FINGERHOLDS

This practice comes from Indonesian culture and is found in many other cultures throughout the world. It can help children and adults identify and manage strong negative emotions. You can do fingerholds to yourself or to another person, such as a toddler who is having a tantrum.

Identify which negative emotion you are experiencing, and hold that finger with the opposite hand. Breathe in deeply, recognizing and acknowledging the strong or disturbing feelings or emotions you are holding inside. As you breathe out slowly, imagine the feelings draining out of your finger into the earth.

Illustration by Melanie Lombard. Description provided by Dr. Linda Chamberlain.

BELLY BREATHING

Release any tension in shoulders. Close or lower your eyes. Breath in slowly through the nose while counting to 4. Hold the breath, counting to 4. Breath out slowly through the nose while counting to 4. Count to 4 before breathing in again. Complete a minimum of 4 breaths.

Use as a protective gesture before sharing difficult experiences.

RESTING IN YOUR SAFE PLACE

Sit comfortably in a chair. Put right hand on heart. Then place left hand on top. Release any tension in shoulders. Close or lower your eyes. Breathe in, slowly and deeply through your nose. Bring that breath to your heart. Exhale slowly through your nose. Repeat for another breath. With each inhale, bring your breath into your heart. Hold it. Protect it. Create a safe place.

Source: Capacitar International, Dr. Linda Chamberlain
Photos by Laura Norton-Cruz
Switching can be difficult, especially for those who have experienced trauma. Use this movement to prepare for a transition.

**SWITCHING**

Sit comfortably in a chair or do this standing.
Cross left ankle over the right.
Extend arms out in front of you with thumbs pointing down.
Cross right hand over the left and interlace fingers.
Bring hands to chest by bending elbows and twisting hands under and up to chest, like a pretzel.
Close or lower eyes.
Gently rest tongue behind upper teeth.
Take slow, deep inhales, bringing the breath into a deep, safe place inside yourself—a place you can keep safe regardless of what is happening around you. It’s okay if this is difficult to find—if so, just bring the breath into your heart.

Slowly reverse back to the beginning. Open your eyes. Bring hands back out in front of you and unfurl fingers. Uncross ankles.

Use this self-regulation movement to help prevent panic attacks and decrease anxiety.

**ACUPRESSURE POINT FOR ANXIETY & PANIC**

Place finger right below the nose. Apply light pressure for 2 minutes for an adult, or 1 minute for a child. To make this movement less noticeable in front of other people, use a knuckle instead (see photo on right).

Use to these movements to transition students between activities or to help shift energy & help focus.

**CENTERING**

Sit comfortably in a chair.
Release any tension in shoulders.
Cross right ankle over the left.
Bring hands together in your lap with fingertips touching.
Close or lower your eyes.
Breathe in, slowly and deeply through your nose.
Bring that breath to your heart.
Exhale slowly through your nose.
Repeat for one more breath.

**UPHOLDING THE HEAVENS**

Start by standing.
Place feet hip distance apart. Focus on where your feet connect with the ground.
Lace fingers together and raise them over your head.
As you inhale, push up against the heavens through the palms of your hands.
As you exhale, push down against the earth through the soles of your feet.
Repeat for 3 to 5 breaths.

**ARCHER**

Start by standing.
Bring feet wider than hip distance and cross arms over chest, making an x.
Point left foot out. Point left finger up like an arrow, and pull bow back across your chest with right arm.
Look out over your arrow. Take 3 deep breaths.
Bring hands back to center, crossing your chest, and feet back facing forward.