



Activities to Develop Fine Motor (Hand) Skills

Efficient fine motor skills depend on having sufficient strength and stability in your body and shoulders to allow your arms to move freely away from your body and for your thumb and fingers to work cooperatively. Below are some activity ideas to help develop your fine motor skills (you can probably think of many more). Make them fun, vary them regularly, and practice them daily by incorporating them into your daily routine.

Writing on a chalkboard, whiteboard or paper taped to the wall

Use pens, paints, finger paints, crayons or stampers to make designs on vertical surfaces. Working against gravity will help strengthen your shoulders and whole arm to support fine motor control in your fingers



Balloons

Have someone hold a balloon in front, to the side or above you - bash it a specified number of times - use both hands. To increase or reduce the difficulty have it held just out of/within reach. Try to use your left hand to bash it on your right side and vice versa (crossing the midline of your body). Play 'keepie upie', by repeatedly hitting the balloon up so it doesn't fall to the floor. Use a bat, racket, fly swatter or rolled up newspaper to hit the balloon. Play balloon tennis.



Cooking

Help with baking at home - stirring cake mixture is great. Use two hands together to roll out dough. Use cookie cutters to make shapes in the dough



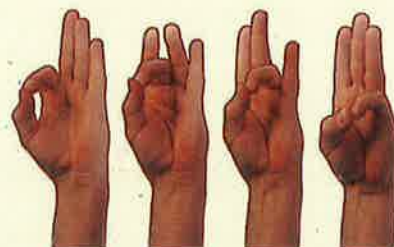
Pouring water

Use a jug/bottle to pour water into a container. Increase the amount of water (and therefore weight of the jug/bottle) over time. Try this in the bath, in the kitchen or garden. Pour water back and forth between different containers (you can also use sand). To help develop control pour water up to a specific mark and no more. Add food colouring or glitter to make it more interesting. Have different jugs with different colours and mix them together



Thumb opposition

Touch your thumb to each finger in turn and repeat several times. Take it slowly and aim for tip to tip contact and a big round space between your thumb and finger.



Writing with small pencils

Write using a pen, pencil or crayon only 5-10cm long, this encourages a tripod (3 finger) pencil grasp to be used by preventing a whole hand/palmer grasp. It also encourages tip to tip opposition of thumb to fingers. Cut down paint brushes and glue spreaders and use them in the same way.



Pegs

See how many times can you open and close the peg in a certain time (e.g. one minute), draw eyes and teeth on the pegs so they look like crocodiles (or other animals) then play games where the hungry crocodiles 'eat' up other things. Peg all the pegs around a plate like a big sunshine. Peg different coloured pegs onto corresponding coloured cups or bowls. Help peg out the washing or peg pictures onto a line of string



Beads

Try sorting bead into colours, thread beads to make bracelets and necklaces, start by threading them onto a pipe cleaner if laces are too tricky. Hold as many beads as possible in your hand until one drops. Post them as fast as possible into a small container



Tweezers

Use tweezers to pick and place small objects e.g. from one hole of a muffin tin to another. Using tweezers to 'fish' objects out of water. Play classic games such as 'Operation'.



Pipette, turkey baster, eye dropper

Use it to suck up and splatter paint onto paper, use it to transfer coloured water from one container to another, use it to 'blow' a ping pong ball across a table.



Arts and crafts

Make mosaics from rice, pasta, or dried lentils; tear paper into small strips/pieces to make a collage; glue and stick rolled up balls of tissue paper to make pictures; cut up straws and thread them onto a string to make a necklace.



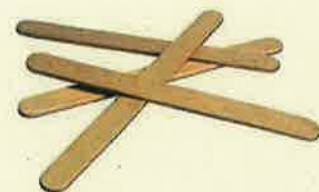
Spray bottles or squeeze bottles

Spray coloured water onto paper to create modern art, squeeze water at a target to knock it over, have a 'water fight', spray plants around the house or help with the cleaning. Also practice screwing and unscrewing bottle tops and jars lids, use a variety of sizes



Finger tug of war

Pinch a lolly stick between your thumb and index finger, have someone hold the other end and try and pull it away from you as you hold on as tight as possible.



Posting coins

Start with large ones and then move onto smaller ones, post as many as possible in a minute, hold a number of coins in your hand and then post one at a time (this helps develop in-hand manipulation).



Zippers

Practice unzipping bags, pencil cases and jackets.



Wringing out a sponge

This can be incorporated into messy play with paint, it could be part of bath time fun or water play in the garden, you could help wash the car with a soapy sponge or clean the windows, squeeze the sponge really tight to get out all the water.



Bubble wrap

Pop the bubbles between your fingers.



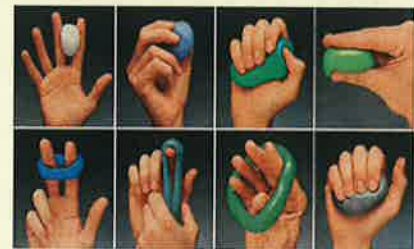
Colander

Pull straws or pipe cleaners out of a colander, ribbons or silk scarves out of a bottle, or pegs out of a peg board.



Play dough, putty, clay

Poke deep holes into it with individual fingers, pinch off small pieces between thumb and index finger and roll into small balls, flick the small balls into a target, squeeze it hard between thumb and first two fingers, put it on a surface and use whole hand to roll it into a large ball, use two hands together to roll it into sausage then pull small pieces off. Have someone hid small bead/toys in it for you to find.



Occupational Therapist:

Date: