

## Finger Holds to Balance Emotions

**The Theory:** Strong emotions are one of the effects of traumatic stress. Think of emotions as waves of energy passing through the body-mind-spirit. Eastern models of healing suggest that a channel or meridian of energy related to different emotions and feelings passes through each finger. If energy is not released and balanced after stressful or traumatic events, the energy remains blocked in the system, resulting in headaches, insomnia, pain, and other physical or emotional symptoms. If we act, the wave of emotional energy passes through us and gets out of our system.

**The Practice:** Using one hand (either hand is fine) hold each finger on the other hand according to the need for balance and the instructions in the boxes below. We do this naturally without consciousness. For example, babies suck their thumbs, adults give the finger (middle) when angry, or twist their ring finger when anxious.

Within a minute of holding your finger, you will feel a pulse, which is energy flowing. Usually when our energy flows, the strong feeling or emotion moves through us and passes. Finger holds may be used anytime, in a moment of anxiety, grief or anger, or as part of meditation.

This ancient practice is easily accessible to you at all times. If you are experiencing one of these emotions very acutely, it is good to just do the one. For example, if you are afraid of the turbulence on your flight, simply hold your index finger and do the breath exercise. Some people practice these holds as a before bedtime ritual to cleanse their bodies of feelings experienced during the day.

Finger	Emotion	Directions
Thumb	Tears, grief, emotional pain	Hold your thumb, breathe deeply, exhale, and let go of loss and grief. Breathe in peace and soothing feelings. Allow yourself adequate time to grieve and process losses.
Index finger	Fear	Hold your index finger, breathe deeply, exhale, and let go of fear, inhale courage and strength of being.
Middle finger	Anger and rage	Hold your middle finger, breathe deeply, exhale, and let go of all your anger and rage. Inhale compassion, energy, and creative passion.
Ring finger	Anxiety and nervousness	Hold your ring finger, breathe deeply, exhale, and let go of all worry and anxiety. Inhale a deep sense of peace and security knowing that you are held.
Small finger	Low self-esteem, feelings of unworthiness	Hold your small finger, breathe deeply, exhale, and let go of insecurity and unworthiness. Breathe in gratitude and appreciation for the gift of life.

From Patricia Mathes Cane, *Trauma Healing and Transformation: Awakening a New Heart with Body Mind Spirit Practices*. Used with permission.