

## Occupational Therapy Service for Children and Young People

### Finger Strengthening Activities

Encourage as many strengthening activities throughout the day. Any activity that involves gripping against resistance will increase hand strength when used over time. As your child's hand strength improves, increase the amount of resistance in the activity.

Care should be taken with all activities to ensure the child's safety, particularly where moving/handling objects is involved or in push/pull activities.

- Rolling out and pressing and squeezing play doh, clay, dough or pastry using an isolated finger to squash small balls of therapeutic putty / dough. Using different sized balls allows the child to use different amounts of pressure.



- Using pincer grip to squeeze and pop bubbles in bubble wrap.



- Using pincer grip to fasten and unfasten clothes pegs from a line, increase difficulty by seeing how many pegs you can take off the line using one hand and keep hold of them in the same hand.



- Picking up coins using pincer grip with dominant hand and transferring them into the palm to retain whilst collecting the next coin, collect 6 then transfer them back to the pincer grip position one at a time to post into a money box. Increase the difficulty by increasing the number of coins held.

- Using a grip strengthening device, such as squeezing a stress ball, or a Gripmaster exercise tool (available in outdoor shops / on-line as a device for increasing grip strength for climbers).



- Using a piece of light material i.e. crêpe bandage or light weight scarf laid out over the edge of the table. The child sits at the table trapping the end of the bandage/scarf between the wrist of the dominant hand and the edge of the table letting the material hang off the table. Using fingers only, gather bandage/scarf using fingers under the hand until they manage to retrieve the material in their palm. This exercise can be timed and recorded and targets can be set.

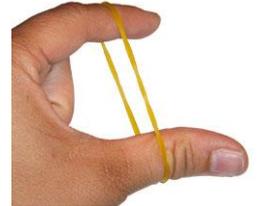
- Practice finger opposition exercises – touching the pad of each finger against the pad of the thumb on the same hand – repeat several times. Focus on making a circular shape between finger and thumb. Start to use this technique in an exaggerated way when completing some of the pincer grip activities above.



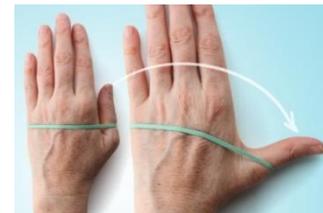
### **Rubber / hair band exercises**

Start the exercise with the tensioned bank around the thumb and finger, then open up finger and thumb to aid stretch.

**Alternate each finger and thumb**, extending fingers outwards.



Wrap the band around knuckles and thumb and extend thumb outwards complete on each hand **10 times**



Wrap the band around tips of the fingers and spread fingers outwards - complete on each hand **10 times**

