

21 ideas to help improve fine motor skills at home

You don't need expensive equipment. Many fine motor activities can be set up with things you have at home. Here are 21 ideas:



Sorting small objects such as beads, dried beans or buttons - This is very easy to set up. Choose objects that can be sorted by colour, size or shape. Mix them in a single bowl and give your child a tray or some small bowls/cups to sort the objects into.



Posting small objects into a bottle - Pipes cleaners, straws or pasta shapes can be posted into the neck of an empty plastic bottle.



Pipette, syringe or water dropper - If you have an empty medicine syringe, water dropper or a turkey baster your child can practise moving water from one container to another or make art with coloured water and kitchen towel.

Pouring water from one container to another - Another great activity is to pour water from jugs or bottles. This can be done at bath time or if they help you with the washing up.



Threading - If you have buttons or beads threading is great for practising the pincer grip. Pipe cleaners or a thick shoe lace can be great to thread onto. Penne pasta is a good threading object too. You can also thread Cheerios or pasta tubes on to spaghetti, straws or bbq skewers.

Hanging out washing - using clothes pegs is quite a skill! Ask your child to help you hang out the clothes or hang out their doll clothes.

Getting dressed or dressing teddies - any clothing where the child is practicing to buckle up or fasten buttons or zips are great for fine motor control.



Posting coins into a money box - Children love this activity. If you don't have a money box, you can get them posting bottle tops, cards or coins into an empty shoe box or cereal box.

Board games that use small pieces - Any board game that uses small pieces can be used. Scrabble tiles can be used to practise phonics or to spell CVC words. Operation or frustration are great games for pincer control.

Transferring objects from one bowl to another, first with fingers then with tweezers. Beans, beads, buttons, rice, the smaller the object the harder it gets!

Spooning - It is easy to increase the difficulty by changing what you set out. Use two bowls, one with the beans/rice/marbles/pom-poms and a spoon. Move the objects from one bowl to the other. The bigger the spoon the easier it is.

Peeling fruit - anything in fact that needs peeling. Satsumas are perfect but bananas are good too.

Using scissors - just practise cutting to start with. They can snip or cut free hand. Then practise cutting on the line or cutting shapes out.

Playdoh - Making peas or beans or eyes, anything that involves rolling the playdoh between the thumb and fingers is good. You can also try some dough disco videos on YouTube.

Popping bubble wrap - Children love doing this. It does need to be between the thumb and a finger to be working the right muscles.

Ripping - Ripping up paper to make collages and ripping out pictures from an old magazine or catalogues is great for pincer control.

Sorting sweets into colours: M&Ms or skittles are great to sort and then eat!

Stacking objects - The smaller the objects the more difficult it becomes: coins, cards, blocks etc.



Elastic bands (or hair ties) can be used to decorate different sized objects. Try putting them over bottles or a can. It can also be fun to put them over door handles or objects such as fruit or pine cones. Taking them off again also is good for hand and finger strength.

Sharpening pencils - This really works for strengthening muscles needed to hold a pencil.

Lego - Building with Lego can be lots of fun, but it also takes strong fingers to press the blocks together and pull them apart again.