

Activities for Building Hand Strength

- Play dough
- Pop beads
- Construction toys
- Legos
- Squeeze toys
- Tug of war with a towel
- Coloring
- Art projects using squeeze paints, scissors, glue
- Crumple paper, toss in a wastebasket
- Squirt gun
- Use salad tongs to pick up small toys
- Wind-up toys
- Stamps or stamp pad activity
- Making cookies from refrigerator dough
- Any toy with buttons or levers
- Racket activities
- Sidewalk chalk



Hand Strengthening Activities

The following activities will help to develop hand strength and coordination to improve your child's handwriting and scissor skills.

1. **Theraputty/Silly Putty** - using the green or yellow theraputty squeeze it in each hand 5 times.

1- Roll it into a snake. Using your thumb and first finger, pinch the length of the snake to give him scales. Switch hands as you go so you don't get tired.

2- Form a Ball and smash it flat, then use your fingers to dig tunnels into the putty. Push your fingers apart and try to move the putty out of the way. Don't forget to use both hands.

3- Pull or cut (with scissors) the putty apart into little pieces and form a tiny ball of each piece. See how many you can make.



2. **Playdough**- Playdough by itself doesn't work the hand muscles very hard, because it is so soft, but combined with the toys, it offers a good way to strengthen shoulders and hands.

1- Use the playdough pasta maker, or any of the other extruders playdough has to offer. (The duffel bag is a good choice with a variety of tools)

Push all the dough through the holes, and make some pasta, or hair. Don't forget to cut it off and clean your tools when you are finished.

2- Form a Ball and smash it flat, then use cookie cutters to make fun shapes. Press each one out with your hand flat.



3. **Washcloth/Sponge**- Squeeze and wring all of the water out of the cloths, no one wants it to drip on the floor. Do it about 5 times for each hand. If you scrub the tub or sink you also get a great shoulder work out and help mom and dad 😊.



4. **Stress Ball**- Any soft foam or gel ball works well for this activity, or you can make one by filling a balloon with some flour or cornstarch. Squeeze the ball 5-10 times in each hand, switching hands as you go.



5. **Rubberband/Scrunchie**- Put the rubber band or hair tie around your fingers and try to open them as far as you can. Do these 10 times with each hand.



6. Clothespins/Binder clips/Hair clips(any spring loaded clip)- This is a great activity to build up your pincers. Practice putting clip on a string or a tough piece of paper. Play games to see if you can make a pattern or reach the highest point on the object. It is a great way to stretch too.



7. Practice with the real thing- in addition to exercise, it is good to work on practicing difficult tasks, such as snaps and opening containers of juice and milk. Whenever you can, try to get the fasteners done yourself and work on opening the packages.

Or if you have a doll that wears clothes, that is a great activity—practice the buttons, snaps, and zippers, they are smaller and present a greater challenge.

