Introduction to Meditation

WHAT IS MEDITATION?
Meditation is a relaxation exercise that has a long history. It allows one to focus their mind to develop concentration, clarity, and emotional positivity. Through meditation a person is working toward freeing one’s mind of distracting and scattered thoughts.

HOW DO I PRACTICE MEDITATION?
The process of meditation incorporates diaphragmatic breathing so you can free your mind of the worries of the day and move into a quieter, more serene place.

1. Find a quiet place to begin. Minimize your distractions. You want to focus on your breathing as a means of preparation.
2. Select a comfortable sitting position so your spine is straight and the weight of your head is also in line with your spine. It is helpful to select an object to dwell upon. This can be a word or a sound, an object or a symbol to gaze at or imagine, or a special feeling or thought.
3. When distracting thoughts enter your mind, you can acknowledge them and then allow them to pass through, while returning to your object of focus. A very important element in meditation is maintaining a passive attitude. Try not to be concerned with how well you are doing.
4. Continue to focus on your breathing. You can count your breaths if this helps you maintain focus on your breathing. Count on your exhale and restart the count if you find yourself becoming distracted.
5. As with most relaxation strategies, practice is important. Practice meditation daily.

CREATIVE VISUALIZATION
You can also add in creative visualization or visual imagery to your meditation. This technique is designed to transport you to a relaxing, pleasant location when you are feeling stressed out. Use your imagination to vividly picture a scene in your mind. It can be anything, just remember to make the situation relaxing.

Utilize as many of your senses as possible in the visualization. Be creative! If you choose to be in the mountains, picture the density of the forest and see how the sun filters through the trees. Feel the warmth of the sun on your skin. Since you know what this actually feels like you can recreate the feeling in your visualization. Hear the birds as they sing to you from their perches.

Listen to the gurgling of the stream that runs through the forest. Feel the crisp chill of the water on your feet as you wade across. Smell the scent of the trees as you walk through the peaceful scenery. Have fun with this exercise…it is your special creation, your place to relax.