

HAND STRENGTHENING THROUGH EVERYDAY PLAY

Climbing Ladders

Holding onto those ladder rungs is a challenge for some kids! But keep practicing! The vertical surface of the ladder makes kids' hands work hard to grip those rungs and stay on against gravity.

Beach/Sand Play

A day at the beach (or in the sandbox) is another fun way to strengthen the hands. Kids can dig in the sand with their hands or shovels, build sand castles, and carry buckets of water or sand.

Play in Quadruped

Maintaining the hands and knees position promotes strengthening in so many muscle groups including the neck, core and hands! This weight bearing encourages co-contraction of the muscles which means the flexor and extensor muscles are working together to hold a child up!

Wheelbarrow Walks

Have the child place her hands on the floor while you or another child holds her feet. See how far she can walk on her hands.

Office Play

Kids love playing with "grown up" materials. Squeezing a stapler (with supervision), folding paper, using paperclips are all fun hand strengthening activities.

Tug of War

If I were a kid, I'd be gripping that rope with all of my might to keep the other team from pulling me across the line! Which team has the stronger hands?

Cartwheels

Doing a cartwheel is tough. It requires coordination, balance, lots of core strength, flexibility, and some good hand strength too.

Play Dough, Putty, or Slime

Squishing, pinching, rolling, squeezing, smushing – all great for building muscles in the hands! Putty can be purchased in different levels of resistance to make the challenge harder.

Mr. Potato Head

The pieces of this game are relatively big and easy to grasp and the repetition of changing the faces over and over again is great for strengthening! Some of other recommendations for toys that do double duty as hand strengthening hits include Squigz, bathtub squeeze toys, wind-up toys, and Pop Beads.

Monkey bars

Grasp, release, grasp, release. Monkey bars are a great way to work the endurance of tiny hand muscles.

Chores

Simply helping around the house allows kids to use their hands and fingers in many different ways, which can help build strength. Try throwing laundry down the chute or into the washing machine/dryer, washing the car, washing floors, tables, windows, or dishes; shoveling snow; raking leaves; taking out the garbage.

Gardening

Working and playing in the garden offer many opportunities for building strength in the hands. Have kids dig in the dirt with their hands or a shovel, pull weeds, lift and pour a watering can, and spraying plants with a spray bottle!

Animal Walks

Walk like a crab, bear, donkey or inchworm to promote more weight bearing through the hands!