

# Occupational Therapy

## Fine Motor Skills Packet

## **SHOULDER STABILITY**

(You MUST have shoulder stability to have hand mobility!)

1. Ball Tapping: Hold a stick/baton with two hands horizontally at about shoulder height. Use the stick to gently tap a small foam ball/beach ball suspended from above or gently tossed towards the child at shoulder height.
2. Mirror arm patterns: Stand in front of the child and have them mirror your arm positions. Emphasis patterns that hold the arms parallel to the floor in different positions around the body. Hold the patterns for a count of 5 seconds.
3. Precise Pouring: Fill a spout watering can to a level that is challenging for the child without being too heavy. Have the child pour colored water from the watering can into smaller containers. Work on control of the water flow; fill the container without allowing it to overflow.
4. Sphere on a spoon carrying: Carry a round ball, marble or stone at arms length on a long handled wooden spoon. Grade the activity by placing the hand further away from the bowl of the spoon or by increasing the weight of the ball. When the activity is mastered, try it with eyes closed.
5. Rope turning: Have the child turn one end of a rope with a partner at the other end.
6. Rope jumping: Self-swing a jump rope. (Size of jump rope: when the child stands on the middle of the rope, the two ends should end in the armpits). Swinging the rope backwards is the most efficient way to work the shoulder muscles. Have the child swing the rope backwards then step over it when it hits the ground.
7. Blackboard shoulder loops: Draw rainbows on the blackboard. Make the stroke as wide and tall as the arm will reach. Try to make the chalk strokes uniform. Continue the motion with eyes closed. Or use water and a paintbrush to paint a wall or on the sidewalk.
8. Zoom ball: Zoom ball is a game with an oval ball on two ropes. Two players stand at each end and open their arms wide to send the ball sailing down the ropes to the other player.
9. Animal walks: Walk like a crab, elephant, frog, or a bear.

10. Wheelbarrow walking: Have an adult hold the child by the ankles while the child 'walks' on their hands across the room.
11. Exercise ball games: Lie on a large exercise ball and push back and forth using the hands then the feet to 'rock'. Or, lay on the ball and place one hand on the floor for stabilization and use the other hand to build a puzzle, stack blocks, or throw bean bags into a container.
12. Lay on the floor: Play with a hand held video game, a tangle or a rubics cube while lying on your back. Hold the game/toy perpendicular to the floor at eye level (arms fully extended) as you lay on the floor looking towards the ceiling.
13. Reach to work: Tape paper on a wall/door at the child's eye level. Have them color on the paper while standing and reaching. To increase the difficulty, move the paper up slightly higher to increase the reach needed to complete the activity.
14. Propped on elbows: Have the child lie on their stomach and prop up on their elbows (prone, propped on elbows position) to play with toys. Playing with cars works well in this position. Encourage the child to hold their head and shoulders up for as much of the game as possible. Initially, frequent short breaks may be needed.
15. Superman position: Have the child lay on their stomach and 'fly like superman' by lifting their head and shoulders and their feet off the floor. Their hands/arms should be off the ground and in the 'flying' position. Start with just the head and shoulders and try to add the feet as the child's ability improves. Try to increase the amount of time that the child is able to hold the position.
16. Crawling: Have the child crawl through a tunnel or a large open ended box. Play tag while crawling.

## **HAND STRENGTHENING**

1. **Squirt Bottle:** Use a squirt bottle to 'paint' the side of a building or the ground. Make spray pictures on the chalk board.
2. **Sopping Sponges:** Use a sponge to soak up water from one container and squeeze it into another container.
3. **Hammering:** Use a hammer to pound nails/pegs into cork board or Styrofoam.
4. **Animal Walks:** Do different animal walks on your hands.
  - frog jump: squat, hands in front and leap
  - bear walk: hands and feet on floor, move r foot, l arm same time
  - inchworm: feet on floor, walk hands forward as far as you can, then keep hands stable and move feet up to meet hands
  - elephant walk: lean over, hands clasped in front like elephant trunk, walk while swinging trunk
  - kangaroo jump: squat, hands beside you, rise up and jump forward, landing in start position
  - crab walk: lean back, hands on floor behind you and walk backwards
  - duck walk.: squat, hands not on floor, walk forward (waddle)
5. **Playground Equipment:** Encourage use of play equipment at recess, especially swings or monkey bars that require use of the hands for gripping.
6. **PVC Pipe:** Use PVC pipe to build structures.
7. **Stirring:** Provide opportunities for the child to help stir when baking.
8. **Play Dough:** Play with play dough or modeling clay. Use tools with the play dough.
9. **Opening Jars:** Screwing and unscrewing jar lids of different diameters.
10. **Hole Punch:** Use a hole punch. Do a hole punch art project.
11. **Tug of War:** Play tug of war with a friend.

## Developing Scissor Skills

1. Thumbs Up for Cutting: Remind the student to keep their thumbs 'pointed towards the ceiling' on both hands (scissor side AND helper side).
2. Have children cut play dough, magazines/advertisements, straws, yarn, or shredded paper, and make fringe on the edge of a piece of paper.
3. Use tongs or tweezers to pick up small objects
4. Eye dropper art: Use an eye dropper to 'paint' with colored water or play in at a water table/in the bathtub.
5. Hole punch art: cut out circles using a single hole punch. Use the circles in an art project.
6. Clothespins: Develop games using clothespins. Use a tripod grasp (thumb, index, middle fingers) to open the clothespins. For example, write a number on a small paper plate and attach the correct number of clothes pins to match the number written or string a clothesline and have the student clip their work up to the line using clothespins.
7. Tape strips of paper to the wall/window so the student has to reach up to cut. This rotates the arm/wrist to the correct position for cutting. (wrist slightly extended, forearm rotated slightly upward). For younger children, tape strips of paper over edge of a table. Have the student sit on the floor and reach up to cut.
8. Scissor Skill Sequence: Learn how to hold the scissors, open and close scissors, make snips on paper, cut and advance the scissors across the paper, coordinate use of 'helper hand' to turn paper while cutting to cut out increasingly more complex lines/shapes (straight lines, zigzag lines, curved lines, wavy lines-more than one curve, shapes)

## **ROTATION: IN-HAND MANIPULATION**

1. **Pencil Twirl:** Hold a pencil like you are writing. Now turn it over to use the eraser using only your thumb, pointer and middle fingers. Twirl it clockwise. Now try it counter clockwise.
2. **Pen Top Printing:** Get a pen with a flat cap. Place clay on an easel. Use a toothpick to draw a face, letter or other shape in the clay. Hold the pen cap in a tripod grasp (pinch between the pads of the thumb and pointer finger, resting on the side of the middle finger) and press the open end into the clay and pull it out. Now flip the lid in your hand using only those same three fingers and make another mark beside the first mark with the closed end of the cap. Alternate like this all the way around the design.
3. **Q-Tip Flips:** Hold a Q-tip in the middle using a tripod grasp. Dip one end in one color then flip the Q-tip using your thumb, pointer and middle fingers and dip the other side in a different color. Draw a picture or a design by making dots of color, alternating between the two colors.
4. **Rotating Rubber Stamps:** Use a ¼ inch dowel approx. 3in long. Glue a stamp to each end. Hold the dowel in the middle with a tripod grasp. Dip one stamp in ink and stamp your paper. Now flip the dowel using just one hand and dip the other stamp in ink and stamp your paper.
5. **Turnovers:** Lay down playing cards, checkers, pennies, or buttons on the table. Place your hand in front of the first item, wrist down, and turn the item over. Move down the line, turning each item while keeping your wrist on the table. No dragging it to the edge of the table.

### **SHIFT: IN-HAND MANIPULATION**

1. **Card Shuffle and Play:** Practice shuffling and dealing cards.
2. **Clay Toothpicks:** Roll the clay into small balls. Roll the clay either between the palms OR between the fingertips of one hand (you would use the thumb, pointer and middle fingers). Build structures using the clay balls and the toothpicks.
3. **Hole Punch Art:** Draw a picture or use one from a coloring book or other source. Cut out the picture with a hole punch. Or use a hole punch to make circles with multiple colors of paper. Use the dots to “color” a picture by gluing them onto a picture template.
4. **Paper Chains:** Make paper chains using strips of paper.
5. **Straw Cut and String:** Cut a straw into 1” pieces. Hold a piece of straw with your non dominant hand between the pads of your thumb and pointer finger. Slide a piece of stiff string through the straw with your dominant hand. Keep pushing the string through with your dominant hand until it is to the end, don’t just slide the straw to the bottom.
6. **Stringing Cheerios:** Hold the Cheerio in your non dominant hand. Push a stiff string through the hole using your dominant hand. Don’t let go of the Cheerio until it is at the end of the string.

## PENCIL GRASP

1. **Dot to Dot:** Hold a marker between the thumb and pointer and middle fingers. Draw one line at a time, connecting dots. Alternate turns with a partner. Object is to make boxes, put your initial in the box and get another turn. Be sure ring and little finger are tucked into palm.
2. **Finger Print Animals:** Use a pencil to fill in a small area on a piece of paper. Use each finger individually to roll in the dark spot the press your print to the sticky side of a piece of tape. Place it on a paper and draw legs, arms, eyes etc to make animals or other designs. Use each finger at least once.
3. **Push Pin Pictures:** Place a picture from a magazine or coloring book on a carpet square or piece of cork board. Hold a push pin with your thumb, pointer and middle fingers and punch holes around the outline of the picture. Place the holes close together to cut out the picture, or place them farther apart to make a sun catcher.
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6. **Straw Wars:** Sit across the table from a partner. Place your wrist on the table and bend your hand up. Each person holds one end of a coffee stirrer straw with their thumb, pointer and middle fingers. Now pull!
7. **Water Droppers:** Place a rubber band around a clear plastic cup about an inch from the bottom. Hold an eyedropper with your thumb, pointer and middle fingers. Fill it with colored water and drop it into the empty cup. How many single drops does it take to fill the cup to the rubber band line?
8. **Wiggle Worms:** Make a worm with a pipe cleaner by wrapping it around a pencil then removing it. Glue magnetic tape or a small magnet to the bottom of your worm. Draw a maze or a path on a piece of cardboard/card stock. Glue a magnet to a piece of dowel. Hold the maze in your non dominant hand and hold the magnet with a tripod grasp underneath the maze. Place your worm on top of the magnet and take him for a walk. Make sure you keep your fingers in a tripod when holding the magnet and curl your ring and pinky fingers into your palm.