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## Hand Arches

There are several **arches** within the palm of your hand that enable the hand to grasp objects of different sizes and shapes. These arches direct the skilled movement of your fingers and control the power of your grasp.



[More about Hand Arches](#)

*Try to keep the RING and PINKY fingers tucked into the palm so that the thumb, index and middle fingers are doing the work*

Developing the "Precision" side of the hand: Let the thumb, index and middle fingers do the work

- cutting with scissors
- scooping sand, rice, beans, etc. using Bubble Tongs
- draw around small circles and fill in small circles
- teach how to snap fingers
- spinning tops
- wind up toys
- tennis ball "Hungry Guy" (see [instructions](#))
- try to twist a cap onto a small bottle or a tube of toothpaste with one hand
- cupped hand activities: shaking dice, forming a ball of clay or putty by rolling it between both palms, see how much rice, beans, sand, etc. you can hold in your cupped hands, form fingers into a spider then bend and straighten fingers
- Tongs, tweezers, connected chop sticks, strawberry hullers: use these to pick up small objects for sorting, such as beads, marbles, beans, pompoms and cotton balls.
- corn cob holders, toothpicks or large push pins (thumb tacks): Place a picture over a sheet of craft foam or cork board. Then use the push pin or corn cob prongs to punch holes along the lines of a picture. Hold it up to let the light shine through.
- Push a toothpick point into a styrofoam tray or plate, or in aluminum foil placed over craft foam or corkboard to make a picture.
- Dress up dolls: requires a surprising amount of hand strength and endurance
- corn cob holders, toothpicks or large push pins (thumb tacks) to make hole designs in putty, play doh, clay, etc.
- place coins or bingo chips in narrow slots; a piggy bank is perfect, Connect Four game
- eye droppers: make colorful dribble art creations by placing drops of colored water on a paper towel or coffee filter
- geoboards: make shapes and letters using rubber bands on geoboards
- pick-up sticks, Jenga, Don't Spill the Beans
- coin flipping contest: line up rows of coins and see how fast you can flip them over
- pegboard activities, Lite Brite
- Tiddly winks games, Ants in the Pants
- tong games: Operation, Crocodile Dentist, Bedbugs
- Ziplok bags: encourage using fingertips to press and seal
- Buttoning, snapping, zipping
- pop beads
- stringing beads
- peel stamps and stickers
- crumple small bits of tissue paper using fingertips, dip in glue and paste onto a paper plate or paper to make a flower bouquet
- tear small pieces of paper with finger tips and paste them onto a sheet of paper to make a picture or collage

Clay, therapy putty, Silly putty, play-doh, Sculpey, bread dough, modeling foam (see [Homemade Play](#) for putty)

- break off small pieces, then try rolling the putty or clay between the pads of the thumb and index finger to make small balls
- flatten small balls by pinching them between the pads of the thumb and index finger
- starting with a larger round ball of putty or clay, form the thumb, index and middle fingers into a large round C shape, place the ball between the fingertips and try to pinch the fingers together.
- try hiding small objects (beads, pennies, beans) inside and then try pulling them out

- use a rolling pin to flatten it out, then use cookie cutters to make shapes

#### Interlocking construction toys

- Mega Blocks are large sized Legos and are best for preschool age children
- Bristle (Krinkles) blocks are a good choice for preschool age
- Legos and K'nex are best for older children
- Pop beads: large size for preschool, small (play jewelry type) for older children
- Linking chains

#### Water play with spray bottles, water guns, squirt toys, sponges

- spray bottles: help water plants or spray the windows to clean, play with it in the bathtub, play outdoors in warm weather, add food coloring to make spray bottle pictures in the snow.
- water guns and squirt toys: outdoor summer fun as well as in the bathtub.
- sponges: squeezing to wring out the water is great for strengthening hands and forearms.
- Help wash the car, wash toys and dolls in the sink or bathtub, squeeze sponges on your friends during water play outdoors, bring a bucket or cooler filled with water and sponges to cool off on a hot day when on picnics, soccer games and other outings.

#### Clothespin games

- use the pads of the thumb and index finger to open the clothespin rather than pinching it open against the side of the index finger
- When pinching open, try alternating each finger to squeeze opposite the thumb.
- place clothespins along the top of a container and then on top of each other to construct a design.
- Pick up small objects with the clothespin: cotton balls, pompoms, crumbled paper, beads, pegs, etc.
- Attach several clothespins along the bottom hem of shirt and then pull them off.
- Place clothespins around an index card
- Hang up pictures or plush toys on a string, like a clothesline.

#### Hole puncher

- punch holes along strips of paper (1 to 2 inches wide) or along the edges of a sheet of paper or paper plate.
- use hole punch clippings to make confetti or 'snow' to glue on paper for pictures
- grip style hole punchers (pictured at left) are easier for children to use, rather than the small punchers that require a strong pinch to operate.

#### Bubble Pack

- pop the bubbles on large or small bubble pack by pinching with thumb and index finger or by pushing down on bubbles when sheet is placed on a hard surface.



#### Squeeze toys and materials

- foam balls, animals and shapes
- "Hungry Guy" tennis ball (see [instructions](#)): When you squeeze the ball the mouth will open. Hide pennies, pegs, beads and other small things inside. Squeeze to open and shake out the contents, then feed the Hungry Guy by slipping in the "food". The wider the slit, the easier it will be to open the mouth wide. Start with a wide slit for young children.
- rubber "pinky" balls
- bulb syringe (usually in infant supply sections of stores) or turkey baster to squirt water, or have a race by squeezing them to blow cotton balls and pompoms across a finish line.
- craft activities that require using bottles to squeeze: glue, glitter glue, puffy paint, fabric paint, etc.

#### Pinch strengthening

- Tongs, tweezers, connected chop sticks, strawberry hullers: use these to pick up small objects for sorting, such as beads, marbles, beans, pompoms and cotton balls.
- corn cob holders or large push pins (thumb tacks): Place a picture over a sheet of craft foam or cork board (or trivet). Then use the push pin or corn cob prongs to punch holes along the lines of a picture. Hold it up to let the light shine through.

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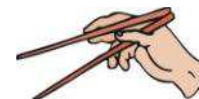
<p>Therapy Street for Kids Store <a href="#">The Beadery Pop Bead Play Set</a> The Beadery New \$50.00 Best \$50.00</p>	 <p><a href="#">Guidecraft Screw Block Set</a> Pro-Motion Distrib... Best \$12.44</p>	 <p><a href="#">Operation Carabiner Keychain by Basic Fun</a> Basic Fun New \$19.51 Best \$14.99</p>
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[Why is this Important?](#)





## More about Hand Arches

hand. While there are some palmar arches present at birth, development of the arches continues over the first few years of life. Crawling is important toward developing the muscles and arches on the pinky side of the hand. Most of the weight bearing when crawling occurs on that side of the hand. The infant learns that he/she can hold something with the thumb, index and middle fingers and crawl with their weight on the pinky side of the hand. This is the beginning of hand separation development. Meanwhile, the arches on the thumb side of the hand are also developing as the child learns to hold objects of different sizes and shapes. When your therapist talks about separation of the two sides of the hand, he/she is referring to being able to perform precision actions with the thumb and index finger side of the hand while the pinky and ring finger side of the hand is stabilized, or acts as an anchor so that the precision fingers can do their job.

## Why is this important?

Separation of the two sides of the hand is most obvious when an individual is cutting with scissors and when writing. You can easily observe the precision side of the hand, thumb-index-middle fingers, controlling the scissors or holding/writing with the pencil, while the power side of the hand, ring-pinky fingers, are not moving. Usually, they are tucked into the palm. When the

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pinky and ring fingers are still, either curled into the palm, resting on a table surface or stretched out into extension away from the other fingers, the precision side of the hand will have the most control. Try writing with your hand totally off the table top. Then try writing so that the pinky side of the hand slides along the page as you write. Think about which position provided you more control.