

Occupational Therapy

Handwriting - The basics

Aniesa Blore



Basic Hand Warm-Ups

Try and do each warm-up ten times.

If it's tricky to do one warm-up with both hands at the same time, then just do the warm-up activity one hand at a time.

1. Hands open and closed
2. Interlocking finger squeezes
3. Finger pulls
4. Finger taps on table
5. Finger taps on thumbs
6. Finger and thumb pulls and squeezes
7. Finger separations



Sit up straight

- How we sit is important as it gives us a stable foundation to use our arms, hands and head.
- Feet - flat on the floor or on a box.
- Bottom - back of the chair.
- Hips, knees and ankles all at 90° (right angles).
- Back - against the chair back.
- No slouching forward or resting on the table or holding our head up with our hands.
- Our stomachs should be touching the table edge.



Your table

- Your table should be not too high and not too low.
- Your shoulders must not be scrunched up to your ears.
- Try to use a sturdy stable table rather than one that wobbles.
- Pull your stomach towards the table but make sure you have enough space to breathe!



Paper placement

- Our paper should be placed on the table so that we can see where our pencil is going and so our arm can move well across the page as we work.
- The paper should be tilted in line with our writing arm.
 - If you are left handed it should be tilted slightly more so you don't smudge your work.
- Place your paper in line with the centre of your body - ask an adult to show you what this looks like.
- Hold the paper still with your other hand when you write. This stops the paper from slipping all over the place.



Holding the pencil

- The best way to hold a pencil is in a tripod grip.
 - This is when we use just the tips of our thumb, first and middle fingers on the pencil with a wide open space where the pencil sits. It is also OK to use our ring finger to help out with this.
- To remind you, you could place little stickers or bits of blu tac onto the right spots on the pencil.
- Some people find a special pencil grip helpful to add onto the pencil. This reminds you where to put your fingers.
- A good way to practise is to break off a tiny bit of crayon and do some drawing with that small piece, because it's so small you **have** to hold it in that ideal tripod grip!



Writing sample

- Once you have got yourself sitting in the right position, place your paper correctly and, holding your pencil correctly, write the sentence on the following page.
- Don't worry about writing the sentence fast. Instead, go slowly and carefully.
- Take a moment afterwards to think about how it felt writing.
- It will probably feel a little different or weird as you aren't used to it but the more you practise the quicker it will become normal to you.



Sentence to copy

The quick brown fox jumps over
the lazy squirrel by the oak tree.





Checklist

- We have gone over quite a few things and there is a lot to remember.
- To help you remember all of this, make yourself a checklist.
- This will be so you can look over it and tick off all the things you need to do before you start writing.
- If you can, ask an adult to help you laminate the page so you can wipe it clean to reuse it. Otherwise you could rub out your pencil ticks or just tick them off in your head.

