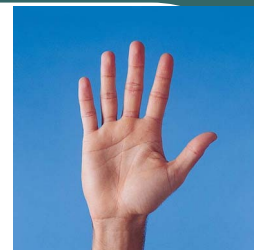


OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY HAND STRENGTHENING PROGRAMME

Hand Strength: Hand and finger strength is important as it is required for many everyday activities such as doing up buttons and zips or cutting up food at mealtimes. Also, to be able to properly hold a pencil, the hand must be strong enough to maintain an open web space or to use the thumb in opposition.



Hand Gym Activities:

- ◆ **Sitting on Hands:** With palms on the chair seat.
- ◆ **Chair Press Ups:** Whilst sitting on hands with elbows slightly bent, try to push body up.
- ◆ **Rubbing Hands Together Vigorously:** Like washing hands thoroughly, rubbing outside and inside of hand. (Repeat)
- ◆ **Squeezing Hands Tightly Together.**
- ◆ **Pressing Hands Down on Desk:** Standing up and pushing down forcefully on the desk.
- ◆ **Finger Tip Tapping:** Alternately tap each fingertip on the table, like playing the piano.
- ◆ **Hands Spans:** Spreading and closing Fingers.
- ◆ **Any Clapping Games:** Tied in with numeracy exercises. Clap alone, or with a partner, or alternate between desk and own hands or a partner's hands.
- ◆ **Playing with:** Sand, Rice, Dried Lentils, Playdough.
- ◆ **Squeezing a soft (stress) ball.** Alternate between hands, this can be done while sitting on the mat or while reading a book. They can be purchased from most toy shops.



Activity ideas for grip strength:

SQUIRT BOTTLES

SQUEEZING SPONGES

HAMMERING

ANIMAL WALKS

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

CUTTING

STIRRING

HOLE PUNCH

OPENING JARS

TUG OF WAR

NEWSPAPER SCRUNCH

BAT & BALL GAMES

Everyday activities including ; getting dressed and undressed, carrying shopping bags, cooking (mixing, sifting, kneading, rolling, grating, peeling, cutting, pouring & squeezing).

Using Theraputty or Playdough can also help develop hand strength. Refer to 'Occupational Theraputty Activities' sheet for further ideas...



MORE IDEAS

Paediatric Occupational Therapy

Swiss Cottage School

80 Avenue Road

London NW6 7YG

Tel: 0207 681 8080

[http://
www.royalfree.nhs.uk/
paed_OT.aspx](http://www.royalfree.nhs.uk/paed_OT.aspx)

Finger Gym Activities:

- ◆ **Sticky Tape Escape:** a piece of sticky tape is wrapped around the tips of the middle and index fingers. The child should then be encouraged to remove the sticky tape without using their other hand. She/he can use the thumb to help!
- ◆ **Rubber band Escape:** Same as above but a rubber band is used instead.
- ◆ **Paper Scrunch Game:** Encourage the child to tear and scrunch up small pieces of paper or magazines. Remind him/her that the trick is to make sure the paper never touches the palm of the hand, and only gets scrunched between the tips of the fingers.
- ◆ **Peg Game:** To have a race to see who can be faster than their family member/s or peers at using the pegs to put all the scrunched paper into a container. Demonstrate the open and closing action of the peg as the thumb and index finger "push down" to open the peg, then "let go" to close it.
- ◆ **Thumb Wrestles:** Have thumb wrestle rounds to see who has the strongest thumb, and who can hold the person's thumb down for the count of 3.



Activity ideas for pinch strength:

NUTS & BOLTS

STAMPS & INK PADS

TWEEZERS

LEGO

THREADING

TIE UP BALLOONS

EYE-DROPPER

WIND UP TOYS

Everyday activities including; doing up buttons and zips, squeezing toothpaste, peeling oranges, opening food containers, writing.

TOP TIP! Encourage the child to draw and do activities on a vertical surface. This helps develop and strengthen the child's arms, hands and fingers. For example, encourage the child to draw on a blackboard, colour in at an easel or put stickers on a piece of paper taped to the wall.

Follow us on Twitter! @RFHPaediatricOT