

Six Types of Gestures



To emphasize your message during a presentation, here below are six types of gestures and three examples:

Type of gesture	Examples
Emphatic	fist pump, chopping hands, finger-pointing
Descriptive	open palms, pinching fingers, hands apart
Symbolic	thumbs up/down, circular motions, air quotes
Connecting	the bridge, handshake, sweeping hand movements
Spatial	pointing at objects/screen, indicating levels or zones
Regulatory	raised hand, clock gesture, cutting motion

For more information about when to use these gestures, see the following page.

Six Types of Gestures

Emphatic Gestures

1. **Fist Pump:** Used to emphasize a crucial point or a victorious moment in the research.
2. **Chopping Hands:** Used to list points or emphasize each syllable or word for dramatic effect.
3. **Finger Pointing:** Useful for identifying specific elements, either in the air or on a presentation slide.

Descriptive Gestures

4. **Open Palms:** Indicates openness and honesty, often used when explaining or justifying research methods or results.
5. **Pitching Fingers:** Used to indicate something small or insignificant, like a minor limitation in the study.
6. **Hands Apart:** To demonstrate the size or scale of an object, finding, or concept.

Symbolic Gestures

7. **Thumbs Up/Down:** Quick assessment or judgement, can be used ironically.
8. **Circular Motions:** Used to describe cycles, loops, or ongoing processes in research.
9. **"Air Quotes":** Indicate that you're using terminology that either doesn't quite fit or that you wish to challenge.

Connecting Gestures

10. **The Bridge:** Using both hands to show a connection between two concepts.
11. **Handshake:** Extending an arm and open hand towards someone or something, to either introduce a new idea or invite audience participation.
12. **Sweeping Hand Movements:** Used to transition from one topic to another, or to "collect" various points together.

Spatial Gestures

13. **Pointing at Objects/Screen:** Directly pointing at what you're referring to can help guide the audience's attention.
14. **Levels:** Using different vertical levels to indicate hierarchy or importance.
15. **Zones:** Designating different 'zones' in the space around you for different themes or concepts, and consistently using those areas when referring back to those themes.

Regulatory Gestures

16. **Raised Hand:** Asking for audience participation or indicating a pause.
17. **Clock Gesture:** To indicate the passing of time or the urgency of the research findings.
18. **Cutting Motion:** To signify the end of a section or that time has run out for a particular segment.