

What is Finger Gym?

- Series of exercises and activities that encourage the muscles to develop in the dominant wrist, hand and fingers.
- Designed to support development of pencil control to be able to form letters and numbers for writing.
- Also encourages attention skills and concentration levels.

Warm up



- Put your forearm on the table.
- Start with your fingers bent, then slowly straighten your fingers until your hand is flat on the table.
- Scrunch up fingers again and squeeze tightly.



- Put your elbow on the desk.
- Put your thumb on each finger tip in turn.



- Place the palm of your hand flat on the table.
- Spread your fingers out slowly, then bring them back together.

These warm up activities can be repeated several times

Bottle and Pasta



Step 1

- Unscrew the bottle using the thumb and first finger.



Step 2

- Carefully tip out the pasta/beans onto the table.



Step 3

- Pick up the pasta/beans one by one and using pincer grip (thumb and first finger) and post the pasta/beans into the bottle.



Step 4

- Using pincer grip again, screw the bottle top back onto the bottle.

It is fine to repeat the activity a few times.

Scrunching Paper



Step 1

- Scrunch up the ball as tight as they can using both hands to make a small paper ball (make up to 5).



Step 2

- Place one ball on the table and encourage your child to blow the ball across the table. Can they blow hard so it falls off the table?
- Once all 5 are blown, they can retrieve them and try again.



Try this

- Encourage your child to flick the paper across the table instead of blowing. Make sure they are flicking the paper and not pushing with their hands. This can be tricky for children to master.

Simple 'on the spot' activities

These activities are very simple and can be done with household objects and on the spot i.e during a time when your child may be focused and/or is interested in an object, you could seize the moment and work on their fine motor skills!

Pegs!



- When you are outside/inside putting up clothes, encourage your child to pick up the clothes pegs and if they can, attach them onto some clothes.
- They could even go around the house and try to attach the pegs onto different items like tea towels/ bed spread/coats etc. To extend them, you could give them instructions e.g. put peg on towel or even put red peg on towel.

Cookie/sandwich cutters!

-If you have any cookie or sandwich cutters at home, you could do a little cooking with your child: They could help during the actual process of making the food like handing you items and/or they could simply just use the cutters to make the shapes. This works well with playdough too!

-Ensure that they are pushing down hard enough for the cutters to work (please assist your child as cutters can be dangerous especially metal ones!)





Colanders

-If you have any pipe cleaners/ spaghetti at home, it would be great for your child to try to use colanders and similar items (i.e. ones with the same sized holes) to thread the pipe cleaners/spaghetti through.

To extend:

-You could give them instructions relating to the colour of the pipe cleaners such as “thread yellow pipe cleaner”.

-You could count with them when they are finished and take one away and add one more

-You could even set a 1 minute timer and see who threads the most pipe cleaners/spaghetti- they could verse you, their siblings, anyone!



Playdough



You could cut up some straws and help your child to use some objects like straws, toys, paperclips to make patterns/ their initials/their name, in the playdough. They just have to remember to push into the playdough so that the objects can make an imprint/do not fall down!

-If they struggle with focus, they could simply just do the activity where they are using a bunch of straws to make an imprint. (remember to adjust the activities to your child's interests and abilities)



Playdough

This is another great activity. All you need is dry spaghetti, cheerios and playdough. Your child will develop hand and eye coordination when putting each cheerio through the spaghetti. This can be linked to maths too! One:one correspondence, one more and one less or simple addition or subtraction.



Sorting/posting

-In this activity, you need an eggbox (or even just a box you can poke holes into) and some matches. Paint/colour the matches different colours and the eggbox the same colours as your matches and then poke some smallish holes into the eggbox

-Have your child try to match the eggbox and the matchsticks based on colour and post the matchsticks through the right colour!

-Feel free to simplify/adjust this activity to your child's needs e.g. by having fewer colours, big holes or even no colours (so they can just focus on the posting part rather than the sorting part of the activity)





Save the superheroes!!

-Using some of their favourite toys, like dolls or action figures and wrap some rubber bands/hair bands around them and encourage them to try to take the bands off of them.

-REMEMBER- This can be a little dangerous, so please stay with your child at all times during this activity to ensure they are safe and are not hurt by the bands!



Tape

-Tape some objects down-it could be fruit/veg, spoons, their toys etc and try to get your child to peel off the tape!

-To extend them, you could come up with a simple story like the one shown in the picture, where the carrots have been captured by the bad potato and need saving!

Crushing the cereal!

-If you have some cheerio's, cornflakes or any other smallish cereal at home and some rolling pins, try to see if your child can crush the cereal using the rolling pin (if using adult rolling pins, please make sure to watch over your child as they can be dangerous)

-Show them how to position their hands on the rolling pin and put your hands over theirs and apply the force needed to crush the cereal so they understand that they need to push down.

-If you don't want to make a mess, you can put the cereal in a ziplock, clear bag, ensuring that the children can see the cereal but it would be best for them to do the activity without a bag so they can hear it crunching too!

-Use and repeat word like role, crush, push



Christmas Activities!

- Create your own Christmas decorations and practise threading string so you can hang up your decorations.
- Make baubles using pipe cleaners.
- Make your own paper Christmas tree and stick on small decorations.
- Threading beads or other material to make your own wreaths
- Cotton wool snowmen
- Paper clip candy canes



Fill a Snowman

Build a snowman using everyday objects!

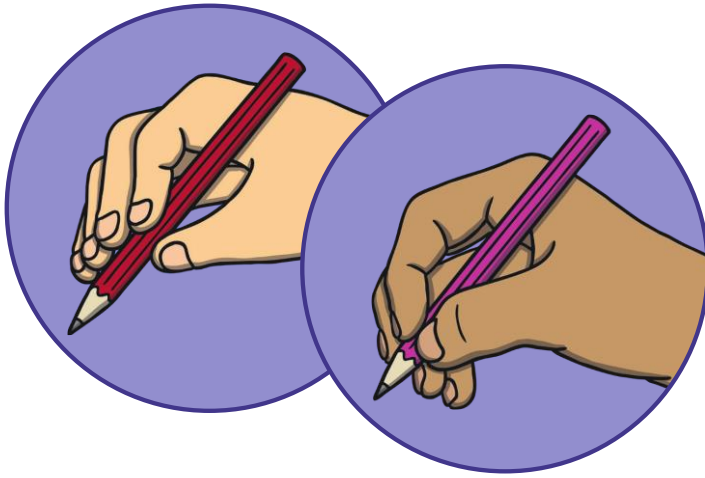


Remember to.....

- Give your child time to understand the activity –they may not get it on their first try but with consistency, they will improve and learn
- Model the activity to your child first
- Take turns with your child
- Praise your child!
- Encourage eye contact
- Simplify/adjust activities to your child's needs and interests (trial and error)
- Allow child to explore materials/activities and become familiar with what they are seeing, touching, smelling etc.
- Have a routine and try to stick to it (can pick 1 or 2 of these Finger gym activities and work on them for a few weeks or everyday)
- Don't force them into an activity (if they are frustrated or not focused, give them a break and then try again)
- Assist with activities as some materials can be dangerous e.g. rubber bands etc.
- Short and sweet-don't spend too long on activities (5 or 10 or 15 minutes is enough-can extend this if child is engaged and focused)
- Use visuals if possible e.g. when it's time for snack, show them a picture of their snack, when it's time to play a game, or read etc. show them a picture of a game or book etc.
- Have fun! :D

How to hold a pencil..

Static Tripod and Quadropod Grasp



- I am using three fingers (thumb, index finger and middle finger) together. This is called a Static Tripod Grasp.
- If I am adding a fourth finger, then this is called a Quadropod Grasp.
- The pencils movement is coming from my wrist.
- I can now copy triangles, circles and squares.

Dynamic Tripod Grasp



- I am now holding the pencil between my thumb, index finger and middle finger.
- My ring and little fingers are bent, and rest comfortably on the table.
- The pencils movement now comes from my fingertips.
- This pencil grip will help me with letter formation.

How to use scissors (please practise this with your child)..

Hold your scissors well.



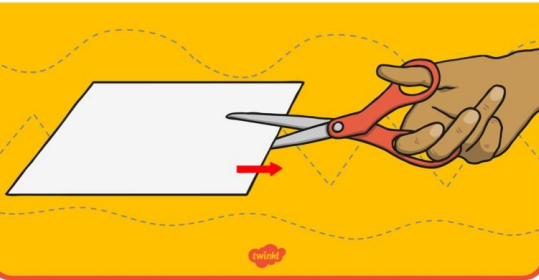
Keep your thumb up.



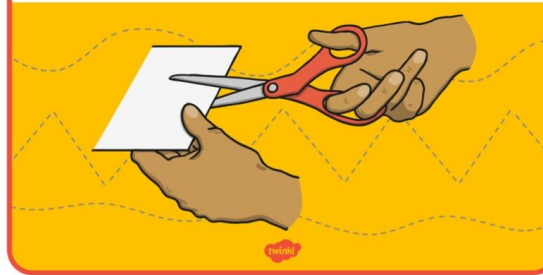
Keep the scissors moving, open and shut.



Move the paper, not the scissors.



Hold your paper tightly.



How to be safe with scissors (please practise this with your child)..

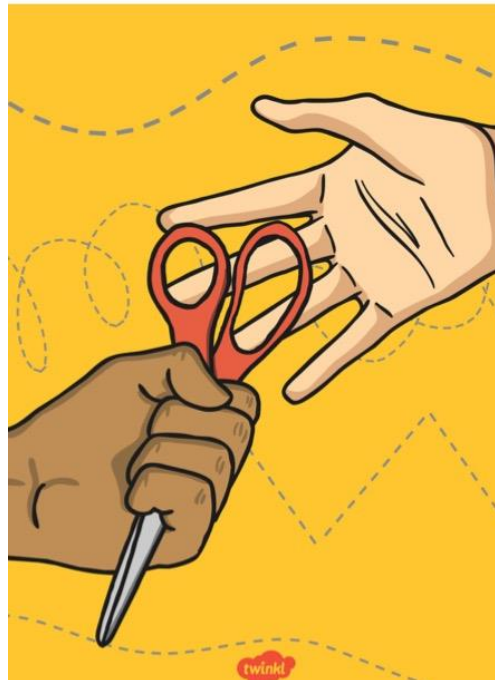
Always walk slowly when carrying scissors around.



Hold the blade down when walking with scissors.



Pass scissors handle first to your friends.



Sit down to do your cutting.

