

Occupational Therapy

Handwriting - Developing your pencil grip

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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



Activity 1 – Tweezers

- Stronger hands can also keep writing for longer.
- Sit at a table with small toys placed to one side of you and a box or basket to put them in on the other side.
- Take the tweezers in your writing hand and, one at a time, take the toys and place them into the box or basket. Practise with your other hand too.
- Try to hold the tweezers using just your thumb on one side of the tweezers and your first two fingers on the other side.
- Use tweezers with some good resistance to them. You want your muscles to have to work! So really-easy-to-squeeze-tweezers are not very good.



Activity 2 – Broken chalk or crayon

1. If we use a very small pencil to write with, we have no choice but to use the ideal grip!
2. Ask an adult to break off the end of a bit of chalk or crayon so it is about 1-2 cm long.
3. You can then spend some time drawing or writing whatever you want on some paper or a chalkboard.
4. As you do so, think about how it feels.



Activity 3 – Playdough treasure hunt

1. This is another fun way to get our hands stronger to help hold a pencil better.
2. Ask an adult to hide some small toys in a large amount of playdough. These should be small toys like little beads ideally.
3. You can then dig through and pull apart the playdough to find these toys.
4. Once you have found them all, you can hide them for next time. Poke holes into the playdough with your pointer finger then push in the toy.
5. For a bigger challenge you can use therapy putty. This is tougher but good for getting strong hands.



Accommodations and alternatives

1. You can use easier tweezers or larger toys until you get better at holding onto and moving these.
2. If your hand gets tired quickly, try using all fingers on the tweezers until that becomes easy.
3. You can get little pencil grips to add onto your pencil that also help remind you of a better way to hold onto it. Practise drawing or colouring with these until your brain gets used to it and you're automatically using the best pencil grip.

