

## **The essential four bases for an efficient pencil grip**

1. **Postural stability**
2. **Tactile perception**
3. **Hand function**
4. **Bilateral coordination**



If your child struggles to take part in fine motor activities or finds holding a pencil difficult, it may be because one essential base is less developed than the others.

This pack outlines the four bases and provides activities that can build a good foundation for fine motor development.

### **Postural stability**

When the bigger muscles of the shoulder girdle and trunk are strong and stable, the smaller muscles of the arms and hands can move freely in a controlled way.

When this is lacking a child will hold their pencil really tight to try and control it or sometimes press really hard on the paper. It may also cause tension in the shoulders.



### **How to develop shoulder and core strength at home:**

#### **Pushing games**



### Crab and bear walking



### Chair push ups



### Snake curls



### Plank/balances



# Tactile Perception

If you are not getting good tactile feedback from your fingers, it is hard to be accurate with them.

When a child has poor tactile perception it may feel as though the pencil is being held with rubber gloves on. Fine motor developmental is not optimal.

Can be clumsy  
Can drop things small items regularly  
Can let items slip from their grasp



## How to develop tactile perception at home:

### Grocery hunt game feely bag

- Discuss the feel of different items first and how they differ
- Then get the child to pick out the correct item without looking



### Material games (science) blindfold or feely bag

- Describe the material that they can feel



### No peeking game with PE kits or bags.

'Without looking, everyone get their shorts out of their PE kits. Now get just the right shoe. Now find your house Tshirt (it will feel different!!)'





## Hand function

The hand and finger muscles need to work well together in order to control pencils and other small items and tools.

The wrist and forearm muscles are also important, as their positioning will get the hand in the best position to control pencils.

Cutting with scissors is one of the best ways a child can develop hand function.



### Hand, wrist and finger exercises that can be played at home:

**Tennis ball roll up and down your body (only using your three writing fingers)**



**Scissor work...lines, around shapes, spirals, intricate silhouettes**



## Finger extension (and isolation skills)



Fine motor challenges such as using tweezers, sewing or rolling balls of play doh with your three writing fingers





## Bilateral coordination

If your hands do not work well together, your ability to do fine motor tasks may be affected.

Eating with a knife and fork  
Holding paper whilst cutting  
Tying shoe laces  
Playing with construction toys



These activities need both hands to work together in a coordinated way.

Children with poor bilateral coordination may avoid fine motor activities and thus affect their handwriting development.

### How to develop bilateral coordination at home:

Alternating movements such as climbing a ladder



Juggling scarves



Colouring



Tracing

