



# Activities and Exercises for Home from your Occupational Therapist

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Incorporating fine motor activities into daily life and play time will help improve your child's hand strength, coordination, control, and thus handwriting! I recommend trying to incorporate these activities or others into play time for at least 15 minutes daily.

## Exercises:

- Mickey Mouse Ears: hold hands next to ears and open and close fingers, 10-15 times
- Table push-up: lean on table or wall, bend elbows to bring face closer to surface and then push back up, 5-10 times.
- Palm pushes: place palms together in front of chest and push hard against each other and hold for 15-20 seconds, repeat 2-3 times.
- Palm pulls: link fingers and try to pull hands apart and hold for 15-20 seconds, repeat 2-3 times.
- Making "O's": Touch each fingertip to thumb to make an "O" shape, hold it up so you can look through it, as your child gets stronger try to go faster through each finger, repeat 5 time
- Count to 10 on your fingers: make sure you raise only 1 finger at a time
- Pencil jumping jacks - count to 3 with thumb, index, and middle finger then open and close just those 3 fingers 5-10 times, repeat 2-3 times

## Fine Motor

- Learn sign language letters
- Pick up coins/marbles and drop them one by one into a jar
- Pick up small objects with a clothespin
- String small beads onto yarn or a pipe cleaner
- Cutting - various shapes and sizes and types of paper
- Tearing paper (can rip tissue paper, crumble it, and glue to paper to make a picture)
- Squeezing a sponge to fill a bucket
- Squeeze a stress ball
- Tying shoes or knots in a string
- Playing games with small pieces (Trouble, Operation, Legos, Knex, Jenga, Topple)
- Playdough
- Finger painting
- Popping bubble wrap
- Reading a book on his/her stomach (strengthens triceps/shoulders/upper back - which supports posture too)
- Coloring or drawing a picture with crayons and color some lightly and some with heavy pressure
- Do origami
- Play dot game or tic-tac-toe
- Create a rice bucket and have your child search for objects hidden in it (pennies/dimes/quarters, paperclips, keys, eraser)
- Card games, encourage your child to hold the cards in his/her hand the entire time (UNO, slapjack, Go Fish)
- Jacks
- Create designs with a single hole-puncher
- Play typing games online
- Operation
- Topple
- Jenga (works on finger isolate and motion planning)



## Visual

- Word search with age appropriate words (word wall words)
- Mazes or crossword puzzles \*you can make your own online\*
- Cutting
- Cross out activities (you can use a word search for this word and give 1-2 letters to cross out every time he/her sees that letter)
- Ball toss (with a person and tossing up in the air by themselves)
- Dot-to-dot activities
- Hidden Pictures
- Copy designs with Legos or light-bright from model
- Trace shapes with stencil
- Pop bubbles
- Draw pictures - look at a mirror or person to make sure all the body parts are there
- Color pictures

## Motor Planning

- Simon Says
- Twister
- Wheelbarrow walking
- Animal Walks
- Monkey Bars
- Yoga
- Hopscotch
- Dribbling/catching balls

## Handwriting

**To practice handwriting over the summer/school breaks, come up with meaningful ways to incorporate handwriting into everyday activities**

- Make chore lists
- Write grocery lists
- Keep a summer journal (don't forget to draw pictures!)
- Send postcards to friends/family on vacation
- If you want to work on specific letters, I recommend going in the following order
- o c, o, a, g, q, d (these are "magic c" letters! They all start by making the c motion first)
- o l, t, h, b, k (these are "magic l" letters! They all start with a straight line down first)
- o r, n, m, ("magic r" letters!)
- o j, p, y plus review g, q (letters with tails below the line)
- o v, w
- o f, x, s, z, u, i, e



## Handwriting Tips and Reminders

- Finger spaces between words
- No floating letters (all letters should touch the bottom line)
- Don't press too hard or light (if difficult to erase fully – too heavy!)
- Don't hold too close to the tip of the pencil where you can't see what you're writing
- Practice writing letters on various surfaces (carpet, wall, skywriting, shaving cream on a wall or kitchen counter)

## iPad Apps:

- Zaner-Bloser (\$0.99) - handwriting
- Flow Free - fine motor precision, visual tracking, visual motor skills
- Bubble Pinch - fine motor strength
- Pinch Peeps - fine motor strength
- Memory Cards - visual memory
- Ozil? - visual attention, visual scanning
- Piano free - finger isolated movement and extension
- Tap the Frog (\$1.99) – everything!
- Where's My Water? – organization/planning
- Letter School – handwriting
- Matrix – visual discrimination
- My Mosaic – fine motor/visual motor
- Memory Block (Simon) – attention, fine motor precision

## Useful Websites for Tips and Activity Ideas

- <http://www.pts-inc.net/> (scroll to bottom of page for Parent Resources section – sensory, fine motor, gross motor, and more!)
- [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com) (search fine motor play, handwriting, occupational therapy, visual motor)
- [www.worksheetfun.com](http://www.worksheetfun.com) (tracer sheets)
- [www.kidzone.ws](http://www.kidzone.ws) (custom tracer pages – great for names!) 5. [www.hwtears.com](http://www.hwtears.com) (worksheet maker, books you can order)
- [www.otplan.com](http://www.otplan.com) (you can pick certain areas to work on and it lists craft and activity ideas based on supplies you want to use)
- [www.mamaot.com](http://www.mamaot.com) (helpful tips and ideas from a mother/OT)