

Urge Surfing

guided meditation script

Urge surfing is a technique for managing your unwanted behaviors. While practicing, you will ride out an urge, like a surfer riding a wave.

brief pause _____

Sit back or lie down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes, or let your gaze soften.

brief pause _____

Much like an ocean wave, an urge will gradually gain strength, peak, and then fade away.

brief pause _____

When an urge is growing or at its peak, it often feels as if it will never go away. You might feel discomfort, or like you *have to* act on the urge. Remember, these are just feelings.

brief pause _____

Notice where you are on the wave of your urge. Is the urge gaining strength, peaking, or beginning to fade?

20-30 second pause _____

Remind yourself that urges are temporary. No matter how intense your urge, it will eventually weaken and disappear, even if you don't act upon it.

10 second pause _____

The goal of urge surfing isn't to change your thoughts and feelings. Instead, you will try to accept whatever you are experiencing.

brief pause _____

Take a moment to notice your thoughts. Simply observe the words or images in your mind.

30-45 second pause _____

Shift your attention to your feelings. You might have uncomfortable feelings, such as anger, temptation, or guilt. Even uncomfortable feelings are okay.

30-45 second pause _____

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Now we will practice a relaxation technique called visualization. This will help you continue to ride out your urge.

brief pause _____

Use all your senses to imagine the following scene.

brief pause _____

Imagine you're standing on a beautiful, sandy beach. You feel the warmth of the sun on your face, and a gentle breeze on your skin.

15-25 second pause _____

You begin to walk slowly down the shore. With each step, the sand crunches beneath your feet.

15-25 second pause _____

Birds sing in the distance, and ocean waves rumble steadily along the shore.

15-25 second pause _____

You take a step toward the ocean and stand at the edge of the surf. Cool water rushes over the top of your feet.

15-25 second pause _____

The air is warm, and smells salty.

15-25 second pause _____

You look out toward the ocean and notice the water contains every shade of blue and green. When the waves peak, they shimmer in the sunlight, before disappearing onto the shore.

30 second pause _____

You continue standing on the shore, taking in the sensations of the beach, the ocean, and the waves.

60-90 second pause _____

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The waves in the ocean are just like your urge. They are powerful for a short time, but before long they peak, and then fade away. You don't have to suppress your urge or try to change it. It will simply fade away on its own.

brief pause _____

Now, begin to focus on your breathing. For the next few minutes, you'll practice taking slow, deep breaths, which will help reduce stress and anxiety.

brief pause _____

You'll inhale for 4 seconds, hold the air in your lungs for 4 seconds, then slowly exhale for 6 seconds.

When inhaling, focus on completely filling your lungs with air.

brief pause _____

To start, follow along as I walk you through the breathing cycle. Let's begin:

brief pause _____

Inhale, 2, 3, 4

Hold, 2, 3, 4

Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Inhale, 2, 3, 4

Hold, 2, 3, 4

Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Inhale

3 second pause _____

Hold

3 second pause _____

Exhale

5 second pause _____

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Inhale

3 second pause

Hold

3 second pause

Exhale

5 second pause

Continue practicing on your own for a few minutes.

60-90 second pause

During deep breathing, it's normal for your mind to wander. When you notice this happening, simply return your attention to your breathing, noticing how it feels to take slow, deep breaths.

120-180 second pause

This exercise is nearly complete. Before continuing your day, take one more moment to observe your thoughts and feelings. Notice if your urge has changed.

30-45 second pause

When you feel ready to do so, open your eyes and stretch.

15 second pause

This concludes the urge surfing exercise. If you'd like to continue practicing, you can start the exercise again, as many times as you need.