

## **THE FOUR COUNT BREATH**

This breath focuses the mind and reconnects you to the present moment.

1. Take a deep breath and shake out your shoulders. Focus on the count in order to still your mind.
2. Breathe in slowly for a count of four. Feel your face, neck, and shoulders relax as you inhale deeply into your belly.
3. Hold your breath for a count of four, allowing your body to soften and release. Drop your shoulders away from your ear.
4. Exhale slowly to a count of four, feeling your shoulders slide down your back as your legs, back, and feet relax. Pull in your tummy at the end of the exhale.
5. Finally, let your lungs stay empty for a count of four, further softening your body, letting any tension melt away.
6. Repeat.
7. Note: Each breath becomes deeper and fuller. Notice how you feel in each of the four phases. Consciously relax your body with each part of the breath work. The Four Count Breath helps you focus your mind to bring clarity and peace to a situation. The deep breaths increase oxygen levels and calm the nervous system. I use these counted breaths when I need to be present, powerful, and peaceful.

## **THE PAIN RELIEVING BREATH**

Researchers now know that controlled breathing used during childbirth is effective not because it distracts from the pain, but because it increases oxygenation, relaxation, mindfulness, and body awareness. It helps women be more alert, focused, and aware. This breath is ridiculously simple, and here are the steps:

8. Take a deep slow inhale right down into your belly.
9. Exhale for longer than you inhale.
10. Counting can help: inhale for a count of four, and exhale for a count of eight. Extend the exhale for as long as you can, maybe up to a count of sixteen!
11. If the pain is severe, purse your lips as you exhale. Focus intently on your breath rather than the pain. Continue until you feel your body relax and the pain begin to ease.