



# Fine Motor Warm Up Activities

Completing “warm up” activities before writing is a good way to activate the finger muscles and prepare students for handwriting. Research also suggests that engagement in fine motor activities supports students’ attention.

**Keywords:** *warm up activities, fine motor, finger muscles*

1. Shake hands from wrists and wiggle fingers between activities
2. Make a tight fist – stretch fingers out wide three times
3. Make a fist – get student to point each finger in turn
4. Make a fist – release thumb and wiggle, make a fist again, release the first finger – wiggle – make a fist. Repeat with each finger in turn with each hand
5. Press the palms of the hands together then release
6. Rub hands together in circles clockwise and anti-clockwise – or rub on carpet in circles
7. With flat hands together – spread the fingers apart then move them together again
8. Finger Tip Presses – With flat hands together, separate two thumbs then press back together again, then repeat with each finger
9. Fast piano music with fingers – Heels of hands on thighs, tap each finger top quickly on thigh
10. Interlace the fingers and move the palms from side to side
11. Turn interlaced fingers so knuckles are facing the chest and stretch arms out in front of the body
12. Monkey grip – Clasp/inter-link bent fingers of one hand with the bent fingers of the other hand. Pull apart for five seconds and then release for five seconds. Repeat.
13. Crocodiles – Ask the student to join tip of thumb to tips of index and middle fingers with each hand. Keeping them all touching, move fingers in towards the palm and out again.





14. Heels of hands together – fingers curled slightly, finger tips apart. Touch opposite finger tips one at a time as quickly as possible. Repeat with eyes closed and with hands behind back.



15. With elbows bent and hands help up – touch tip of first finger and thumb together as if pinching.

- a. Repeat with 2<sup>nd</sup> finger, then 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> repeat as quickly as possible
- b. Try it in reverse order and both hands together
- c. Repeat but sliding thumb down the side of each finger in turn
- d. Repeat with eyes open and closed
- e. Repeat making each finger flick on the thumb



16. Finger Fiddles – pretend to play the fiddle using the thumb against each finger alternatively



17. Butterfly – hook thumbs together and wiggle fingers in the air, moving the butterfly up and down, and around the body



## Warm Up Activities – At the Table

1. Window Wipers – put forearm and hand flat on the table surface. Keeping the forearm still, move hand from side to side at the wrist.



2. Place hands palm down, flat on the table – spread fingers apart, open and close three times.

3. Caterpillar walks with hands across the table



4. Finger taps as if typing – place both hands with forearms resting on the desktop – lift each thumb and finger individually in turn. Imagine the typewriter buttons must be hit quite hard with separate fingers to make it work.



5. Move the gap – student puts their hand(s) flat on a table and start by keeping their fingers straight, but moving the index finger sideways, away from the middle finger and then move it back. Then move the middle and index fingers away from the ring finger and then back. And finally move the little finger away from the others and then back. Use the other hand to help move the fingers until they get the “feel” for it.



# Warm Up Activities – Pencil Olympics

1. Pencil push ups – hold the pencil in a correct tripod grip (i.e. between the thumb, index and middle finger) and practice bending fingers to pull the pencil towards the palm and then straightening the fingers out fully.
2. Hold a pencil up vertically at one end – using thumb, index and middle fingers only, “walk” the fingers up and down the pencil
3. Pencil Windmill – hold a pencil in the middle with your thumb, index and middle fingers and try to turn it like a windmill. Try anticlockwise and clockwise – then swap the pencil to the other hand. Try with pencil in a vertical position then horizontal position.
4. Hold a pencil between fingertips of both hands. Pull apart and push together in both directions.
5. Make tiny circles on paper with only your fingers moving to make the pencil move – imagine your wrist is stuck to the page before you make the circle.





### Want to learn more?

To learn more about Language Disorder and how to support children and young people for whom language is their primary disorder, please contact Speech and Language Development Australia (SALDA). SALDA provides holistic, innovative and effective therapy, education and support services and has a transdisciplinary team of speech pathologists, occupational therapists, educators, psychologists and physiotherapists.

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### References

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