

Upper Extremity Strengthening Activities

The following activities are recommended to help develop and refine arm and hand skills. If possible, practice these activities with the student 10-15 minutes daily.

Shoulder Activities

- Have child stand a little less than an arms length from the wall, with their feet placed in a stride jump position. Have them lean forward until their palms touch the wall. Tell them to try to push the wall as you count to 4. Repeat 3 times.
- Play tug of war with child, using a towel or rope. Pull for 6-10 seconds before stopping. Repeat 3 times.
- Wheelbarrow walk on hands. Support child's legs as they attempt to walk on their hands. Initially you may support the child at the hips and as the skill improves, support may be provided at the thigh and then the calf area.
- Skip using a rope.
- Tape an activity page (ie colouring page, a maze, a word search, or a crossword puzzle) to the wall at eye level and complete the activity while standing.
- Swimming is a good activity and fun for all kids. Front crawl and back crawl are exercises which strengthen shoulder and arm muscles.
- Provide younger students with daily opportunities to draw, colour or paint on an easel, chalkboard or whiteboard.

Elbow and Forearm Activities

- Have your child place their palms up towards the ceiling to control the arching movement of a slinky back and forth between their hands.
- Play games such as bean bag toss, table tennis, horseshoes, and volleyball ([try with a balloon](#)) where the hands are in the 'palms up' position.
- Using a 'palms-up' position of their hand to tap a balloon, have the child try to tap/bounce the balloon in the air 10 times.
- Have your child lie with their tummy on the floor, elbows bent and therefore taking weight of the body through the forearms. Put a puzzle together, watch TV, or read a book in this position.

- Have your child participate in household activities (i.e. setting the table, stirring the cookie dough, peeling [vegetables](#), [opening cans with the manual opener](#), [help assemble furniture](#) etc.)

Wrist Activities

- Tape a pencil and paper activity page (i.e. colouring page, a maze, a word search etc.) to the wall at eye level. Have the child complete the activity while standing. Have them lift their wrist up until the little finger side of their wrist rests on the wall as they complete the activity.
- Paint murals on paper that is taped to the floor.
- Play card games such as "Go Fish" and Crazy 8's" where the child must hold a small number of cards fanned out in their hand.
- Place a tea towel lengthwise over the far edge of the desk or table. Your child should sit with arms resting, palms down, on the desk or table. Instruct the child to keep their forearms on the tabletop and uses their fingers to scrunch up the tea towel into the palms of their hands.

Finger Activities

- Stamping
- Sealing zip-lock bags
- Transferring clothes pegs from the edge of one container to the next.
- Single paper hole punch
- Squirt bottle for watering plants
- Playing with toys that have small parts such as Lite Brite, Pegboard designs, Marbles, Lego and stringing beads.
- Tracing templates/stencils
- Wind up toys
- Spinning tops
- Spring loaded paper clips
- Popping bubble pack
- Squeezing liquid using eye droppers, turkey basters and squeeze bottles. Thicker liquids are harder.
- Scissor activities