



# Hand Strengthening Through Everyday Play

There are lots of easy ways to strengthen the hands through simple everyday play! Think about all the great play activities kids are already doing to target those hand muscles and make them strong. Try working these activities into kids' everyday play routines!

**Climbing** - Encourage climbing on ropes, ladders, trees, jungle gyms, playground equipment, and more!

**Cooking** - Kneading dough, stirring batter, scooping, cutting...if it happens in the kitchen, it's probably a hand strengthener! Opening and closing containers, squeezing juice from a lemon/orange, peeling an orange are all great options too.

**Wind up toys** - Kids love these simple cause and effect toys and those fingers will be working hard to get the toys wound up and moving!

**Gardening** - Working and playing in the garden offers 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!

**Beach/sand play** - A day at the beach 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.

**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/dishes, shoveling snow, raking leaves, taking out the garbage.

**Playground play** - Grasping the chains on a swing, hanging from the monkey bars, or holding onto the grips of a rock wall are all great hand strengtheners!

**Office play** - Kids love playing with "grown up" materials. Squeezing a stapler (with supervision), folding paper, using paperclips are fun hand strengthening activities. squeezing staplers, folding paper, paperclips

**Lacing, sewing, and threading activities**

**Bath toys** - Squishy toys that squirt water can make bath time even more fun while also providing resistance that builds strength in the hands!



# Hand Strengthening Supply List

## *Materials for Weight Bearing and Other Movement Activities*

- Towel or blanket for propping during tummy time
- Collapsible fabric tunnel
- Balls, cars, toys, stuffed animals to retrieve during crawling play
- Foam therapy wedge
- Pillows/cushions for crawling obstacle course
- Bean bags
- Therapy ball
- Large cardboard blocks
- Puzzle

## *Materials for Pushing/Pulling/Lifting*

- Lego® or Duplo® Bricks
- Lego Pattern Cards
- Velcro®
- Rubber bands
- Tape or stickers
- Rolling pins
- Paper for tearing and crumpling
- Weighted toys, weighted stuffed animals, or weighted balls
- Box or laundry basket
- Pop beads
- Small manipulative (marbles, coins, popsicle sticks)
- Empty containers with hole/slit cut in the top

With just a few simple materials and supplies, it's easy to get kids motivated to participate in hand strengthening activities! Throw a few of these items in your bag or keep them on hand in the classroom for instant hand strengthening fun!

## *Materials for Squeezing and Pinching*

- Play Dough and putty
- Eye droppers
- Bubble wrap
- Sponges
- Spray bottles
- Water guns
- Squeeze bottles
- Stress balls
- Balloons and fillers for DIY stress balls
- Clothespins and clips
- Hole punches
- Scissors
- Tongs and tweezers