# Haptic Signals - 139 new and known signals

# Text version English

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## Signals ordered by alphabet:

### AGAIN

Category: Other

Use your index finger to make a tick movement on the shoulder.

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### ANGRY

Category: Person

Write an opposite V on the back.

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### ANNOYED

Category: Person

Bend the fingers and place all the fingertips against the back. Move the hand from side to side in a shaking movement.

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### APPLAUDING

Category: Person

Pat both hands one after the other against the back. Repeat the movement as long as people are applauding. When the applause dies out, clap more gently and let the hands slide downwards.

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### ARROW KEY

Category: Computer & smartphone

Move the index finger back and forth along the back according to the direction of the arrow.

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### BEER

Category: Food & beverage

Write an Ø (small circle with a line through it) on the upper arm.

TIP: The Danish word for beer is Øl.

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### BEVERAGE

Category: Food & beverage

CATEGORY SIGNAL

Shape a hand as if holding a glass. Loosely grab around the upper arm with the little finger hand side downwards. Move the hand up the arm.

TIP: Can be used as introduction to different beverages

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### BLACK

Category: Colours

Place a flat outstretched hand palm against the upper arm. Point the fingertips upwards. Turn the hand 90 degrees forwards.

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### BLOOD PRESSURE

Category: Care

Use two fingers and thumb to squeeze gently around the upper arm.

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### BLUE

Category: Colours

Use a flat, outstretched hand. Place the palm against the upper arm, the fingertips pointing forward. Move the hand upwards and turn it 90 degrees.

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### BLUSHING

Category: Person

Move the hand upwards on the back with fingertips pointing upwards while spreading the fingers like a blush spreading across a person s face.

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### BORED

Category: Person

Slowly drum the fingers against the back.

Repeat the movement.

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### BREAD

Category: Food & beverage

Use the tip of your thumb to cut a slice over the shoulder.

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### BREAK

Category: Other

Make a cut into the upper arm using the index and middle fingers. Hold the cut for a moment.

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### BROWN

Category: Colours

Make a fist and place the little finger hand side against the upper arm. Move the hand round in a small circle.

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### CAKE

Category: Food & beverage

Bend your fingers and place all fingertips on the shoulder and remove them again.

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### CAR

Category: Other

Hold two fists against the back and move them as if turning the wheel of a car.

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### CHAMPAGNE

Category: Food & beverage

Fingers wiggle up the upper arm like bubbles fizzing. The fingers spread out and jump from the shoulder.

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### CHEERS

Category: Food & beverage

Shape the hand as if holding a glass. Loosely grab around the upper arm, the little finger hand side downwards. Keep the hand in this position as long as people are toasting.

Make a double clap or gently squeeze the arm, when people drink.

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### CHOCOLATE

Category: Food & beverage

Place the index and middlefingers against the upper arm, fingertips pointing upwards. Make a short quick movement downwards along the arm and outwards.

Repeat the movement.

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### COFFEE

Category: Food & beverage

Make a fist and place the little finger hand side towards the shoulder. Move the hand around in a circle shaped movement.

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### COFFEE TROLLEY

Category: Food & beverage

Make a fist and place the little finger hand side towards the shoulder. Move the hand around in a circle shaped movement.

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### COLOUR

Category: Colours

CATEGORY SIGNAL

Spread your fingers and move the hand down the upper arm making a waving movement from side to side.

TIP: Can be used to introduce all colours

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### COUGHING

Category: Person

Shape a hand as if holding a glass.

Loosely grab around the upper arm, the little finger hand side downwards. Move the hand up and down as long as the coughing continues.

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### CRYING

Category: Person

Quickly draw a vertical line down the back using the index fingertip. Quickly draw another vertical line parallel to the first.

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### CURIOUS

Category: Person

Make a short and quick downwards movement on the back using only one fingertip. Repeat the movement.

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### DANGER

Category: Other

Draw a big cross.

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### DIFFERENT

Category: Other

Using index fingers of both hands, poke both fingers close together on the back. Lift the fingers, move them outwards and make two new pokes.

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### DIRECTION

Category: Rooms & surroundings

Place a flat, outstretched hand, the little finger hand side against the back. Move the hand in the relevant direction.

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### DISABLED

Category: Person

Draw a line on the recipient’s arm by the elbow using the edge of an outstretched hand.

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### DISAPPOINTED

Category: Person

Move the hand down the back in a slow movement with a flat hand and with fingertips apart pointing upwards.

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### DOCTOR

Category: Person

Write an L on the back of the recipient hand.

TIP: (L comes from the danish word for doctor = læge)

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### DOOR

Category: Rooms & surroundings

Place a flat outstretched hand with the little finger hand side against the back. Tilt the hand up or down like a door opening or closing.

TIP: Can be used in room description

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### DOUBLE CLICK

Category: Computer & smartphone

Rest your hand on the recepient’s back and make two pokes quickly one after another using the index finger.

TIP: Can be combined with SCREEN and placed according to where to double click on the screen.

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### DROPPED

Category: Other

Make a fist and place thumb and index finger hand side against the back. Move the hand down the back while opening it to indicate that something has been dropped.

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### DRUNK - a person is drunk

Category: Person

Draw a winding line upwards using the fingertip.

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### EMBARRASSING

Category: Person

Place a flat hand, fingers spread against the back, ingertips pointing upwards. Slowly bend the fingertips against the back until the hand is made into a fist (like toes curling).

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### ENTER (KEY)

Category: Computer & smartphone

Draw a reversed L on the back (a short vertical line then a horizontal line turning to the left).

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### ERROR

Category: Other

Draw a big minus on the back consisting of a horizontal line and one dot above the line, and another dot below the line. The dots are made as small circles.

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### EYEBROWS RAISED

Category: Person

Using index and middle finger of one hand, make two dots simultaniously with some distance between them (for eyes). Place one finger horizontally above the dots and move it upwards (as an eyebrow).

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### EYES CLOSED

Category: Person

Shape a hand as if holding a glass. Place the thumb and index finger hand side against the back and shortly tilt the hand forward down and then back again to show eyelids closing shut and opening by bending the wrist.

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### FETCHING

Category: Other

Use all fingers on one hand to grab the back as if taking something.

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### FINISHED

Category: Other

Make a wiping movement from side to side using the edge of the hand and turning it back and forth against the back.

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### FOOD

Category: Food & beverage

CATEGORY SIGNAL

Draw a circle on the upper arm using the fingertip

TIP: Can be used as an introduction to description of food

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### FRUIT

Category: Food & beverage

Bend the fingertips and place them against the upper arm. Rotate the hand back and forth. Make sure the fingertips touch the upper arm during both rotations.

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### GOOD-

Category: Other

Write a capital G on the back.

TIP: Can be used as abbreviation for greetings such as Good morning, Good night, Good evening etc.

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### GREEN

Category: Colours

Stretch the fingers and place a flat palm against the upper arm, fingers pointing upwards. Move the hand downwards and away from the arm in as weeping movement.

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### GREETING

Category: Person

Push gently twice behind the elbow using a flat hand.

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### GREY

Category: Colours

Use a flat outstretched hand with the fingertips pointing forward. Make a light sweeping movement upwards on the upper arm. Repeat the movement.

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### GRUMPY

Category: Person

Draw a curved (sulky) line using the fingertip.

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### HAND RAISED

Category: Rooms & surroundings

Poke twice against the upper arm and simultaniously make a poke on the back showing where the person is located in the room.

TIP: Use YES to indicate that your hand has been noted

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### HEAR – can you hear?

Category: Other

Write a capital C on the upper arm. Make a dot in the middle.

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### HUG

Category: Other

Somebody wants to hug you. Gently grab the upper arm with your hand and and give the arm a little squeeze. Push gently on one arm to indicate whether the person uses the left or right cheek.

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### HURTS

Category: Care

Draw a line across the back of the hand.

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### IMPATIENT

Category: Person

Drum quickly with shifting fingers against the back. Repeat the movement.

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### INJECTION

Category: Care

Make a poke on the inside of the elbow joint and thereafter a poke where the injection will take place on the body.

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### INTERESTED

Category: Person

Write the letter i on the back. Include the dot above.

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### INTERPRETING

Category: Other

Place your hand outstretched on the back and flip it palm down and palm up. Repeat the movement as long as interpretation is going on.

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### INTERRUPT

Category: Other

Place a flat hand, palm down on one shoulder. Hold the position for a little while

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### IRONY

Category: Other

Make a dot on the back and a drilling movement with the index finger a few times. TIP: Use the signal as soon as the conversation turns ironic

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### KNOCK

Category: Rooms & surroundings

Knock on the back using your knuckles.

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### LAUGHING

Category: Person

Scratch up and down the back using the fingertips. Repeat the movement as long as the laughter continues.

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### LESS

Category: Other

Move your hand down the upper arm using a flat horizontal hand little finger against the arm.

TIP: Can also be used for speak softer

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### LETTER

Category: Other

Use capital letters. Each letter is written preferably in one movement, without lifting the finger.

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### LOADING

Category: Computer & smartphone

Draw a small circle on the back. Let your finger continue round and round as long as the machine is loading or working. Make a short stop every time the finger passes the top of the circle.

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### LOOKING AT YOU

Category: Person

With the index finger of one hand make a poke on the back to indicate the recipient’s position.

With the other hand draw parallel lines using the index and middle finger towards the poke to show that people standing around are looking.

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### LOOP SYSTEM

Category: Rooms & surroundings

Write a capital T on the upper arm. Draw a circle around the T.

TIP: T stands for Teleslynge (the Danish word for loop system)

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### MAN

Category: Person

Use thumb and index finger to make two parallel lines down the upper arm.

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### MICROPHONE

Category: Rooms & surroundings

Write a capital M on the upper arm and draw a circle around it.

TIP: Can be used in combination with DIRECTION

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### MOBILE PHONE

Category: Computer & smartphone

Place the thumb and little fingertip against the upper arm with the other fingers curled (like a phone receiver) and touch the arm with the little finger and thumb in turns.

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### MORE

Category: Other

Move your hand up the upper arm using a flat horizontal hand, little finger against the arm.

TIP: Can also be used for speak up

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### MOVE

Category: Other

Press a flat outstretched hand firmly against the arm.

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### NERVOUS

Category: Person

Use thumb and index finger to draw two parallel zig-zag lines down the back (like shaking legs).

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### NO

Category: Other

Use a flat, outstretched hand, palm against the back and fingertips pointing upwards. Move the hand from side to side a couple of times.

TIP: Can also be used to erase a wrong signal.

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### NODDING

Category: Person

Clap gently a couple of times on the back, shoulder or upper arm using a flat, outstretched hand.

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### NOISE

Category: Rooms & surroundings

Clasp fingers together and move them around on the back like ants.

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### NUMBERS

Category: other

Write one number at a time on the back preferably in one movement without lifting the finger.

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### NURSE

Category: Person

Draw a cross on the back of the hand using two fingers held close together.

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### OKAY

Category: Other

Draw a tick on the back.

TIP: Or write OK using capital letters.

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### ORANGE

Category: Colours

Place the thumb and index finger hand side against the upper arm. Open and close the hand repeatedly with thumb and index finger outstretched. Repeat the movement.

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### PACKING UP

Category: Person

Use the little finger hand sides to push something from each side towards the middle of the back. Lay down flat one hand after the other on top of each other.

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### PAYMENT

Category: Other

Press your thumb firmly against the upper arm and remove it with a sweeping movement.

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### PERSISTANT

Category: Person

Draw an exclamation mark on the back.

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### PERSON

Category: Person

CATEGORY SIGNAL

Use thumb and index finger to make two parallel lines down the upper arm.

TIP: Can be used as introduction to all descriptions of personal caracteristics.

Make the signal narrow for a slim person or wider for a larger person.

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### PLATE

Category: Food & beverage

Draw a circle on the upper arm.

Use the edge of the hand to illustrate how to use the knife to push food back into the centre of the plate:

Upwards / downwards / from the left / from the right.

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### PURPLE

Category: Colours

Use two fingers to make a small curve on the upper arm.

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### QUESTION

Category: Other

Draw a question mark on the back.

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### QUIET

Category: Rooms & surroundings

Draw a long horizontal line across the back.

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### RAIN

Category: Rooms & surroundings

Move both hands downwards on the back with fingers spread like rain falling.

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### READING

Category: Person

Move the hand back and forth with the back of the hand against the back and fingertips pointing upwards. Flip the hand and repeat the movement, as if turning pages in a book.

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### READY

Category: Other

Move both hands upwards and outwards on the back towards each side.

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### RECEIPT

Category: Other

Use the index finger and thumb to draw a small vertical rectangle on the upper arm.

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### RED

Category: Colours

Draw a horizontal line by moving the side of the index finger along the upper arm. TIP: Can be combined with BEVERAGE for red wine.

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### ROMANTIC

Category: Other

Using both index fingers draw the two halves of a heart simultaneously on the back.

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### ROOM

Category: Rooms & surroundings

CATEGORY SIGNAL

Draw a large rectangle on the back to illustrate that room description starts. Then draw the actual shape of the room.

Make a poke where the recepient is placed.

At last, draw the furniture, windows, doors, etc. Use the large rectangle as introduction to all room descriptions.

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### ROOM DESCRIPTION

Category: Rooms & surroundings

Draw the shape of the room. Make a poke where the recipient is placed. At last, draw the furniture, windows, doors, etc.

Remember to describe the room from the point of view of the recipient.

If you move, you might need to draw the room again seen from the deafblind person’s perspective.

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### SAD

Category: Person

Slowly draw a vertical line down the back using the fingertip. Slowly draw a vertical line parallel to the first one.

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### SCREEN

Category: Computer & smartphone

CATEGORY SIGNAL

Using both index fingers draw the upper frame and the two sides of a screen on the back.

TIP: Can be used as an introduction and frame to show where elements on a screen are placed.

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### SERIOUS

Category: Person

Place a flat, outstretched hand, the little finger hand side against the back. Move the hand down the back in a vertical line.

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### SERVING

Category: Food & beverage

Write a capital S on the upper arm.

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### SHAKING ONE’S HEAD

Category: Person

Use a flat outstretched hand, palm against the back and fingertips pointing upwards. Move the hand from side to side a couple of times.

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### SIGNATURE

Category: Other

Use two fingers put together to make a bow on the upper arm in one movement.

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### SLEEPING

Category: Person

Write a Z using your index finger.

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### SMILING

Category: Person

Draw a curved (smiling) line using the fingertip.

TIP: Can be made wider or firmer to underline a great smile.

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### SMOKING

Category: Person

Draw a horizontal line on the back with a wavy line rising as smoke.

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### SNOW

Category: Rooms & surroundings

Use all fingers to drum gently down the back.

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### SOFT DRINK

Category: Food & beverage

Fingers wiggle up the upper arm as bobbles.

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### SPEAK (YOUR TURN)

Category: Rooms & surroundings

Poke twice against the upper arm using your index finger.

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### SPEAKING (SOMEONE ELSE)

Category: Rooms & surroundings

Poke twice against the back using the index fingertip. Place the poke on the back indicating the position of the speaking person in the room.

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### SPEECH

Category: Other

Use the index finger to tap the upper arm a few times as if tapping the glass for speech.

TIP: Can be used in combination with INTERRUPTING

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### STAIRS

Category: Rooms & surroundings

Draw the outline of the stairs upwards or downwards on the back.

TIP: Can be combined with DIRECTION

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### STAND UP

Category: Other

Push firmly upwards underneath the elbow.

TIP: Use FINISHED when it is time to sit down again.

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### STAY STILL

Category: Care

Place your hand on top of the recipient’s hand and slide gently towards the fingers. Keep your hand still on top of the recipient’s hand, when the recipient is not allowed to move.

TIP: Use FINISHED when the recipient is allowed to move again

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### STOP

Category: Other

Place a flat outstretched hand, palm against the back. Point the fingertips upwards. Hold this hand position for a moment.

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### SUN

Category: Rooms & surroundings

Draw a circle (a sun) on the back. Place all fingertips on the sun and spread them out as rays. Let the rays radiate in the actual direction of the sun compared to the position of the recipient.

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### SURPRISED

Category: Person

Make a quick sweeping movement upwards on the back using a flat outstretched hand.

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### SWIPE

Category: Computer & smartphone

Use your fingertips to make a sweeping movement sidewards on the back.

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### TAB KEY

Category: Computer & smartphone

Use both little finger hand sides to push something from each side towards the middle of the back. Lay down flat one hand after the other on top of each other.

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### TALKING

Category: Person

Shape the hand as if holding a glass. Open and close the hand against the back with fingers outstretched. Repeat the movement.

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### TEA

Category: Food & beverage

Thumb and index fingertips are put together and moved down the upperarm and back up again (as a tea bag being dipped).

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### TEMPERATURE - will be taken

Category: Care

Draw a line up the index finger.

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### THINKING

Category: Person

Let the index and middle fingertips walk back and forth a few times on the back. Continue as long as the person is thinking.

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### TICKET

Category: Other

Use the index finger and thumb to draw a small vertical rectangle on the upper arm.

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### TIME

Category: Other

Poke twice on the upperside of the recepient’s wrist.

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### TOILET

Category: Other

Draw a small cross on the upper arm.

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### TYPING

Category: Computer & smartphone

Let the fingers ‘type’ against the back as if typing on a keyboard.

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### UNSURE

Category: Person

Place the index and middle fingers against the back and shift from finger to finger, only one finger at a time touching the back.

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### WAIT

Category: Other

Move the index finger side back and forth against the upper arm.

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### WALKING

Category: Rooms & surroundings

The index and middle fingers walk across the back.

Let the fingers walk in the actual direction.

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### WATER

Category: Food & beverage

Fingers wiggle down the upper arm as water flowing.

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### WHAT

Category: Other

Place the hand beneath the elbow and let the fingers wiggle against the forearm.

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### WHITE

Category: Colours

Place the fingertips against the upper arm. Make a quick and short movement downwards. Repeat the movement.

TIP: Can be combined with BEVERAGE for white wine

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### WINDOW

Category: Rooms & surroundings

The position of windows are drawn on the back illustrated by straight lines.

TIP: Can be used in room description

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### WOMAN

Category: Person

Use thumb and index finger to make two parallel lines down the upper arm.

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### WRITING

Category: Person

Draw wavy lines on the back as if writing on paper.

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### YAWNING

Category: Person

Join the fingertips and place them against the back.

Open and close the fingers against the back, separating and joining the fingertips.

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### YELLOW

Category: Colours

Stretch thumb and index finger and place them against the upper arm. Tilt the hand forward by bending the wrist.

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### YES

Category: Other

Pat gently a couple of times on the back, shoulder or forearm using a flat, outstretched hand.

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### YOU

Category: Person

Make a double poke on the upper arm.

TIP: Can be combined with room description to show where the recipient is in the room.

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## Introduction

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Haptic signals – 139 new and known signals is a collection of the most common haptic signals used by people with visual and hearing impairments, deafblind people and their relatives and interpreters in Denmark.

By using haptic signals you can get information that others get through sight. This provides a better opportunity to participate actively and on an equal footing with others in social interaction. It is our hope that haptic signals will become a natural part of every day life for all deafblind people and people with visual and hearing impairments.

Previously published and new signals have been collected and standardized in this book in alphabetical order, so that it can be an inspirational platform for the further development of signals both in Denmark and internationally.

The signals have been developed and chosen by deafblind people and people with visual and hearing impairments in collaboration with their contact persons and a reference group consisting of representatives from different parts of the deafblind community in Denmark.

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## What are haptic signals?

The word haptic is Greek and means touch. Haptic signals are signals drawn on the body – typically on the upper part of the back, shoulder or upper arm.

The signals can be performed simultaneously with conversation and can thus be used to make a visual description of what is going on in the room during the conversation or to illustrate for example the shape of a sculpture. With haptic signals, deafblind people can get information discreetly about the surroundings or about other people s mood and facial expressions, while the conversation can continue undisturbed.

If a person smiles, if people laugh at a joke, if your dinner partner raises his glass to make a toast, if the meeting commences or if a comment is said with irony. All these situations could lead to misunderstandings. These are all situations where visual interpretation is useful to help the deafblind to respond right away.

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## Not a language in itself

Haptic communication is not a language in itself, but is used as a supplement to speech, sign language or other forms of communication, when necessary. Some of the signals have been developed with inspiration from Danish sign language.

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## Who can use haptic signals?

Haptic signals are useful for deafblind people and people with visual and hearing impairment, but blind people and the visually impaired can also benefit from haptic descriptions. Using signals can provide a better overview of a room or a building or even make it possible to manage a meeting.

For persons with a narrow field of vision, the signal DIRECTION can be of great help to locate where in the room sign language is performed.

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## 6 reasons to use haptic signals

• when you would like to receive information discreetly and without disturbing those around you

• when your hands are occupied by sign language, braille reading or investigating something

• when there is too much noise to use your residual hearing

• when something is best described by drawing the shape of it, e.g. a room and its furnishings

• when you need to relax your arms/hands/ears/eyes, but still need to receive brief information

• when you need to orient yourself in a certain direction

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## Category-signals

Each signal belongs to a category. Most categories have a specific category-signal, which can be used to introduce a signal in order to tune into a certain context. For example in the beginning of a haptic description of a dish, it might be useful to introduce with the category-signal FOOD. If the description concerns somebody s reaction, it might be useful to start with the category-signal PERSON.

There is no category signal in the category CARE, since the situation is usually given in advance for example at the hospital, at the doctor s, at the dentist s etc. Signals belonging to the category ‘Other signals’ do not have a category-signal.

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## Categories & Category signals

Category: Person

Category signal: PERSON

Category: Rooms & surroundings

Category signal: ROOM

Category: Colours

Category signal: COLOUR

Category: Food & beverages

Category signal: FOOD / BEVERAGE

Category: Computer & screens

Category signal: SCREEN

Category: Care

No category signal

Category: Other

No category signal

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## Adjust the signals to your own needs

Get started by selecting a single category or five signals that will be especially useful to you. When those signals have become a natural part of the communication, you can learn more signals.

You can also experiment with the size of the signals, the pressure and where on the body a signal will be easy to perform and receive. In the book most of the signals are performed on the back, the shoulder or the upper arm, but they can also be performed elsewhere on the body. The importance of a signal can be enhanced by using a larger movement, by repeating the movement or by adjusting the pressure. For example repeating the signal for LAUGHING indicates that people are still laughing. If a person is very angry, the signal for ANGRY can be performed with more pressure on the back.

Be aware that it might be difficult to receive signals through a thick sweater, and it can be difficult to perform signals, if a hood or a large collar is in the way.

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## Description of rooms and surroundings

Haptic signals are very suitable for describing a room and how it is furnished. Begin by drawing a large square with both index fingers on the recipient’s back. Then draw the outline of the room. Then draw the positions and shapes of tables, doors and other relevant objects in the room. The outline of the room provides a basic framework to describe what takes place in the room afterwards. Note that the room must be described from the position of the deafblind person. If you change places, it might be necessary to make a new description based on the new position.

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## Description of persons

Many haptic signals are linked to people s moods and reactions e.g. in a conversation. Is the other person smiling, does she seem angry or disappointed? Is she crying or laughing? All this information is important to receive in order to respond immediately to the present mood of the conversation. If appropriate begin by using the category signal PERSON.

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## Feedback

To show whether a signal has been understood or not, the receiver can give feedback by:

- nodding (I understand)

- shaking one’s head (I don’t understand)

- lifting the hand (to say stop)

- wiggle fingers in the air finger tips pointing upwards (as the signal for WHAT)

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## Exercises

Exercise 1

Participants form a circle. One person draws a haptic signal on the back of the person that he or she is standing next to. He or she repeats the signal on the back of the next person and so on around the circle. When the signal reaches the first person again, he or she says it out loud.

Is the signal still the same?

Exercise 2

Use haptic signals to describe visually the room you are in. Start by drawing the outline of the room by using both index fingers and then place windows, doors, tables and chairs in the room. Use regular speech or sign language at the same time to explain what you are drawing.

Exercise 3

A plate of food is best described by referring to the numbers on a clock face: Are potatoes placed at 3 o’clock ? Is the meat placed at 6 o’clock? … and are the vegetables placed at 9 o’clock? If the food has a remarkable shape or colour, then describe it. If necessary use the category signals for COLOUR and FOOD at the beginning of the description.

Exercise 4

Go for a walk. Find trees, buildings, rooms, sculptures and other objects that can be described by drawing them on the back.

Enjoy haptic signals!

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## 

## COLOPHON

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The signals in this book are performed on Dorte Eriksen and Gerd Nielsen by contact person Anette Rosenqvist and interpreter Riinette Askgaard.

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