

Activities to Improve Handwriting After a Stroke

This handout provides exercises and activities to incorporate into your daily routine to improve motor control in your affected hand for writing.

In-Hand Manipulation Exercises

These exercises are designed to improve your in-hand manipulation skills, or your ability to move an object in one hand. In-hand manipulation is used frequently to readjust your pen during writing. All you need to complete these exercises is a pen or pencil. Attempt to complete 3 sets of 10 repetitions of these exercises daily.

Finger to Palm

Start by grasping your pen between the pads of your fingers and thumb. Then move the pen towards your palm.

Starting Position



Ending Position



Palm to Finger

Start by grasping your pen in your palm. Then use your fingers and thumb to move the pen to the pads of your fingers.

Starting Position



Ending Position



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Shift

Start by grasping the pen so it is positioned up/down, and then move your fingers so you are grasping the top of the pen. Then complete the same movement only downwards to grasp the bottom of the pen.

Starting Position



Ending Position



Rotation

Start by grasping the pen with your fingers and thumb so the pen is positioned horizontally. Then use your fingers and thumb so the pen is positioned vertically.

Starting Position



Ending Position



Functional In-Hand Manipulation Activities

Some activities that you can incorporate into your everyday routine that involve the skills outlined above include opening containers, playing cards, gathering coins from your purse/pocket, and crafting.

Coloring

Coloring is a great activity that improves the strength and coordination in your small hand muscles for writing. Coloring provides repetition and simulates grasping and coordinating the pen similarly to writing. There are many adult coloring books you can find at your local convenient store and also many free templates you can print out from online.

Tracing

Tracing sheets can provide visual support while practicing forming words, which can help with improving your motor coordination for writing freely. There are also many free tracing worksheets you can find online and inexpensive books you can purchase in the preschool section of bookstores.

Writing Activities

Out of all the activities and exercises listed above, the most important activity to incorporate into your daily routine to improve your writing after a stroke is to actually write. The above activities and exercises are a great “warm up,” but you should always follow them with practicing writing. With this, it is not only important to incorporate writing into your daily routine, but also writing activities that are **meaningful** to you.

Some of these activities can include journaling, copying your favorite recipe, writing a note to a loved one, or creating your grocery list.

For more information on this and other information in relation to the older adult please check out our websites at theseniorcenteredpt.com and theseniorcenteredot.com.

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