



FINE MOTOR SKILLS

What are they?

Fine motor skills involve the small muscles of the body. They are involved in small coordinated movements such as grasp and release, manipulation of food, toys, tools, and writing. These skills are often the last to be perfected in a normal developing child/adult and are consequently some of the hardest skills for children and adults with disabilities to perform. Because these skills are difficult to learn and even harder to perform, they are often not attempted or ignored through the course of development, which can lead to a loss of motion, and finally compensation through other “extra” or inefficient movement.

How can they affect my child?

Your hands are extremely powerful and a huge part of allowing you to do the things you want to do throughout the day. Children and adults who have disabilities may have difficulties with using their hands whether it's grasping an object, opening their fingers, or doing small tasks like buttoning. These difficulties can be present due to a variety of reasons and to a varying degree.

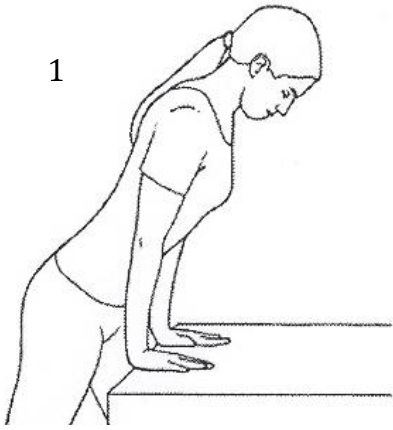
What activities can help my child with their fine motor skills?

By doing some simple stretches and range of motion activities we can help you move your hands more effectively.

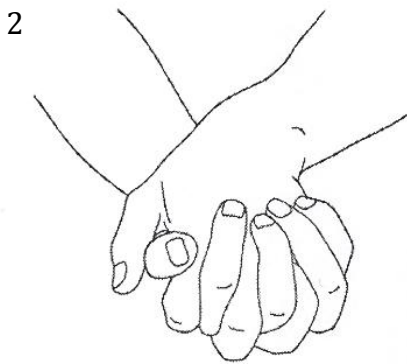
- When you stretch your muscles for 30-60 seconds at a time you can decrease tightness and improve your range of motion in your hands
- Stretching is important in your warm-up prior to riding the horse but also after riding to maintain your range of motion
- Make this a daily routine when you attend RideAbility
- On the back of this page you will find a few stretches and activities that can help you incorporate fine motor skills into your riding activities

Campbell S.K., Palisano, R.J., & Orlin, M.N. *Physical Therapy for Children*. 4th ed. St. Louis: Saunders, 2012.

Kisner, C. & Colby, L.A. (2007). *Therapeutic exercise: Foundations and techniques* (5th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: F.A. Davis



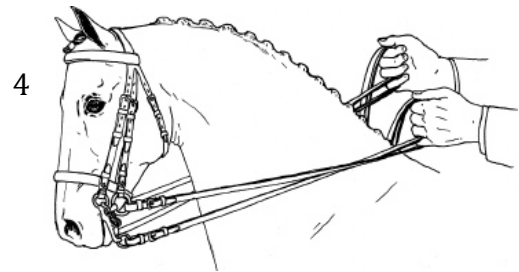
- Stand with the palms of your hands on the saddle horse
- Keep your arms straight and fingers pointing forward
- Press down and straighten your fingers against the saddle
- Hold for 30 seconds
- Repeat 2 times



- Clasp your hands together and support your forearms on the saddle stand
- Put the back on one hand on the saddle and then turn your hands and put the back of the other hand on the table
- Repeat 5 times



- Clasp your hands together
- Reach your hands above your head until you feel a comfortable stretch
- Lower back to saddle
- Repeat 10 times



- Grasp the reins and pull back evenly on both sides
- Release the reins and open your hands
- Repeat 5 times