



**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES**

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**HANDWRITING AND HAND STRENGTHENING EXERCISES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

- **Correct body posture and paper alignment** helps students the write more freely and it reduces neck, back and arm pain when writing for long periods of time such as in an examination.



The student should have their feet flat on the floor, the forearms resting on the desk, with weight supported on the non-writing arm. The non-writing arm should stabilise the paper at the side. The trunk and body should be upright, not bent over the table.



The paper should be to the left of the midline, with the top of the paper tilted to the right for a **left handed student**.

The paper should be to the right of the midline, with the top of the paper tilted to the left for a **right handed student**.

- **A functional pencil grasp** allows a student's fingers to move freely when writing. It also assists with improving handwriting legibility and it reduces the muscle cramping and pain that some students experience when writing for extended periods such as in an examination. The pen should be held with the tips of the thumb and index finger on the side of the pen and the pen rests on the middle finger, and the back of the pen should rest in the webspace.





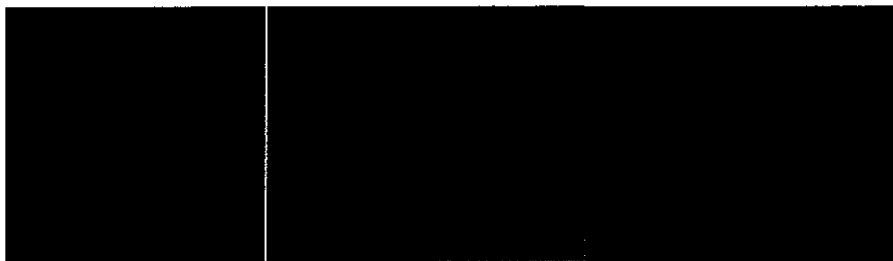
- **Wall pushups** - stand with your arms out straight against a wall, then take a SMALL step backwards. Now place your hands flat on the wall – your body will be at a slight angle. Keep your body straight and bend just your elbows so your body comes closer to the wall, then push your arms out straight, keeping your hands on the wall. Repeat this 30 times.



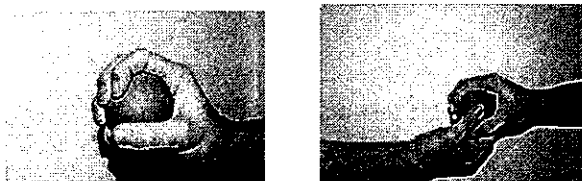
- **Wall pushups with fingertips** - this exercise can be repeated but place your fingertips on the wall instead of flat hands.



- **Pincer grasp** (ie: using the fingertips of your thumb and index finger not the pads of the fingers) and **in-hand manipulation** – place a coin or a small item in the palm of your dominant hand. Just using the fingers of this hand, move it to your fingertips. This can be incorporated into games like Connect 4 or posting money into a money box. As your skills improve make the object smaller and place 2 -3 items in your hand at one time and you have to hold the extras without letting them fall out while getting one to the fingertips.



- Squeezing an exercise ball or tennis ball in the palm of your dominant hand for 5-10 seconds – repeat this 10 -20 times. Repeat with an adult gently trying to pull the ball out.



If you are using a smaller ball just squeeze it using your fingertips.



*J. Painter*

Janine Painter  
Occupational Therapist

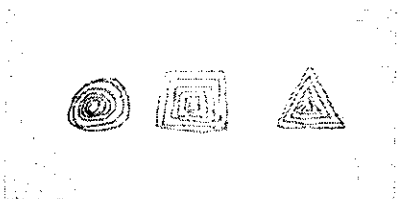


**Some activities to practice to develop writing fluency:**

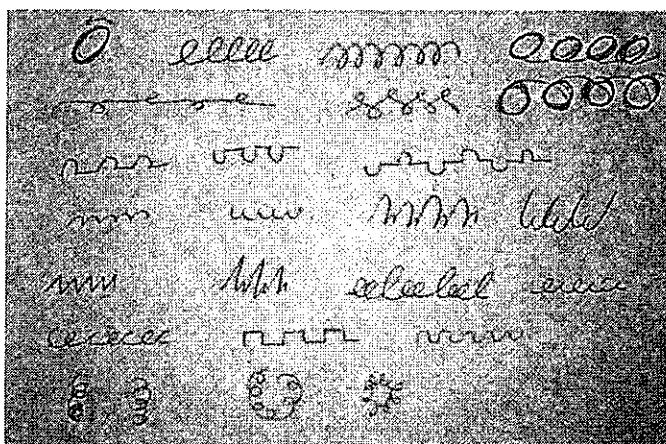
- Practice pencil and paper activities like colouring small shapes using a circular motion.



- Drawing small shapes, keeping your wrist on the table in one spot.



- Practice fluency patterns



**Some activities to develop finger and arm dexterity and strength for handwriting:**

- **Finger lifts and with resistance** – Place your hands flat on a table. Lift only one finger at a time without any others lifting, and then count to 30. Repeat for all fingers. This can be repeated with someone gently pushing down on the finger while you try and keep the finger lifted.

