

# HANDWRITING WARM-UPS

**H**andwriting warm ups are beneficial to increase endurance and strength in the small intrinsic muscles of your hand, and enable you to regulate the pressure you put through your hand and arm when writing. Choose 4 or 5 activities, repeat each activity 5 –10 times prior to handwriting.

**1** **Star jumps and scissor jumps** while standing on the mat to increase energy and concentration.

**2** **Chair-push ups.** Whilst still sitting, put your hands onto the sides of the chair, next to your hips –try to lift your bottom off the chair, and in that position for 5 seconds. (Feet should not be on the floor to assist)

**3** **Wall pushups.** Face a wall with hands on wall at shoulder height. Try to touch your nose to the wall while keeping your body straight

**4** **Desk push ups.** Place your forearms on the desk, (feet on the floor), and push your weight through your arms.

**5** **Push your hands** together in a prayer position with your elbows out to the side, while sitting or standing, and holds for 5 to 10 seconds. Alternatively facing a wall and you can do several wall push ups, keeping your body straight.

**6** **Birdcages.** Put your fingertips on the table, with your hands arched up. Your hands should look like birdcages. Press down onto the table with your fingers, without allowing the birdcages to collapse. Hold for 5 to 10 seconds.

**7** **Tripod stretch and bend** – hold a pen or pencil in a proper tripod grasp i.e. between the tip of the thumb and forefinger resting against the third finger. Do it in the air and practice straightening and bending the fingers.

**8** **Climb the pole** – Hold pencil vertically in the air. Using finger only (not the palm), climb the hand up and down the pencil.

**9** **Paper tug of war** -with another person. Hold the paper between your thumb and index finger -and pull!

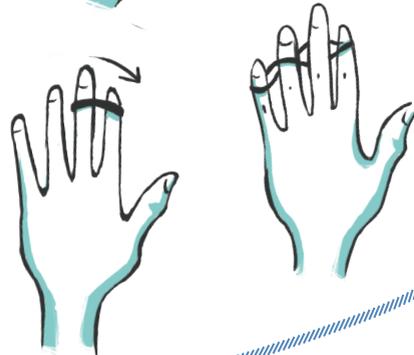
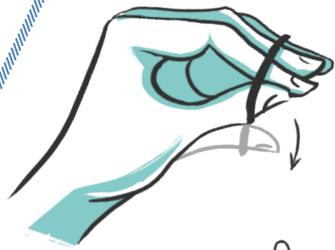
**10** **Shake the hands** out before starting to write.

**11** **Finger taps on the desk** – one finger only at a time. Try to create sequences or tap from thumb to little finger then back again.

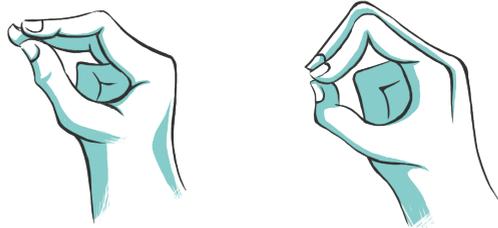
**12** **Hunch your shoulders** up to your ears, hold it for 1,2,3, then drop them back and feel how they are in the relaxed position.

# DURING WRITING

Try these ways to help stop your hand from aching/getting tired.



## Bird Beaks



**Pencil push ups:** This involves hiding the 'magic rock' by curling the ring and little fingers over it. The ' Magic rock is a glass stone or similar, the type used in the bottom of a flower vase....available from \$2 shops... or use a marble or bead. Then touch the tips of the thumb index and middle fingers together and bend and straighten them. This is the movement involved in the ideal pencil grip.

**Exercises:** You can add a bit of extra effort by holding an elastic band in your own thumb and fingers and asking your child to use birdie beaks to pull in the rubber band. Make sure they rest their elbow on the table and are not "cheating" by using their whole arm or wrist to pull! It's a rubber band tug-o-war!!!

- If you can, stop writing & have a short break, before your hand begins to ache. Put your pen down & stretch out your hand regularly.
- Put your hand underneath your thigh (palm facing down) and shift your body weight to put pressure onto your hands.
- Ensure that your forearm/wrists are supported by the desk.
- Drop your arms down beside your body & shake your hands out before starting to write.
- Fluency patterns – while sitting at the desk and holding a pencil, copy your teacher drawing squiggle patterns in the air – try using fingers to make the movements as small as you can – don't use your arm or wrist.
- If you start to feel your body get tired while you are at the desk- repeat some of the 'desk' exercises again.