



Set for Success!

# Fantastic Fingers®

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Welcome to this free sample of Fantastic Fingers® activities for improving the development of children's fine motor skills

**Try out** the games and song, and print off the worksheet from my book. See these activities demonstrated on a video from my Fantastic Fingers® DVD: <https://vimeo.com/90704180>

### It's easy - read, watch & do!

These activities for the fortnight concentrate on developing strength in the wrist extensor muscles, which are needed for precise control of the fingers. Strengthening these wrist muscles brings the thumb and fingers together naturally. This is known as the tenodesis effect.

### Feel it:

Drop your wrist, let your fingers go floppy and relaxed. Now lift your wrist back up quickly.



### The tenodesis effect



Many developmental skills are enhanced while doing these Fantastic Fingers® activities, including: speech & language skills, listening skills, attention & concentration, creativity, rhythm & motor planning, and counting. Of the 100 activities, 40 focus on developing early numeracy and literacy while improving fine motor skills. This makes it ideal for school use.

### Before and After

Prior to these activities, the children have been using a parachute (or cardboard tubes) and ribbons to develop control over their arm movements and develop strength in their shoulder muscles. They have also been strengthening their core muscles for good posture and stability vital for good fine motor control.

In the following weeks after this particular fortnight, through a range of fun activities and songs, they will develop their arm, hand and finger strength, specific coordination for good pencil grip and control, scissor skills and more.

## What do parents, teachers & OTs *love* about Fantastic Fingers®?

the activities easily available equipment **the balance between table top & physical activities**

the creative element easy to follow user-friendly **the kids love it it's fun, playful and child friendly** *definitely helps to improve fine motor coordination* good ideas for teachers to implement

graded from easy to more difficult follows a developmental progression **the songs** **the structure of the programme & the activities** it fits easily into the school term **teacher and parent friendly**

# Track 3 – Wrist Rhymes

## Song and Games – Mr Muscles and Finger Fun

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### Why Do It

*Wrist Rhymes* develops strength in specific wrist muscles required to hold the wrist in extension (back) and stable when colouring, writing and keyboarding.

### What to Do

Sit on the floor with legs crossed and perform the wrist and arm actions on the song sheet. Encourage forceful clapping and tapping as this works the wrist muscles the most. Emphasise straight backs. Keep the elbows straight (long arms) for the seal and crocodile actions.

### Variation

The child places the wrist of their preferred hand on a table with palm off the surface. Adult places their fingers over the back of the child's hand and gently pushes the child's palm down onto the table. The child resists the adult's movement for five counts. Do 5 times.



*Child holds palm up while adult pushes down*

### Further Games

These also develop good wrist strength:

#### i Tracing, Drawing & Colouring Against a Vertical Surface

Trace, draw or colour in on paper mounted on a smooth vertical surface e.g. door, whiteboard (middle of the paper positioned at eye-level, forearm below hand). Use worksheets 9-13 (also 73-100). Chalkboard easels or part of a wall painted with blackboard paint are ideal for vertical drawing.

Draw in chalk on a fence and 'paint off' with water. Rub a crayon sideways over raised objects covered by a thin sheet of paper e.g. leaves, stuck onto paper, which is in turn fixed to the wall with a thin sheet of paper on top.



*Tracing shapes with paper fixed to the wall*

#### ii Jumping Frogs/Ants 'n Pants®

Lie on the stomach, resting on the forearms with the base of the wrist on a non-carpeted floor. Use the middle or pointer finger of the preferred hand to push down and flick toy frogs or ants onto a target or across a line.



*Flicking frogs with base of wrist down*

#### iii Balancing Games

Hold a bean bag or similar item in the hand with the palm up, wrist back at shoulder height and walk backwards, heel to toe etc. Or balance marbles on a plastic plate while walking.



*Balancing a bean bag with wrist extended*

### Related Activity Tracks

See Track 4.

# Wrist Rhymes

## Words and Actions

(words and melody by Ingrid C. King)

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**I can clap like a seal, clap, clap, clap**



(arms out to the front, base of wrists together, hands clap forcefully)

**I can snap like a croc, snap, snap, snap**



(base of wrists together, preferred hand on top and other on bottom, hands clap forcefully)

**I can buzz like a bee, buzz, buzz, buzzy**



(arms out to side and wrists move up and down very quickly)

**I can tap my knee, one, two, three**



(forearm rests on thigh and move wrist up and down loudly)

**Now copy me!**

(tap a pattern for the children to copy or count up to ten)

# Fantastic Fingers® Program Sheet

## Weeks 5 & 6 – Track 3

**Materials:** Print colouring worksheets 9-13 (can also use worksheets 73-100), felt markers; 6-8 plastic jumping frogs or ants; bean bag or plastic plate with rim, 5 marbles

**Preparation:** Watch video track 3 & read pp24-25

**Activities:** Repeat each activity 3 times a week for 2 consecutive weeks

1 Wrist Rhymes (MP3 track 3)	Dates & Comments
In week 6 include variation	
<i>Can they clap loudly keeping the base of their wrists together?</i>	
<b>i Tracing &amp; Colouring Against a Vertical Surface</b>	
Mount worksheet as demonstrated on p24; trace around; remove and colour in at a table	
In week 6 include some colouring in while the worksheet is mounted on the vertical (allow for choice with the worksheets or select other suitable pictures if preferred)	
<i>Time how long they can trace for while the paper is mounted to the wall before tiring and needing to continue at the table. Compare first and last times.</i>	
<b>ii Jumping Frogs/Ants ‘n Pants®</b>	
Follow instructions on p24, place frogs/ants on a smooth surface; jump each frog/ant 3 times or until fatigued	
In week 6, do the activity sitting cross-legged	
<i>While keeping the base of their wrist on the ground, measure how far can they flick? Compare first and last.</i>	
<b>iii Balancing Games</b>	
Follow instructions with the bean bag and then the plate adding marbles; provide a line or object to walk to or around	
<i>Can they maintain their hand at shoulder height throughout? How many marbles drop on the floor?</i>	

# Track 3 – Numeracy & Literacy Ext.

## Shapes, Money, Measurement, Initial Sound & Mass

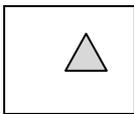
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### Vertical Surface Activities

#### i Stencil Shapes

To name, describe and draw the basic shapes is important for geometry.

Using an A4 size of firm cardboard or thick plastic, cut out a shape from the centre (leave enough on the sides to keep the stencil edges strong). Make several stencils with big and small circles, squares, rectangles and triangles.



Stencil with grey area removed  
Shape is off-set to the right to give the non-preferred left hand space to support the stencil easily

Position stencil against a vertical surface e.g. chalkboard or large sheet of paper mounted against a wall (top edge at eye-level, forearm below hand). Press firmly into surface with non-preferred hand. Using small pieces of chalk/crayon draw around edges of the shape. Remove stencil and use others to create a picture e.g. house. Make repeating patterns using the stencil e.g. 

Re-create the stencilled pattern by arranging cardboard or plastic 2-D shapes. Recognising and creating patterns is an important skill.

#### ii Money Rubbings

Select a variety of coins. Name and order the coins according to value and stick well against a vertical surface (at eye-level). Secure a sheet of thin paper over the top. Rub over coins using the side of a wax crayon until the pattern emerges clearly. Do more and cut out. Play shop with the 'money'.

### Jumping Frogs or Ants

Remember to keep the base of the wrist on the smooth surface. While working in pairs do the following:

#### vi Longest Jumper Competition

Decide what to use to measure with e.g. hand span, ruler or measuring tape. Line the plastic frogs or ants up on the starting line. Take turns to flick them one at a time from left to right. Measure the distance each jumped. Use language such as *long/er/est* and *short/er/est*. Record the distances and place the ordinal cards from worksheets 7-8 next to the furthest three frogs to show which one was *first*, *second* and *third*. Extend to include using other ordinal numbers.

#### vii Froggie Tell Me the Sound

If new to identifying the first sound in a word, arrange the picture cards from worksheets 14-25 in front of a line of plastic toy frogs e.g. picture cards of the ant, apple, snake, sun. Jump the frog and say the name and first sound of the picture the frog lands on or near. Alternatively, draw dinner plate sized circles in chalk on a smooth surface or draw circles on a large sheet of paper or use disposable plates with the letter or word drawn inside/on. Once the frog jumps inside the circle or plate, say the initial sound. Add on a writing component by copying over the letter. Use different colours.

#### viii Human Balancing Scale

Hold both hands with palms facing up and wrists back at shoulder height. Child must not look as partner quietly counts out different amounts of marbles into two plastic bowls (easier) or plastic plates with rim. At first make the difference very great. Child closes eyes as partner places the bowls onto their palms. Wait for the marbles to stop rolling and guess which plate is heavier. Repeat several times and then swap roles. Use language such as *heavier*, *lighter*, *more*, *same* and *less*.

## Worksheet 9: Outlining & Colouring Tricky Thumb – p24

Track 3: Attach worksheet to a wall or window as this will help with muscle strengthening. Outline over the grey lines with a marker. If developmentally ready, colour in the smaller areas of the picture using bending and stretching movements of the 3 Friends which are the thumb, pointer and middle fingers. Then colour in the other areas at a table.

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**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

