



Postural control refers to the ability to maintain an upright position. This is an important skill needed for developing fine motor skills. Without good postural control, a child may have difficulty maintaining an upright sitting posture and may fatigue easily when sitting at a desk in school. Plus using the hands well will be difficult. When postural control is adequate, the hands may be used effectively for working on table top tasks, such as writing and cutting with scissors. For the hands to work well, strength, stability and mobility are necessary in the shoulders and forearms. So, in addition to the shoulders being strong, wrist stability is an important component for having precise finger control.

Ways to develop shoulder strength and stability

- Playing while laying on the tummy is a great way to develop shoulder strength and stability. Try reading, writing, colouring, working on puzzles, playing with toys or anything, while laying on the tummy.
- wheelbarrow walking
- Crawl on all fours: forward, backward, sideways or change direction on command.
- Crawl through an obstacle course
- While in a crab walking position, kick a balloon and keep it up in the air for as long as possible.
- snake or combat crawl (low crawl on your elbows and knees with pelvis flat) to squeeze under a low limbo stick
- strengthen the arms by swinging on monkey bars, trapeze bar, ladders, climbing up a slide
Aim for the basket ball hoops with all types of balls
- Pour water from a jug or sand from buckets
- Draw large shapes and pictures on chalk boards or white boards with both hands simultaneously

Ways to develop wrist stability

- Walk or race while balancing a tennis ball on a large spoon; don't let it fall!
- Play with a Yo-Yo
- Putting weight into the arms and hands by walking like animals; Gorilla crouch walking, Bear walking, Inchworm walking, Snake crawling, Bird walking, Crab walking.
- When sitting on the floor to play, lean into one hand and keep the hand open; Reach across your body with the other hand to play. This is a good position for drawing in the garden with chalk, doing a floor puzzle, playing with blocks, lego and other small toys.
- Practice opening jars of all sizes
- Pour water from a pitcher into several cups
- To keep the wrists straight while colouring, drawing and writing, use a slanted or vertical surface such as an easel. Paper can be taped to a wall as well.

Ways to develop fine motor control

- **Playdough** - pinching, squeezing, with thumb and forefinger, poking, rolling to make a snake
- **Threading** - beads, pasta straws. Make necklaces
- **Picking up small objects** - using the thumb and index finger, learning to use tweezers and pipettes or small eye droppers. Count dried peas into a pot or post pennies into a money box or use inset puzzles.
- **Finger rhymes** - stretching and curling fingers, moving them independently
- **Water play** - using spray toys and spray bottles. Water the flowers, spray the path or windows
- **Craft activities** - glue sticks and paint brushes. Making collages with paper, decorating with sequins.
- **Icing cakes** - using a plastic dispenser to push and squeeze out the icing.
- **Strengthening activities** - swinging from a climbing frame, grasping to climb, crawling through tunnels.
- **Stirring cake mixtures** - using a two handed operation, one to hold the bowl the other to stir. Encourage anti-clockwise rotation
- **Making powder paint and blending colours** - as with mixing a cake.
- **Cutting** - using scissors to cut snips in paper either freely or along lines.