

10 Fine Motor Warm Ups Exercises For Handwriting Tasks

Fine motor warm up exercises is a good way to “wake up” the fingers and hand muscles for writing. It makes a fun transition into writing tasks. Below you will find some quick, easy exercises to do with your class.

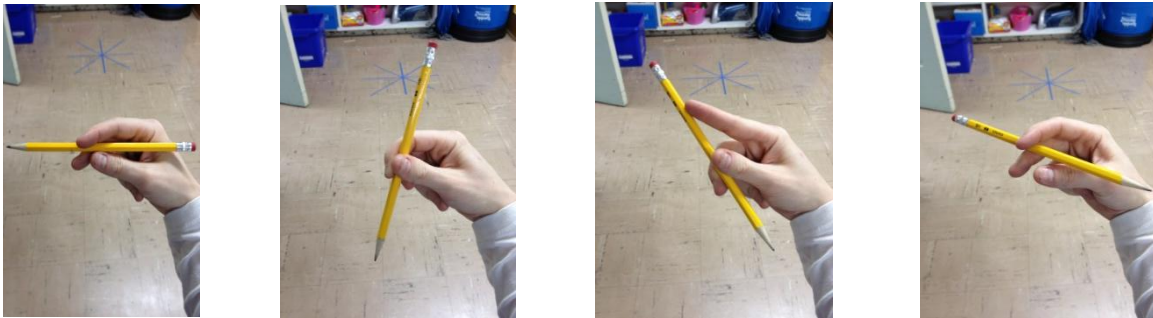
PENCIL WALKS

Pencil walks are a simple fine motor activity that the whole class can do before starting a handwriting assignment. Using your dominant hand, hold eraser-end pencil as you would grasp it to write (using your thumb, index and middle fingers). Use only these three fingers to “walk” down the shaft of the pencil to the tip. Flip the pencil over, then “walk” back up to the eraser end. Be sure not to use your ring finger or pinkie, or other hand, to help! Have “walking” races between students, or time students to “break records” to motivate them.



THE PENCIL BATON

A quick follow up to “pencil walks” is the “pencil baton”. Hold your pencil in the middle of the shaft with in your dominant hand using your thumb, index finger and middle finger. Using these three fingers, twirl the pencil like a baton. Perform between 10-20 reps.



PENNY TRANSLATION

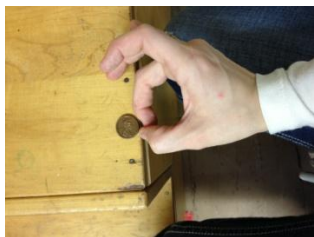
“Translation” is ability to move an object that is in the palm of your hand, to your fingertips of the same hand, using just finger movements. Translation involves finger isolation and finger coordination skills, and so is a great warm up to handwriting. I like using a penny, but any small item will work – like a button, paperclip, bobby pin, pen cap, erasertop or marble. Motivate kids by timing how long it takes them to get the object to their fingertips, or who can move the smallest object the fastest.



PENNY SHUFFLE BOARD

Penny Shuffle Board is a quick follow up to Penny Translation. The activity is simple. Two people stand on either side of a desk or table. Using their thumb and index finger or middle finger, they must “flick” the penny

in order to make it slide to the other side of the table. Each player only gets 5 flicks. The goal is to get it as close to the edge as possible in those 5 flicks without going over the edge.



HAND PUSH AND PULL

Hand push and pull is an easy exercise that “wakes up” the hands and upper arms. Encourage the students to use their “strongest” muscles when pushing or pulling. You perform the “push” part of the exercise by putting your two hands together, pointing upwards, in front of your chest, with your elbows bend at a 90 degree angle. Push your two hands together as firmly as you can, and hold that “push” for 5-10 seconds. You perform the “pull” part of the exercise by holding your two hands together by hooking your fingers. Again, keep your elbows bend at a 90 degree angle and pull your two hands apart, without losing your grasp, as firmly as you can. Hold this “pull” for 5-10 seconds.



SPIDER PUSH UPS

Spider push-ups involve moving the fingers together in a coordinated way. Put one hand, palm up, on your desk. Place the other hand, palm down, on top of it. With your fingertips touching the “matching” fingertip of the other hand, bring the fingers together. Then bring the fingers back down to the original position. Perform exercise in reps of 10-20.



FINGER HOCKEY

You already know how to play this game. Two players sit or stand on either side of a desk or table. Mark out a “goal” using masking tape on each side. Make a “puck” out of crumbled paper, a cotton ball, a small pom pom ball, a coin, etc. Using your thumb and index or middle finger, take turns shooting the “puck” into the goal.



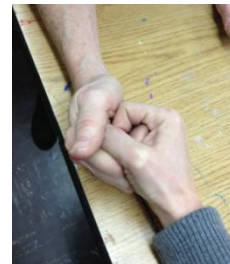
SPIN THE LID

This is an easy way to recycle your old lids - any size lids will work (tomato sauce jars, baby food jars, butter tub lids, coffee canister lids, etc.) Place your hand palm facing upward, holding the lid with your fingertips. Keeping your hand in this upward position, use your fingers to rotate the lid in a circle. Make the task entertaining by seeing who can “get to the . . .” marker first. This activity can easily be made into a fun and/or academic activity by placing “markers” on the lid. Using your thumb as the “pointer”, have the students rotate the lid to a desired point. Use letters, numbers, colors, etc.



THUMB WAR

As long as your students can follow rules and accept defeat, a good old fashioned game of thumb war works on thumb isolation and strengthening. Make sure the student keeps their forearm and pinkie side of the hand ON the table.



THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

This is a nice exercise to finish the warm up with. Start SLOWLY counting 1 to 10, having the students count along by touching their thumb to each finger. Make sure that the student is touching only the designated finger without moving any of the other fingers. Then count backwards from 10 to 1. Now you're ready to write!

