

**HAND-WARMERS FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

Ruth Schechter, Brookline Tai Chi, December 2009

1. **Invisible Finger Circles** (with thanks to Kathleen Ahern)

With hands relaxed and down at your sides, let your mind rest in your thumbs. Then gently make tiny circles with your thumbs, first one way, then the other. It doesn't matter if your movement is imperceptible—make the circles with your mind. Then move on to index fingers, middle fingers, ring fingers, and pinkies.

2. **The Hand Sandwich** (Ruth's own)

This one needs a partner (every sandwich, after all, has both bread and a filling). One person provides the "bread" with 2 hands, while the other person puts one hand between them. Sitting close enough that both people can let their hands rest (on a knee) without strain, let your hands soften and simply notice what you feel. Then move to the other hand. Trade roles, so the other person gets to be the "filling."

3. **The Finger Hug** (with thanks to Carolanne Oller)

With soft fingers, wrap the fingers of one hand around the thumb of the other hand; feel into the finger until you feel it pulse. Then move on to each other finger on that hand, doing the same thing. After the pinky, slide your hugging hand down so that you are palm-to-palm, with your fingers wrapped over the back of your hand; again, wait until you feel the palm pulse. Then reverse hands. **Note:** This helps to reduce jet lag (do it about every hour that you are awake, and even after you've arrived). It is also very centering: it addresses all of the body's major meridians.

4. **Finger Circles** (with thanks to Bill Ryan)

With fore-fingers in front of your body, at any level that is comfortable, let your fingers circle around each other, allowing your mind to rest on them. Go only as fast as your mind can follow their movement; focus on the circularity of the movement. Every so often, change direction.

5. **Circling Hands** (a tai chi staple)

With palms facing each other at comfortable chest height, make vertical circles (train wheels), first one direction and then the other. Let your mind rest in your fingers.

6. **Expanding Knuckles** (Ruth's, still in the experimental stage)

To my astonishment, this kept my fingers warm last Friday (a VERY cold day). Simply allow your mind to expand and relax the top knuckles of your hand/fingers (like an accordion or like holding a tennis ball). Observe and report back!

*"The mind moves the chi and the chi moves the blood"*