



# FINGER GYM ACTIVITIES

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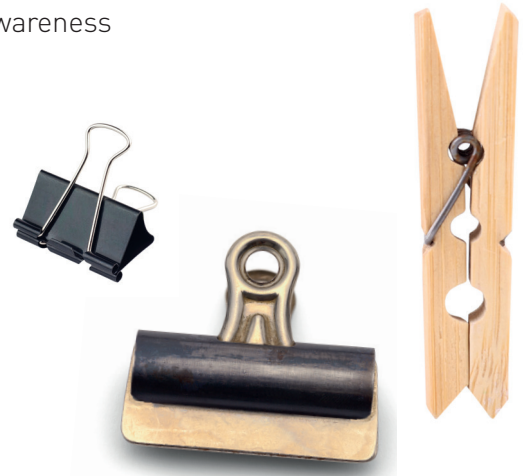
Children with fine motor difficulties will benefit from using a selection of suitable small toys and activities on a daily basis at home and school, for approximately 5 minutes at a time, at least twice a day. These activities would be focussed on building hand strength and improving manual dexterity.

Before participating in fine motor tasks, a 'warm up' routine of finger stretching, clenching fists, rubbing hands, clapping and turning wrists round and round can be beneficial. This will increase the child's body awareness and provide sensory feedback from hands.

## Suitable fine motor activities could include;

### Pegs

Use pegs of different sizes, clothes pegs, small bulldog clips, stationery clips etc. Ask the child to put the pegs of different sizes onto the sides of a gift bag or shoe box. They might put them on with their left hand and take them off with their right.



### Elastic Gymnastics

Start by putting 2 elastic bands (the same size) around the thumb, first and middle fingers, ask the child to open and close the fingers. Then add another 2 elastic bands and so on. The more you have on, the harder it is to move your fingers. These exercises help to develop the muscles which make the web space when writing.

### Beads

Use beads of different sizes and encourage the child to thread them onto their string. The smaller the hole, the harder it is to thread. This develops hand/eye coordination.





## Play Dough

This is great for squeezing and rolling which provides necessary sensory feedback and helps to develop hand strength. Ask the children to squeeze the dough and roll it with the palm of their hand. Ask them to use tools to roll it out and cut shapes. Also, they can practice pinching the play dough to help develop a pincer grip.



## Gummed Shapes

Give the child a sheet of plain paper and ask them to make patterns or pictures with the gummed shapes. Picking up a shape at a time, licking it and then sticking it down helps to develop hand/eye coordination and the pincer grip.



## Hama Beads

Hama beads are good for pincer grip and hand/eye coordination. The child can follow patterned sheets and put the pegs onto a peg board to make a pattern. If the ordinary ones are too small, a larger size is available which are easier to manage.

## Lacing Cards

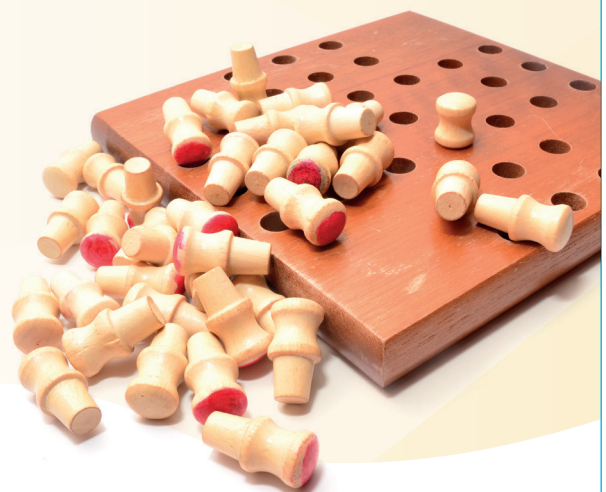
These are also good for hand/eye coordination. Give the child one card to lace and ask them to put the lace in from front to back and then back to front, rather than "over sewing" the edge.

## Peg Boards

You can use peg boards where the child has to place pegs in the holes, maybe copying patterns.

## Solitaire

Sets of this game can be played with small pegs or balls which can be challenging to pick up. It is a good game for older children.





## Tiddly Winks

Try playing the traditional game where you use one tiddly wink to propel another along. If this is too tricky, try playing with the small plastic jumping frogs instead.

## Construction Toys

Use of Lego, Stickle Bricks, Connex and Meccano toys can help develop finger strength and dexterity.

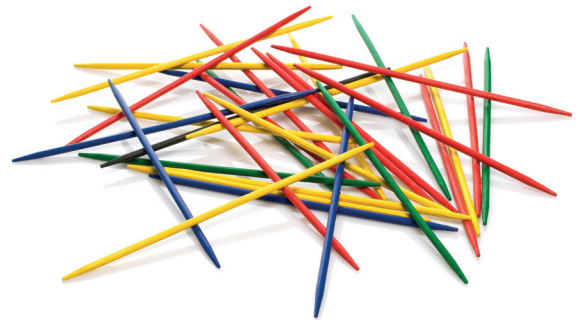


## Finger Puppets

Use of these can be good to help isolate and move fingers separately from each other.

## Games

Such as Operation, Mousetrap, Buckaroo, Pick Up Sticks are very good for finger dexterity and fine motor co-ordination.



## Pencil Activities

Ideas such as mazes, dot-to-dots, spirograph, stencils, colouring can help to develop pencil control, use of tools, bilateral hand use and spatial awareness without doing actual handwriting. Children can sometimes be more accepting of these activities rather than writing.

## Popping Bubble Wrap [use with caution/supervision]

This can be a fun game to help develop strength and a pincer grasp. The child can be encouraged to pinch the bubbles or screw the bubble wrap up to twist it between two hands. Different sizes of bubble wrap offer different levels of resistance.





## Craft Activities

Finger painting, Papier Mache, collage making and sticking/glueing helps to promote finger dexterity, separation of fingers and strength. Gradual use of these activities can also be useful for desensitizing children who have over sensitive hands.



## Scissor Activities

Cutting a fringe on the edge of thick paper or thin card, cutting around pre drawn shapes and cutting along straight and wavy lines can be good activities to develop scissor skills. If the child struggles with opening and closing standard scissors then use of Peta sprung scissors can be beneficial.

