

Three Activities to Improve Your Core Strength

Crab Walk

You need

An area of floor or grass and a bean bag or soft toy.

How to do it

Get your child to sit on the ground with their hands and feet on the floor, fingers pointing behind them, raise their bottom off the floor to make a table shape. In this position get them to walk backwards, like a crab, to a destination and back again. Put a beanbag or soft toy on their tummy - make sure they keep their bottom up otherwise the toy will fall off!

As this activity is quite demanding only ask your child to go 2 to 3 metres at their first attempt, as your child's endurance increases you can increase the distance.

To add variety you can add an obstacle course or follow-my-leader to the game.



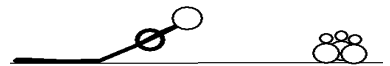
Tummy Skittles

You need

A large/medium sized ball, skittles or empty 1 litre or 2 litre plastic drinks bottles and space enough for your child to lay flat on their tummy and the skittles to be about 2 metres away.

How to do it

Get your child to lie on their stomach, lift their head up and then lift their arms above their head. Throw the ball at the skittles, then lower the body gently back to the floor, ready to throw again.



Bridge Games

You need

An area of floor or grass and some small toys to pass under the bridge such as vehicles or animals. For older children a stopwatch or clock with a seconds hand.

How to do it

Laying on their back with their knees bent and feet flat on the floor get your child to raise their bottom off the floor to form the bridge. Pass the toys under the bridge. For younger children get them to make the noise of the toys, for older children set them time challenges.

As this activity can be quite demanding start by just playing for between 30 seconds and one minute. As your child gets stronger and can play for longer why not turn it into a family competition?



Three Activities to Improve Your Balance & Coordination

Step-Ups

You need

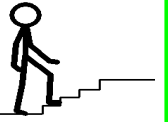
Step or bottom stair, a timer and a piece of ribbon or a sticker (optional).

How to do it

Ask your child to face the step and then step up first with the left foot followed by the right foot. Still facing the same way ask them to step down first with the left foot followed by the right foot. Repeat this a couple of times and then ask them to start with the right foot followed by the left.

Take it slow and steady to start with, as they progress you could start to see how many steps they can go up and down in a minute.

To help them to remember their left and right you could tie a ribbon or place a sticker on their right or left hand to help.



Cross Crawling

You need

Space and very little else unless you are going to set up an obstacle course.

How to do it

Ask your child to get onto all fours. Cross crawling is when your left hand moves forward at the same time as your right knee and visa versa. There are many games that can be played while crawling.

Animal Magic - Give your child an animal to mimic such as a cat, dog or tiger and ask them to really think about the speed and the way these animals would move. Then ask them to mimic something that moves slower but sways more such as an elephant or hippo. A crocodile would mean they have to crawl in a very slow, low position.

The Hero Crawl - Here the child moves like spiderman or cat woman with one hand stretched forward as far as possible and the opposite foot as far forward as possible, close to the hand on the same side.

Limbo - A broom handle can be used for this. Each time your child crawls under the bar it is lowered slightly. Eventually they will have to wriggle underneath on their tummy.



Marching

You need

Space, chalk or a marker of some kind if you are going to create a maze line.

How to do it

Marching can be turned into games or used as a timed exercise for older children. When marching the opposite arm should swing forward to the raised knee, so left arm and right knee together.

Marching Songs - Such as 'The Grand Old Duke of York' and others.

Maze Lines - Draw a mixture of straight and curved lines with chalk and ask your child to march along the line. Slowly at first so that they focus on marching skills and then this can be turned into a time trial, setting rules about how high the knees have to be raised in the march.

Sergeant Major - Marching on the spot with you giving orders. Low march (knees raised slightly), normal march (knees raised to about 90 degrees) and high march (knees raised as high as possible), left turn, right turn, about turn and face forward. For older children terms such as turn anti-clockwise and clockwise, quarter turn, half turn, turn 45 degrees or 90 degrees could be introduced. You could even use the points of the compass.



Three Activities to Improve Your Balance & Stability

Chair Push-ups

You need

A child sized chair without arms and an adult sized one with which you can demonstrate.



How to do it

Put your hands on either side of your chair and push until your bottom raises off the chair. Hold for a count of five. Ask your child to copy you!

If this is too easy ask your child to lift their feet off the floor and hold them off while raising their bottom and hold for a count of five.

A great exercise to do before writing.

Statues

You need

Space and music.



How to do it

The aim of the game is to stay as still as possible even when someone is gently pushing, trying to move you. As the statue you may wobble a little but try to regain your balance to keep the statue shape. Try these positions:

Hands & Knees

Starting position -as if you were about to start a running race

Kneeling

Down on one knee

Standing on one leg

One knee & hand

This could be turned into a game of musical statues, naming the position for when the music stops. This can be made more challenging by having someone be an official statue tester, who gently pushes the statues who have to work on keeping very still.

Tightrope Trail

You need

A rope 5 - 10 metres long or chalk line, bean bag or flattish small soft toy, empty large plastic drink bottles or cones, some of different heights, and a few toys of various height to sit on top of the bottles.



How to do it

Lay out the rope or draw a straight line. Ask your child to walk along it slowly and carefully. There are several games that can be played.

1. With the bean bag/soft toy balanced on their head.
2. Place the large bottles either side and equal distance apart along the route. With the bean bag on their head they have to bend and touch the top of the bottles.
3. Play the same game as 2 above but with different height bottles and with the toys balanced on top of the bottles. Your child needs to collect the toys on the way.
4. To give more interest change the shape of the course and vary the distance between the bottles.

Three Activities to Improve Your Body Awareness & Direction

Simon Says Variations

You need

Just your child.

How to do it

Play the game asking your child to touch, point or move different parts of the body. As they become confident in this game try adding in phrases that relate to left and right, such as 'Simon says touch your left knee with your right hand!'

In this version of Simon Says the idea is to help your child understand some of the language of instructions for direction and placement of themselves and objects. Use words and phrases such as: in front, next to, behind, on the left of, on the right of, on top of, under the, underneath, stand beside, inside, outside, over the top, around, turn left, turn right, straight on, backwards, forwards, reverse and opposite.

So you might say 'Simon says jump in front of the chair!' or 'Simon says put the red car inside the box!' or 'Simon says march around the coffee table!'



Model Village

You need

Toys you can use to make a location or maze. For older children you could use maps.

How to do it

Try to use items and themes that your child enjoys playing with.

Using the language for placement and direction, talk through how you are moving the toy. Then either give instruction or ask your child to give you instruction on how to get to a location in the game.

Only give one instruction at a time where possible and increase the number of instructions as their ability and confidence grows.

The language that can be developed through this kind of play is, in front, next to, behind, on the left of, on the right of, on top of, under the, underneath, stand beside, inside, outside, over the top, around, turn left, turn right, straight on, backwards, forwards, reverse and opposite.



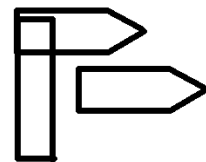
Journey Sticks

You need

A stick about 50 - 60 cm long, sticky labels or pieces of paper about 8 cm long and 4 cm wide, sellotape and pens/pencils.

How to do it

This is a great outdoor activity at any time of the year. Pick a start point; it could be your front door. At this point on one of the labels ask your child to write one or two words/draw a picture or symbol that will remind them later which direction they went. This is then wrapped around and stuck to the top or bottom of the stick. At the next point, which does not have to be very close to the first ask your child to complete another label which is attached to the stick next to the last one. This continues throughout your journey. The pictures may show things that caught their attention for instance a pile of rubbish that shouldn't have been there which you may have discussed, an unusual tree or car or perhaps someone's dog or a friend's house. The idea is not to write detailed notes but put down memory joggers so that once at home they can talk through the changes in direction of the journey. They could also draw a map of the journey.



Three Activities to Improve Crossing the Mid-line

Lazy 8

You need

Ribbon or streamer, chalk, wall or chalk board (all are optional).

How to do it

Using "Lazy-8"s has long been a popular way of getting a child to cross the mid-line. These can be performed in mid air, it is important to make sure your child keeps both feet on the floor and shoulders facing forward and does not twist the body. These big arm movements should cross in front of the body and back again. Using ribbons or streamers is just more fun. Encourage them to follow their arm movements with their eyes rather than moving their head.

Once they are happy to draw a lazy 8 in the air move to drawing them large on a wall or chalk board. Another way would be to hang up a piece of newspaper for them to paint or use pens on to do the same thing. The non-writing hand needs to be placed against the wall, this will help prevent your child from twisting their body around so that they do not have to cross the mid-line point.



Cross Pass Ball

You need

A ball that can be held in both hands.

How to do it

Ask your child to hold the ball with both hands out in front of them. The aim of the activity is to move the ball from one side to the other so that both hands cross the mid-line. There are various activities that can be done to help achieve this.

Get your child to stand with their back against a wall and hold the ball in both hands out in front of them. They then have to try and hit the wall either side of their body while holding on to the ball with both hands. They must keep their back as flat against the wall as possible. The larger the ball the easier it will be, especially for younger children.



Messy Mid-line Games

You need

Plastic squeeze bottle or water pistol, chalk, cardboard tubes, bath foam or shaving foam.

How to do it

Draw a range of shapes, well spread (different colours if possible so that each colour is worth a certain number of points), on a wall or path/patio.

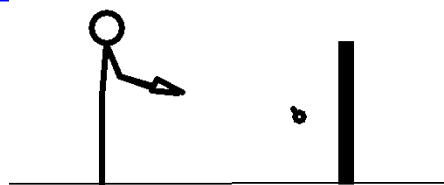
Mark up a shooter placement (an outline of feet position is always helpful) on which your child stands and is not allowed to move from during the game.

Try to encourage them to keep their body facing forward and to move their arms only.

Fill the squeeze bottle with water, they have to hold the bottle with both hands.

They score points for each shape they hit or wash away.

This could also be played where your child knocks lightweight items such as kitchen roll inner tubes off a low wall.



Three Activities to Improve Your Coordination & Ball Skills

Bubble & Flashlight Tag

You need

Bottle of bubbles, torch, timer & dark room.

How to do it

Hand and eye coordination requires your child to be able to follow an object with their eyes (tracking).

Bubble popping- try not to blow too many bubbles at a time, encourage your child to follow the bubble with their eyes taking their time before they pop the bubble with their middle finger. If they are finding this difficult then you could use a paint brush to start with. As their accuracy and speed grow more bubbles can be blown at a time. To make it more fun see how many can be popped in a set time—say 1 minute.

Flashlight tag- a darkish room is needed for this game as it requires the light from the torch to create circles of light on a wall. Your child needs to tag the light circle before it moves or disappears. Start off slowly and encourage your child to step back from the wall once a light circle has been tagged.



Keep it in the air

You need

Balloon or beach ball.

How to do it

The idea is to keep the balloon/beach ball in the air for as many hits as possible.

It is important to explain to your child the skills needed for the activity so they begin to learn that catching and throwing are not about luck but a skill base.

Tell them that to be able to keep hitting the balloon in the air they will have to keep their eyes on it and NOT their hands. This can be tricky at first but the game is such good fun they will not mind.

Try it using both hand and then only one but don't forget to try both left and then right hand.



Goal Post Skittles

You need

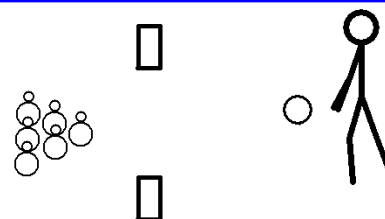
Posts/marker, large plastic drink bottles/skittles and a range of ball sizes.

How to do it

Place the posts about 2 metres away from the start position and about half a metre apart. Place the skittles about half a metre behind the posts but directly between them. Your child starts by rolling a large ball through the posts to knock the skittles over. Before they roll the ball explain to get a maximum score they need to knock all the skittles over in one roll and that the best way to do this is to look directly ahead through the post at the skittles, NOT at the ball or their hand.

It may take a little practise, as they improve they can use a different size ball or move the skittles so that they form different patterns which means they have to be more accurate with the roll.

This game can also be used as a foot and eye activity, the same rules apply, they must look to where they want the ball to end up not at their feet or the ball, tricky!



Three Activities to Improve Your Tactile Perception Skills

Feely Bag Games

You need

Non-see through bag, selection of toys and pictures, or second set of toys being used.

How to do it

Before you start the game let your child feel the objects you are going to use. Talk together about them.

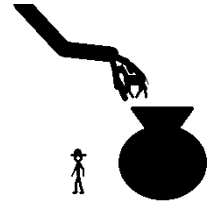
Put one set of the toys (e.g. shapes) in the bag and place the other set on the table for the child to look at. Before you start make sure your child knows the basic properties of the toys they will be looking for. Your child should use both hands to manipulate the toy.

Handbag Hunt Level One

In this activity, your child puts their hands in (both hands if possible, but if not, then use the dominant hand), picks up an object, feels it, identifies it and pulls it out to check only AFTER identifying it. If correct, your child gets to "keep" it, if wrong, you get to "keep" it. The winner is the one with the most animals/shapes at the end.

Handbag Hunt Level Two

Ask your child to find a specific object. This is usually harder as it involves your child identifying and discarding possibilities before deciding on the one that feels right.



Grocery Hunt

You need

Grocery bag and a few unopened packets of non-perishables e.g. rice.

How to do it

First make sure your child knows the names of all the groceries and has felt the packets and has an understanding of how they are different from one another.

Put the items inside a grocery bag. Ask your child to put both hands into the bag, feel a packet and tell you which item it is.

After "guessing", let your child pull it out to see if it's correct. If correct, your child gets to "keep" it, if wrong, you get to "keep" it.

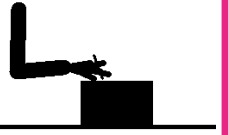
See who has the most items at the end of the game.



What's the Fabric/Material?

You need

A range of different fabric and material types which are safe for your child to touch and feel, a feely bag or box.



How to do it

With your child, hold the fabric or material in your hands so that you can both touch it while you talk about how it feels e.g. is it cold, smooth, fluffy, warm, soft or hard. Then ask your child to tell you how the material feels. Encourage the use of different language to describe the various materials, such as a piece of fabric may be soft and furry while another is soft and silky.

Once your child is happy with this try putting the fabric into a feely bag, without them seeing, and ask them to put their hands in and describe the material without seeing it. Can they tell you what it is?

If your child is fearful of any items, have them play with them in a less threatening way. For example, they can use your hands to start touching it or they can push toy cars or plastic animals through it etc.

Helpful tips:

Introduce new sensory stimuli slowly and gradually.

DO NOT FORCE your child to touch things which cause a significant fearful response.

Prepare your child, let them know what you are doing ahead of time and while engaged in the activity.

Allow your child to experience sensations when they are ready. You CAN encourage it and creatively find a way to get them to do it.

Let your child know you understand and accept what they are feeling!

Be patient, allow extra time, ask your child what is making them feel anxious, sad, angry etc. Give them words to use to express their feelings and emotions.

Three Activities to Improve Your Tactile Defensive Skills

Messy Play

You need

Things with different textures as well as wet, dry, sticky things and a bowl of water and towel to clean hands if required.

How to do it

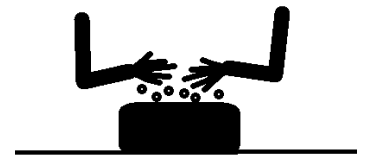
If your child is fearful of any material have them play with it in a less threatening way. For example, they can use your hands to start touching it, they can put objects in or out of the "messy" materials, or they can push toy cars or plastic animals through it etc.

After they begin to feel safe, slowly encourage them to try other fun ways which you model... splatting it, poking, pulling, rolling etc. Eventually encourage the use of the whole hand (including palm).

DO NOT FORCE your child to touch things which cause a significant fearful response.

Prepare your child, let them know what you are doing ahead of time and while engaged in the activity.

Allow your child to experience sensations when they are ready. Encourage it and creatively find a way to get them to do it.



Buried Treasure

You need

As suggestions - Sand, feathers, rice, beans, play dough, bowl and small toys.

How to do it

Hide a toy or a small number of toys in the material being used, such as sand, for your child to find. To start with have toys sit on top of the sand to build confidence then push them into the material so that only a small part of the toy is showing. This allows your child to retrieve the toy without having to put their hands completely into it. As their confidence grows push the toys further into the material until it is no longer seen. Let your child watch so that they can see where the toys have been placed. Once they are comfortable ask them to look away or close their eyes as you hide the toys so they have to search with their hands. Try to encourage them to put in both hands (including the palms). If they are reluctant to try this stage, ask them to hide the toys and you demonstrate the search and find part of the game.



Cooking

You need

A recipe that requires mixing with hands and kneading such as those that need pastry, pizza dough or bread making.

How to do it

Any form of cooking that requires your child to use their hands is great. Making pizza provides an additional tactile experience when handling the toppings; just be sure hands are clean.



Three Activities to Improve Your Tactile Pressure Skills

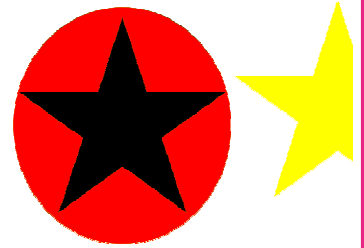
Imprint

You need

Play dough, plasticine or clay, cookie/pastry cutters or imprint tools.

How to do it

Using tools such as cookie cutters talk through and show your child how the cutters work when you only use a small amount of pressure (it does not cut through the play dough, just leaves a mark). As you use a greater amount of pressure discuss how far the cutter goes through the dough and how the cutter feels against your hand/finger. Ask your child to do the same thing and help them to talk through the experience making them more aware of how the tools feel in their hand and fingers and what the rest of the body is doing to help them mark or cut through the play dough. Talk through how the cutter makes shallow cuts when pressed gently and deeper cuts when pressed hard and that they will cut all the way through if the right amount of



Printing

You need

Paint, printing ink /pads, print pens, odd objects to print with such as cotton reels, sticks and pencil ends, leaves, small toys such as lego or you could make your own print stamps with vegetables, bought printing stamps and different types of paper.

How to do it

Printing can be great fun, creating patterns or pictures. This artwork can be used to make cards or wrapping paper which friends and family will always be pleased to receive.

Tips:

- It is important to have enough paint on the stamp, however if it is too thick it will not give a good print and become a little splodgy.
- Try not to wriggle the stamp around while it is on the paper as this will smudge the print.
- When lifting the stamp up off the paper the paper can sometimes lift as well, try taping or blue-tacing the corners down to help prevent this.
- If you are going to stamp over the top of a paint print then it is best to let the first layer dry.
- Stamp pens can be used to mark off calendars or other timetables to give daily practice.



How Thick Can You Go?

You need

Carbon copy paper, paper, pencils, tracing paper.

How to do it

Sandwich the carbon paper between two pieces of paper (make sure that the shiny side of the carbon paper is against the top piece of paper) and then draw or write on the top piece of paper. Then check the bottom sheet, has the drawing or words been copied?

If your child has not been able to create a copy then continue to practise with just two pieces of paper. When they have mastered this then, to help your child improve and develop more of an understanding of how they implement pressure, you could add thicker paper or more sheets.

If your child has created a very dark copy or has heavily indented the top piece of paper, try using several sheets to start with so that the copy is fainter to suggest a more appropriate pressure has been used to show your child the colour copy to be achieved. Then take away a sheet of the top paper as they learn to adjust the pressure being used. Eventually they will get down to one sheet of paper on top of the carbon paper.

Tracing

This can also help build a child's understanding of how much pressure is required. Using tracing paper ask your child to trace a simple shape or picture. Then turn the tracing paper over onto another piece of paper. Draw over the lines that show through the tracing paper, quite a bit of pressure is needed for this. When the tracing paper is lifted a copy of the shape or picture will be left on the paper.

If your child is pressing too hard and tearing the tracing paper try doubling it over, you will however have to use quite a bold colour shape or picture underneath for them to be able to see it. As your child's understanding of how much pressure is needed to achieve the best results for the task, reduce the thickness of the tracing paper.



Three Activities to Improve Your Hand Strength Skills

Hole / Thumb Punch

You need

A variety of paper types and a single hole punch.

How to do it

Start with thinner straight edged paper, ask your child to hold the paper in one hand and the single hole punch in the other. The hole punch needs to be held between their thumb and fingers, with the thumb on top of the hole punch supported underneath by the fingers, NOT on the table. The palm of the hand needs to be facing upwards NOT down towards the table. The paper should also be held and manipulated (moved) in the same way with the thumb on top of the paper and the fingers underneath supporting the paper.

Punch a line of holes along one side of the paper and then swap and use the hole punch in the other hand along another side of the paper. This activity can be made into a time challenge task. How many holes can they make in a minute?

Gradually introduce different 'thickness' of paper to increase the level of challenge.



Clothes Pegs

You need

A range of pegs and bulldog clips, string or washing line, an odd selection of clothes and a timer.

How to do it

Start off with pegs or clips that your child can manage fairly easily, using more challenging ones as their hand strength improves.

Encourage your child to place the pegs/clips onto different thickness of materials and positions, such as : around the top of a box, up the edge of a curtain, on their jumper or top, or around pieces of card of different 'thickness' and shape (circles, flowers, stars).

Alternate the hands being used to develop strength in both hands. Also vary the fingers used in the pincer grip for pegging/clipping. Start with thumb and index finger, as your child's strength improves use each finger in turn to squeeze the peg/clip open.



Squirter Activities

You need

A water squirting bath toy, a variety of paper types, blu tac, straws and coins.

How to do it

The squirter is used without water, it is the puffs of air that can be created when these toys are squeezed which is important. All sorts of racing games can be created to encourage your child to squeeze the toys helping to develop hand strength.

Fish Racing- cut out fish shapes in different types of paper, curl the tails slightly as this will help the fish move along the table/floor when the air is blown behind it rather than it being pinned to the table. Start with small paper fish with curled tails and then move to larger, heavier ones.

Bath Time/ Outdoor Fun- These toys can be used as intended as water squirters for target games and pattern drawing in the bath or outside.



Three Activities to Improve Your Individual Finger Strength

Marbles

You need

Marbles or small plastic balls, targets, cardboard tube, plastic cups.

How to do it

Using a finger-thumb flick, the nail of the index or middle finger pressed against the thumb pad, start by flicking the marble across the table/floor. Then try to use the other fingers to flick the marble, not forgetting to try with the other hand as well. If your child is finding the marbles too heavy or small then change to small plastic balls or pin pong balls or scrunched up pieces of paper or even cotton wool balls.

Shooting Range- the range can be set up in a number of ways, for instance, different size paper or plastic plates/cups could be propped up as targets, the smaller the target the more points they are worth. Another idea is to use cardboard tubes numbered and set out at different distances, the further away the target, the greater the points earned.

Marble Alley- can be bought or you can make your own.



Finger Football

You need

Football pitch A3 size and variety of small balls.

How to do it

Start by flicking the ball across the table/floor as far as possible using the index or middle finger. The kicking finger needs to work independently from the rest of the hand. This will be made easier if the tips of the other fingers are resting on the surface, giving greater support and stability to the hand. Then repeat with the opposite hand.

If your child is finding it hard to isolate one finger then adapt the flick to a two finger flick. Then move to a flick with the nail of the index or middle finger pressed against the thumb pad.

A more challenging position is to hold the hand above the surface and curl the thumb and other fingers into the palm leaving the kicking finger free.

Use softer lighter balls to start with then move to heavier ones.



Three Activities to Improve Your Individual Finger Strength

Finger Escape

You need

Sellotape or masking tape

How to do it

Ask your child to hold two fingers together, for instance index and middle finger. Then gently wrap sellotape a couple of times around the top of the fingers. The aim is to get the sellotape (masking tape is easier to start with) off the fingers only using the fingers and thumb from the same hand on which the fingers have been taped.

This is a hard activity to do and can make the fingers ache a little, so start off by making the sellotape looser so that it is easier to remove, gradually make it a little firmer so that the task becomes more challenging. Remember not to wrap it too tight so that it affects the blood circulation to the tips of the fingers.

Try taping different pairs of fingers together and also using the other hand, building strength in both hands.



Three Activities to Improve Your In-hand Manipulation Skills

Pinch Pots

You need

Play dough, plasticine or air drying clay.

How to do it

Ask your child to roll the clay into a palm size ball and hold it in the palm of their hand. Next get them to stick their thumb of the other hand into the middle of the ball and use two finger (usually the index and middle fingers) on the outside of the ball to help pinch the ball into a pot shape.

Move the thumb and fingers around the edge of the ball as well as slowly moving the ball/pot around in the palm of the hand until the pot has been made. Try making them with the ball of dough/clay held in the palm of the other hand.



Egg Box Share

You need

The bottom section of an egg box and dried beans / peas or beads.

How to do it

Using the egg box as the catching container ask your child to hold a number of small dried beans in the palm of one hand. Then ask them to place one bean at a time into each of the cups of the egg box. They will need to have their palm and curled fingers facing upwards. Then use their thumb to help roll each bean up from the palm of the hand to drop into the each egg cup.

Start off using a 6 space egg box and 1 bean per egg space, so they hold 6 beans at the start. Gradually get them to hold more in their hands and see how many they can place in the holders. This can be played as a time or number challenge, 'how many beans can they place in one minute' or 'how many beans can they hold and place in the holders without dropping any'. Remember it is important to do one bean at a time!



Posting Frenzy

You need

Money box or container with a slot cut into the lid, cardboard box, money, paper clips anything that can be posted through the slot and a timer.

How to do it

Time Trials- Pick up one object at a time and post through the slot, 'How many can you post in minute?' Change the size and angle of the slot to make it more challenging.

Double Post- You can use the side of a cardboard box for this activity. Cut a slot an appropriate size in the card, depending on your child's ability you or your child holds the card in one hand and posts through 5/10 objects with the other hand. Once they have been posted they have to move around to the other side of the card where the posted object now lay and post them back using the opposite hand to before. This is a timed activity, 'Who is the fastest double post master?'



Three Activities to Improve Your Arch of Hands & Grip Release

Wheelbarrow Races

You need

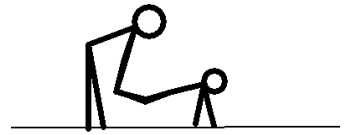
Just yourselves.

How to do it

Take it slowly and steadily to begin with. Your child may only be able to hold the position at first or manage one or two hand steps forward, this is fine as their strength increases so will their ability.

Ask your child to go down on all fours to start with, explain exactly what you are going to do, then do it, this stops it being a shock as you grab their ankles and lift their legs into the air. Explain that they are going to walk on their hands. If they are a little unsure only lift them a little way off the floor, supporting the legs just above the knees. As they get stronger you can set a course or distance for them to walk. You will also be able to move the support from above the knee to below the knee with the aim of holding the ankles once they are strong enough.

If you are feeling brave wheelbarrow races make a great family or party game.



Model Making

You need

Play dough, plasticine or clay.

How to do it

Rolling, squeezing, squashing, pulling, pinching and poking in modelling materials is a great work out for the whole hand. The greater the resistance the more strength is required to achieve these. Play dough type material tend to be easier to manipulate than some Plasticine or clay, so if your child does find them difficult try using play dough to start with.

Encourage your child to use one hand then the other and both for rolling, squeezing, pulling and squashing.



Grab & Drop

You need

Small items such as marbles, coins, small toys and a box or container.

How to do it

Place a pile of objects such as marbles on one side of your child and the box on the other side. The aim of the game is to pick up a marble with one hand and place it into the palm of the other hand, close the fingers around the marble to make a fist. Then twist the hand around so that the closed fingers and palm are facing down to the floor and then release the marble so that it falls into the container/box. Try this for 5/10 objects then swap hands so the picking up hand then becomes the fist making hand. If your child is finding this difficult use slightly larger items for picking up and a larger container/box for them to drop the item into. Reduce the sizes as they become more confident. To make the task more challenging see how many they can manage in a minute or perhaps make the objects small. To increase the accuracy of the drop you could try using smaller containers.

