



FINE MOTOR



IN-HAND MANIPULATION

Beginner Activities

This resource has been developed by a team of occupational therapists at Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children. The information and activity ideas included in this handout were compiled based on current research and expert clinical opinion.

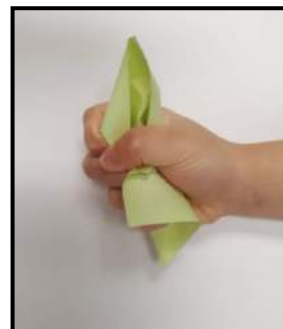
Definition: In-hand manipulation allows us to move or reposition small objects using just one hand. Examples include: moving a small cracker from the palm to the fingertips, flipping a page, turning a key, and fastening buttons.

To develop these skills, it is best to practice these activities regularly. If you are not sure which exercises to use, how often they should be done, or if you have any other questions or concerns, please talk to your occupational therapist.

Most of the following activities should be done with one hand only. Encourage your child to do these activities without using their other hand, body or table to help.

Finger to palm (moving an object from the fingertips to the palm):

- Play a magic trick!** Have the child pick up a small object and hide it in their hand. For example, a bead, coin, small fish cracker, or craft pom-pom.
- Paper attack!** Crumple pieces of paper using only one hand. Make it fun by turning it into a race against the clock. See who can make the most paper balls in a set amount of time or race against each other to see who can finish their pile of paper first.



Shifting (sliding an object along the pad of the finger):

- Flip the page!** Encourage the child to turn the page when reading a story or book. The thinner the paper, the more challenging the task.
- Push the peg!** Using only the fingers, push small objects like pegs or cut up straws into a ball of Playdoh or putty, then practice pulling them back out again. Softer dough will be the easiest and stiffer dough will be the most difficult for your child to do.
- Roll a worm!** Have the child take a small pea-sized ball of dough or clay and roll it between their index finger and thumb to form a worm.



- Button up!** Use both hands to do up and undo buttons. Larger 1-inch buttons will be the easiest to start with.
- Sort the deck!** Have the child sort a deck of cards into different piles using only one hand.
- String the bead!** Use one hand to support the bead while the other feeds the string through the hole. Larger beads are typically easier, longer beads will be more challenging and require the child to shift the string further.



Simple rotation (turn an object up to 90 degrees using the fingers)

- Spin the Puzzle Peg!** Practicing putting peg-style puzzle pieces into a board using one hand only.
- Spin the Top!** Spinning tops are a fun way to practice using fingers to get something turning.
- Wind it up!** Wind-up toys are a great way to practice this skill.
- Nuts and bolts!** Use fingers to loosen or tighten a nut onto a screw. Using large pieces will be easier.



Palm to finger (move an object from the palm to the fingertips)

- Fill the jar!** Work quickly to fill a piggy bank, jar, or other container before the time runs out. Small objects like coins, beads, pompoms or marbles will work best. Have the child place the object in their palm first, then using only one hand, slide it to their fingertips before placing it into the container.



References:

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