

Handwriting

Handwriting is a very complex perceptual-motor skill and certain fundamental skills need to be developed before a child even picks up a pencil.

These skills include: fine motor strength, thumb opposition, crossing the midline, pincer grasp, finger isolation, hand-eye coordination, bilateral integration, upper body strength, in-hand manipulation and postural control.

We've already looked at good posture for handwriting. Today, I'd like to quickly look at handwriting warm up exercises.

Handwriting Warm-up Exercises

Tense muscles can make **handwriting** difficult and make a child tire more quickly during handwriting tasks. These exercises can be beneficial when carried out prior to handwriting (especially a longer writing task); or when used during short breaks during longer pieces of work. These exercises are in a sequence (starting from the large muscles to the smallest) that incorporates all the main muscle groups used in handwriting. The entire sequence should be carried out.

1. Establish a good sitting position, sitting upright with the feet flat on the floor.
2. Hold on to each side of the chair and push up through straight arms.
3. Shrug shoulders – right, left then both.
4. Hold arms out in front with one in a fist. Open that fist whilst making the other hand into a fist simultaneously, repeat several times.
5. Stretch both arms up above the head, stretch out to the sides and then cross them in front of you. Hold each position for ten seconds.
6. Interlock fingers and circle thumbs around each other, clockwise then anticlockwise.
7. Interlock fingers and lift both index fingers up and down. Repeat this with little fingers.
8. Hold hands pointing upwards in front of you, with both elbows pointing out to the side. Press palms against each other and hold for a few seconds.
9. Make loops with the thumb and each finger in turn.
10. Press all fingertips and thumbs together.
11. Walk the index and middle fingers up and down the surface of a table.