



Hand Strengthening Through Everyday Play

There are lots of easy ways to strengthen the hands through simple everyday play! Try working these activities into kids' everyday play routines!

Climbing Ladders

The vertical surface of the ladder requires kids' hands to work hard to grip those rungs and stay on against gravity.

Monkey bars

Monkey bars are a great way to work the endurance of tiny hand muscles.

Play in Quadruped

Maintaining the hands and knees position promotes strengthening in so many muscle groups including the neck, core and hands!

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.

Animal Walks

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

Tug of War

Assign teams and then see whose hands can hold on the longest and pull the hardest!

Cartwheels

Another fun idea for promoting weight bearing in the hands.

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 toy are big and easy to grasp and the repetition of changing the faces over and over again is great for strengthening!

Beach/Sand Play

Kids can dig in the sand with their hands or shovels, build sand castles, and carry buckets of water or sand.

Chores

Try throwing laundry down the chute or into the washing machine/dryer, washing the car, washing floors/tables/windows, shoveling snow, raking leaves, taking out the garbage.

Office Play

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

Bath Toys

Fill up an old shampoo bottle and squeeze it empty. Or try a set of fun water squeeze toys to encourage imaginative play as they squirt away!

Pop Beads

Kids love to pop together necklaces, bracelets and rings and there are different sizes to appeal to all ability levels.

Tongs or Tweezers

Have the child pick up objects from a sensory bin, sort craft pom poms, or pick up small blocks and stack them using a pair of tweezers!

Squeeze Balls/Stress Balls

Kids can squeeze these squishable balls as hard as they can for some hand strengthening fun!

Squigz

Pushing and pulling these "fun little suckers" is great hand strengthening fun!

Animal Poppers

When little hands squeeze the animal's belly, it launches soft, ping pong sized balls across the room! The harder they are squeezed, the bigger the launch!

Gardening

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!