

## Thumb – Stabilise

### Plastic bottle top twist

Place the bottle top on a table. Place the top between your thumb and fingers, and twist from one side to the other as if you are undoing the bottle top. Make sure the thumb moves all the way out to the side.  
**5 – 10 times on both hands.**

### Make an ‘O’ (not a ‘C’)

Use a small firm ball and place it in your ‘web space’ (between the base of your thumb and index finger), so you are making an ‘O’ around the ball. Squeeze for 3 seconds, then relax.

## Theraputty Games

(Use medium strength Theraputty or playdough).

**Hedgehog** – make a ball shape then spikes by pinching the putty.

**Hiding the thumb in a ball of putty** – or making a bowl out of putty.

**Finger Squeezes** – Squeeze the Theraputty between each finger.

**Mud Squeezes**- Squeeze the Theraputty (mud) as hard as you can so that it squidges out between your fingers.

**Model make** – Roll out a sausage shape, and turn it into a snake or snail and pick indents all the way along.



# Strengthening Activities

## For Hypermobile Fingers & Thumbs

### Our Details:

Children’s Therapy  
AHP Hub 1,  
Kendray Hospital,  
Doncaster Road,  
Barnsley  
S70 3RD

Telephone: 01226 644396

If you have any queries, please contact your therapist

### Barnsley Children’s Therapy Services



**Name:**

**NHS Number:**

[www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk)

With all of us in mind.

Some children and young people have hypermobile\* joints in their fingers and thumbs.

*\*hyper means 'more' and mobility means 'movement'*

This means your joints can look bendy and can move further than other people's. Muscles have to work harder and you might get more tired.

This may mean you:

- Hold your pencil differently.
- Struggle to use scissors.
- Are not as quick at dressing or fastenings as your friends.

Most children and young people will become less bendy as they get older. In the meantime, it is important to keep your hands (and body) healthy, fit and strong through regular exercise and activities.

Here are some exercises for you to do at home and school:

Try to do them every other day, but at least 3 times a week. Choose 3 activities each time, pick different ones every day.

**Note: we are aiming for strength and control, not speed, so don't rush the exercises. Make sure that your fingers or thumb aren't bending the wrong way!**

If you are struggling with motivation, try a reward chart where you can work towards a special treat.

## Whole hand – squeeze and release

Practice for a few minutes on each hand. Use an egg timer so you know how long you have done!

### Squeeze & Move:

Using a small soft ball (e.g., foam tennis ball), squeeze the ball in the palm of your hand. Then move the ball around with your finger tips before you squeeze it again.

Then just press your thumb tip into the ball.

*Try not to let your thumb collapse into the palm of your hand.*

### Chinese balls / Golf balls rotation:

Place two small balls in the palm of your hand. Rotate the balls around each other towards your thumb. You can use your other hand slightly to assist the balls to rotate around your palm until you improve. The smaller 'chinese balls', if you can find them, are perfect because they are heavier which provides more sensory information to the hand.

### Additional Activities and Games:

- Squeeze water out of washing up bottles to draw on outdoor floors, or knock targets.
- Squeeze out sponges in the bath or clean the car.
- Playdough activities:
  - Roll into different sized balls.
  - Squash them flat.
  - Use shape cutters.

## Fingers – pincer & opposition grasps

### The 'Tent' (repeat several times per hand):

Put your hand flat on the table, and spread your fingers as wide as possible with your wrist flat on the table. Keeping your wrist on the table, keep your fingers straight but pull them in (bending your knuckles) to become a 'tent' – do this with your playdough / putty.

### Pick up Game:

Use small objects such as sultanas, popcorn, beads or 1p coins. Pick them up one at a time using thumb and index finger and store them in your palm. Once you have 2-3 in your palm – use your fingers to bring one object at a time to the tips of your finger and thumb and placing it down on the table or in a pot (or in your mouth if it is a sultana!).

### Additional Activities and Games:

- Playdough activities:
  - Make models of animals, people and flowers.
- Tweezers.
- Clothes Pegs.
- Construction Activities
  - Play and construct with Popoids, Duplo, Lego, Pop'n'Lock, Stickle-Bricks