




Top Tips for Increasing Hand and Finger Strength Primary School

Hand and finger strength is important for many everyday activities. The following activities can help to develop your hand strength. Start with activities you can do easily and gradually try activities that are more challenging.

Everyday Activities	
  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During bath-time squeeze water out of a face cloth, or play with water toys that require squeezing. • Squeeze out a sponge before wiping down the kitchen table or bench. • Use a spray bottle to water plants. • Get dressed and undressed by yourself. • Carry shopping bags. • Cooking – mixing, sifting, kneading or use a rolling pin or cutters. • Peel and cut up fruit or vegetables. Start with easier to cut foods such as bananas or cucumbers and build up to harder foods such as carrots or potatoes. • Grate cheese or carrots. • Make toast or sandwiches – open jars of jam or peanut butter and use a knife for spreading and cutting. • Use a knife and fork to cut up food at mealtimes. Start with easier to cut foods such as potatoes or sausages and gradually build up to harder foods such as a steak. • Squeeze juice from an orange or lemon. • Pour milk, water or cordial from a container to a cup. • Scooping ice-cream. • Turning taps on and off.

Fine Motor Activities



- Play with Playdoh, biscuit dough or exercise putty –knead, squeeze, roll, cut out using cutters, squeeze Playdoh through a garlic crusher.
- Make as many Playdoh sausages as you can in one minute. Then cut up the sausages with scissors or a plastic knife.
- Pop beads, Duplo or construction sets can be pulled apart and pushed together.
- Squeeze soft balls (or squeeze toys) – squeeze 10 times or as many times as you can in one minute to make it fun. Progress to using firmer rubber balls as strength increases.
- Newspaper scrunch – scrunch up sheets of newspaper into balls. Once a few balls have been made throw them into a bin or at a target.
- Tong relay – pick up small toys or objects with a pair of tongs and run and place them in a container. Time your child and see if he can do it quicker next time.
- Hammering activities.
- Hold and use a stapler and hole punch for art and craft projects such as making paper chains or a book. Use thicker paper or cardboard to increase the strength demands.
- Take lids on and off jars that are filled with fun objects such as stickers, stars, small plastic animals or bugs.
- Sharpen a packet of colouring pencils
- Sticky tape escape: a piece of sticky tape is wrapped around the middle and index fingers. The child should be encouraged to remove the sticky tape without using their hands (you can also use a rubber hand)
- Thumb Wrestles: have thumb wrestles rounds to see who has the strongest thumb and who can hold the other person's thumb down for a count of 3.

Gross Motor and Outdoor Activities



- Play tug of war using a dressing gown cord or twist a towel to make a rope. (This activity requires supervision).
- Carry toolboxes, bags or buckets with water or sand.
- Climb monkey bars, ladders or hang on a trapeze swing.
- Play in a sandpit or garden using spades, rakes and other digging tools.
- Squeeze out a sponge to help wash the car, play cubby house or outdoor toys such as balls, bats and bikes.
- Woodwork activities – hammering, sawing, sanding.
- Ride a bike or scooter.
- Cricket, tennis and other bat and ball games.
- Stand opposite your child and place the palms of your hands against your child's hands. Try pushing each other over.
- Fly a kite on a windy day.