

# General Hand Exercises

Source Used:

## OT Mom Learning Activities

### 1) Paper Crumpling

Have your child **crumple up** sheets of newspaper or scrap paper into the **smallest, tightest ball** they can manage.

As their hand strength increases, so the ball will get tighter.



Make it harder by asking your child crumple the paper with **just one hand** at a time.

Please make sure your child cleans the hands thoroughly afterwards as newspaper ink can be harmful.



## 2) Squeezing Sponges

This sponge is one that was being used for sponge painting, but you can also let your child **squeeze bath sponges**, washing up sponges, or sponge balls.

A lovely **bath-time activity**!



## 3) Water Spray Bottles

These give hours of endless fun while strengthening hand muscles.

Have your child **water the plants**, spray an outside wall, or add a spray bottle to **bath time fun**!



## Playdough Hand Exercises

Playdough is a great medium for strengthening little hands!

Try making these **dinosaur footprints** (well, we thought they looked like dinosaur footprints anyway!!) to strengthen the muscles on the back of the hand as well as the inner muscles of the palm. **Here's how:**



1) Put the fingers and thumb together in the center of a blob of playdough.



2) Slowly stretch the fingers and thumb apart. The end result looks like a footprint!



3) After stretching out all the blobs, have your child squish each footprint back into a blob.

Ideally, have **each hand make its own set** of footprints and crumple them up again, to help work on bilateral coordination skills at the same time!

## Gross Motor Activities

Any gross motor activity which requires the hands to **grasp and hold tight**, can help to strengthen hand muscles.

The **grasp and release movements** used for **climbing** and **pulling** are easier than long periods of sustained holding - so use those until your child's hands are stronger.

So take your child outdoors and encourage lots of climbing!

~Adapted by Angela Andriano, OTR/L