



HAND & FINGER STRENGTHENING

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Adequate hand strength is required to complete fine motor tasks within the classroom setting. To strengthen the small muscles of the hand, encourage students to participate in activities such as:

Playdough/Putty:

- Pull, stretch, and flatten. Make a pancake, then have the student put all his fingers on the playdough and spread fingers as far apart as possible
- With straight fingers try to pull the playdough into a pile in the centre (under the palm)
- Provide a large ball of playdough and have the student make small balls of playdough using their fingertips of one hand only
- Search for, then hide small items in putty
- Roll and pinch putty

Crumpling paper. Use one hand to crumple paper into a small ball. Toss into basket or recycle bin to score!

Clothes pegs:

- Place clothes pegs around a container. Using only the thumb and one finger (alternate) to remove the pegs and put them in the container.
- Have student hold container lid or paper plate with one hand and place clothes pegs alongside of lid/plate

Tug of war with small objects such as erasers, short rulers, and/or emery boards.

Finger pull. Partners form hand-circles by touching thumb and index fingertips. One person opens circle to interlock fingers with the other circle. Partners pull hands away from each other, attempting to maintain a closed circle. Whoever opens their fingers and allows the other to pull through loses the match.

Tiddlywinks. Shoot plastic discs towards goal by pushing down on the disk with another disk, held in a fine pinch.



Cotton ball or Table-tennis Ball Race: Use bulb-type nasal aspirators or turkey baster to blow balls across the finish line. Vary bulb resistance and line distance to modify strength requirement.

Bedbugs®, a commonly available game. Pick up plastic bugs with tweezer-like tongs as quickly as possible.

Jars/Lids. Have the student grip the lids to screw them on and take them off. The amount of resistance can be adjusted so that greater strength is required to remove the lids; or the student can be asked to screw the lid on tighter. If a student is unable to open a jar, loosen it slightly and let the student try again.

Nuts & Bolts. Use fingers to tighten and loosen nuts and bolts.

Wring out Sponges. Encourage students to wring out sponges or dishcloths and wipe tables before/after snack and lunch.

Towel Pull. Mark a center line, using tape or chalk. Partners grip opposite ends of the towel and try to pull each other across the line.

Foam Ball Squeeze. Hold a ball in one hand and try to squeeze it out of sight in one hand.

Stretch elastics of varying sizes around pegs on a pegboard to make different shapes. Decrease length or increase width of bands to provide greater resistance as strength improves.

Collages. Rip paper to make collages or papier-maché. Progress from tissue paper to medium weight to thicker construction paper.

Squeeze clothespins and spring-loaded paper clips to pick up cotton balls or small objects, then squeeze again to release them into a container. Use different-sized clips and clothespins. To **increase resistance**, place rubber bands around clothespins to make opening more difficult.

