Breath-Counting Meditation

An alternative form of sitting meditation is the use of counting with the rhythm of the breath.·

Following the gentle ins and outs of the breath creates a sense of peace and restfulness.

1. Find your posture and center yourself Take several deep breaths. Either close your eyes

or fix them on a spot on the floor about four feet in front of you. Your eyes may be

focused or not.

2. Take deep but not forced belly breaths. As you do, focus your attention on each part of the breath: the inhale, the turn (the point at which you stop inhaling and start exhaling), the exhale, the pause (between the exhale and inhale), the turn (the point at which you start to inhale), the inhale, and so on. Pay careful attention to the pause. What are the sensations in your body as you pause between breaths?

3. As you exhale, say "one." Continue counting each exhale: "two... three.. .four.'' Then begin again with "one." If-you lose count, simply start over.

4. When you discover that your mind has slipped into thought, note this and then gently return to the counting of your breath.

5. If a particular sensation in your body catches your attention, focus on the sensation until it recedes. Then return your attention to the inhale and the exhale and the counting of your breath.