

Gross Motor and Fine Motor Activities



A. Postural stability

When the bigger muscles of the shoulder girdle and trunk are strong and stable, the smaller muscles of the arms and hands can move freely in a controlled way.

When this is lacking a child will hold their pencil really tight to try and control it or sometimes press really hard on the paper. It may also cause tension in the shoulders.



A. Gross Motor, shoulder and core strength exercises

1. Time spent lying on their stomachs to play with cars, build legos, draw or mark mark.
2. Wall pushes (leaning body weight in and pushing against the wall) for 20 seconds (count aloud to reinforce counting. Could also coin in 2s, 3s, 5, 10s etc)
3. Wall push-ups - how many can child do in 1 minute?
4. People pushes (with two hands push two hands of another person for 20 seconds (count aloud to reinforce counting. Could also coin in 2s, 3s, 5, 10s etc)
5. Chair push ups - how long can they hold it for?

Gross Motor, shoulder and core strength exercises



Gross Motor, shoulder and core strength exercises

6. Crab walking - children walk in different directions and distances balancing a bean bag on their stomach.
7. Standing on one leg - how long can children balance for? Can they balance on the other leg? Use a chair for balance if they child cannot do it yet.
8. Leg lifts - stand on one leg holding onto a chair and lift other leg to a 45 degree angle, trying to keep it straight. Hold for a few seconds and swap legs.
9. Tightrope walker - walk along a rope on the ground or try to walk along lines on the playground. Balance along benches or balancing equipment.

Gross Motor, shoulder and core strength exercises



Gross Motor, shoulder and core strength exercises

10. Choose activities from the Animal Gross Motor Alphabet - [see here](#).
11. Show children how to make large movements in the air with their arms, hands and shoulders. For example, fix ribbons on to the end of sticks for the children to swirl in the air. Encourage the use of both sides of the body.
12. Tummy skittles - child lies on stomach and throws ball at given objects (e.g. skittles or similar) to knock down. Or sees how far they can throw the ball.

B. Tactile Perception

If you are not getting good **tactile feedback** from your fingers, it is hard to be accurate with them.

When a child has poor tactile perception it may feel as though the pencil is being held with rubber gloves on. Fine motor developmental is not optimal.

The child:

- can be clumsy
- can drop things small items regularly
- can let items slip from their grasp



Tactile Perception Exercises

Feely Bags

Most of the tactile perception activities here make use of a **“feely bag”** – basically a bag that is large enough for the child to put both hands inside to feel the objects.

Cloth bags are best, as plastic bags create too much distracting noise!

You can create two holes for the hands to go through - do this by using a safety pin to hold the bag in the middle or simply sew it closed in the middle.

Tactile Perception Exercises

Household Object Tactile Game

Place **various familiar household objects** in the bag, and ask the child to feel one and tell you what it is without looking.

Your child can then pull the object out and see if they were right!

Tip:

Make sure the child knows the names of all the objects.

If language skills are an issue, then have a matching set of items outside the bag that the child can point to.

Make it harder: Ask the child to find a specific object

Add interest: Use objects related to a theme, such as kitchen objects, bathroom objects, toys etc.

Tactile Perception Exercises

Grocery Tactile Activity

Use **packaged grocery items** such as dried beans, rice, popcorn, macaroni, pasta shells, jelly sweets, raisins.

First make sure the child knows the names of all the groceries, and have the child feel the packets to get a sense of how they differ.

Pop the items inside your feely bag. Ask the child to put both hands into the bag, feel a packet and to tell you which item it is. After “guessing”, let the child pull it out to see if it's correct.

Make it harder: Ask the child to find a specific grocery item. The more items are in the bag, the harder this activity will be.

Tactile Perception Exercises

Tactile Discrimination: Shape Activity

Before beginning:

Let the child feel each shape as you describe it (or let the child describe it).

For example: a circle is round and has no corners; a square has 4 corners and 4 sides all the same, but the diamond has 2 narrow/sharp corners and 2 wider corners etc.

Put one set of the shapes in the bag, and place the other set on the table for the child to look at, to help with identification.

The child should **use both hands** to manipulate the shape and then tell you what shape it is.

Make it harder: Ask the child to find a specific shape, or increase the number of shapes in the bag.

Add interest by finding specific shapes needed to build a picture.

Tactile Perception Exercises

Tactile Discrimination: Animal Activity

Before beginning:

Look at the animals with the child and talk about the difference in the animals: some have 4 legs all the same size, some have 2 big back legs, and 2 smaller “arms”. Feel the different arrangement of spikes, horns, ears etc.

Put the animals in the bag. The child should use both hands to feel the animals.

Make it easier: Use fewer animals, or use animals that are not very similar (eg lion, elephant, giraffe)

Make it harder: Ask the child to find a specific animal, or use animals that are very similar, so the child has to pay attention to small details such as the length of the tails and snouts, the position of the ears, etc.

C. Hand function

The hand and finger muscles need to work well together in order to control pencils and other small items and tools.

The wrist and forearm muscles are also important, as their positioning will get the hand in the best position to control pencils.

Cutting with scissors is one of the best ways a child can develop hand function.



Check their scissor skills



C. Hand function (wrist, hand and finger exercises)

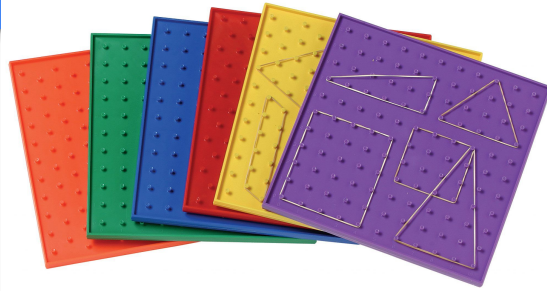
1. Play with lego or duplo
2. Use geoboards - make different shapes, patterns and pictures
3. Pull resistance bands in different directions
4. Play with playdough, clay or putty - enhance this for interest
5. Use spray bottles to squeeze and spray water at given objects or inside given spaces e.g. shapes drawn on the ground. This could be turned into a game.
6. Use hole punches, turkey basters, syringes, squeeze toys, squeeze bottles and sponges. Use dice to make games of these e.g. roll the dice and squeeze or squirt the given number of times. Use two dice for extra challenge.

C. Hand function (wrist, hand and finger exercises)

1.



2.



3.



4.

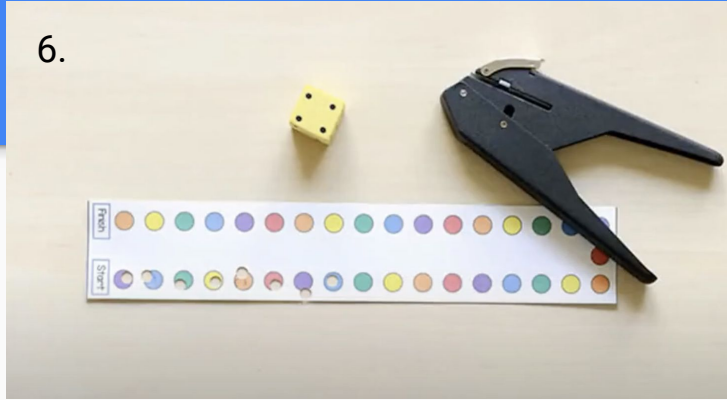


5.



C. Hand function (wrist, hand and finger exercises)

6.



C. Hand function (wrist, hand and finger exercises)

Playdough
enhancements



C. Hand function (wrist, hand and finger exercises)

Playdough
enhancements



C. Hand function (wrist, hand and finger exercises)

Playdough
enhancements



C. Hand function (wrist, hand and finger exercises)

7. Crumple paper into a ball - how many can the child do in 2 minutes using a timer. You could develop this to crumple the paper into a ball, then lie on the floor and throw into a given space to combine a number of areas.
8. Draw and write on vertical surfaces (this develops wrist strength).

C. Hand function (wrist, hand and finger exercises)

7.



C. Hand function (wrist, hand and finger exercises)

8.

Vertical surfaces: windows with chalk pens;
whiteboards; hanging fabric



C. Hand function (wrist, hand and finger exercises)

8.

Vertical surfaces: upturned tables with cling film around the legs; walls with sugar paper



C. Hand function (wrist, hand and finger exercises)

9. A different strategy for poor pencil grip:

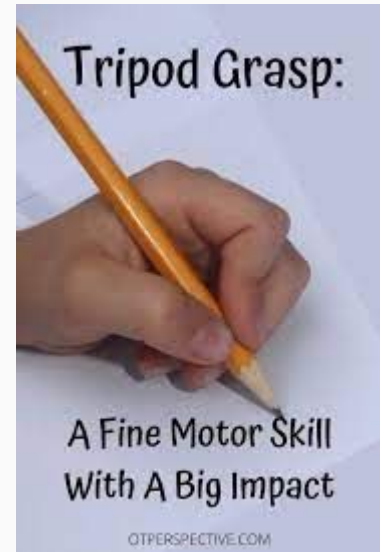
Isolate the 'tripod' fingers, by keeping the others out of the way



C. Hand function (wrist, hand and finger exercises)

9. Isolate the tripod grip by keeping the others out of the way:

- Finger ball walk
- Playdough balls
- Paper crumpling
- Lego
- writing



C. Hand function (wrist, hand and finger exercises)

9. A different strategy for poor pencil grip: For example, using just the thumb and first two fingers of the writing hand, try to make a cube/ball with playdough.



C. Hand function (wrist, hand and finger exercises)

10. Using scissors against different resistances can be useful and a great way to isolate the three “tripod fingers.”

- Fabric
- Card
- Paper
- Bubble wrap
- foam



C. Hand function (wrist, hand and finger exercises)

11. Tong and tweezer games are also useful to isolate the tripod grip.

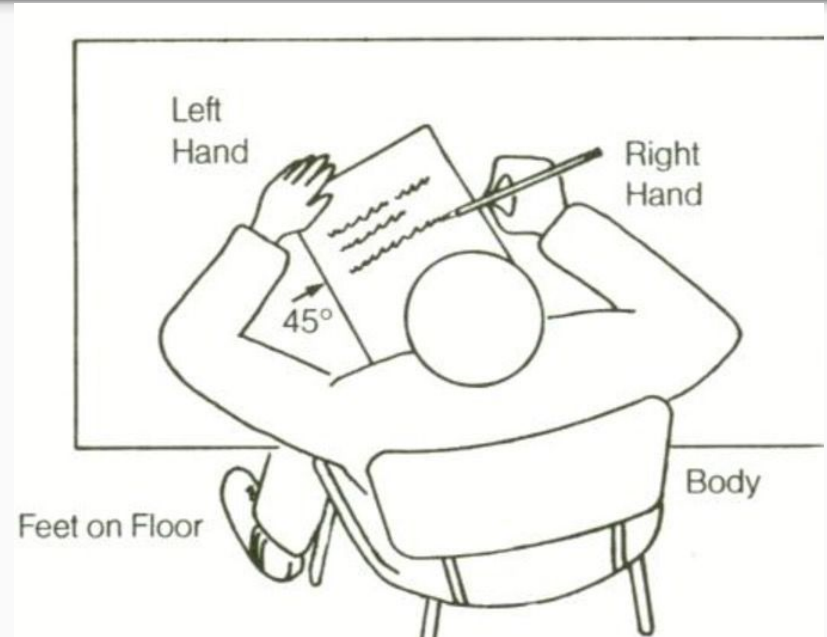
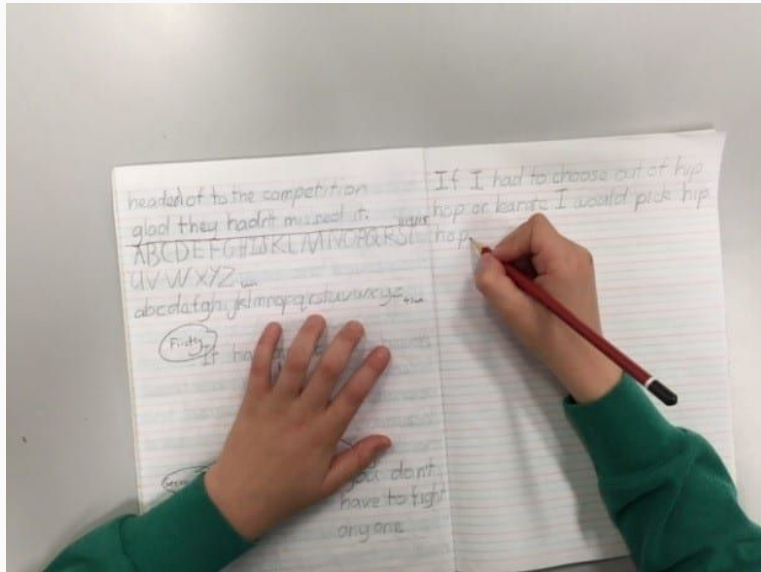


C. Hand function (wrist, hand and finger exercises)

11. Tong and tweezer games are also useful to isolate the tripod grip.



Ensure correct posture and positioning



Ensure correct posture and positioning

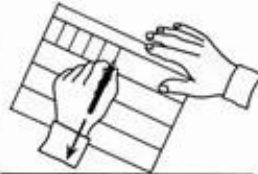
GOOD POSTURE

1. Both feet on the floor
2. Elbows off edge of desk
3. Sit back in the chair
4. Shoulders slightly forward
5. Proper desk height

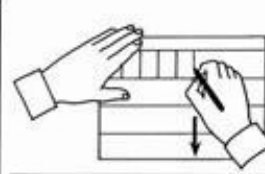


GOOD HANDWRITING

PAPER POSITION



LEFT
HANDED



RIGHT
HANDED

PENCIL POSITION

LEFT
HANDED



RIGHT
HANDED



Pencil grip development by age

