

What are Fine Motor Skills?



Motor skills are actions that move muscles and these movements are divided into **gross and fine** motor skills.

When thinking of fine motor skills most of us will think about those smaller movements like **handwriting** or sewing that involve **grasping** an object between our thumb and finger and moving them with precision.

In actual fact those smaller precise movements are seen throughout the body:

- hands
- wrists
- fingers
- feet
- toes
- lips and tongue



and all demand synchronisation with the eyes (**hand eye coordination**)

Why are they important?

Fine motor skills are utilised when undertaking everyday tasks from **self-care** (using cutlery, fastening buttons or zips, cleaning teeth, etc) to **academic tasks** (colouring, writing, cutting, etc).

Sometimes when children can't complete these tasks their **academic performance suffers**, and they can develop **self-esteem issues** which may result in inappropriate behaviour be it fury born out of frustration or the inability to develop their independence by dressing or feeding themselves.



How to Develop Motor Skills

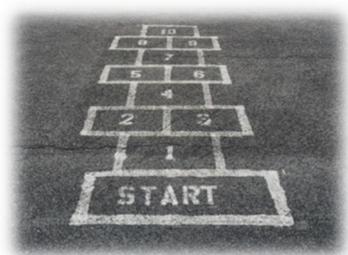
Both types of motor skills develop together as many activities rely on coordination of gross and fine motor skills. There are several **neurological pathways** that need to be developed in order for this to occur.

The breakdown below is an example of those required for the fine motor skills of the **wrists, hands and fingers**:

- **Proprioception (body awareness)** - Information is sent from our muscles and joints to our brain so we know where our body is in space, it's position and movements.
- **Crossing the midline** - being able to traverse an invisible line running from head to toe dividing the child's body into left and right side
- **Hand eye coordination** - being able to process information from the eyes to guide and direct the hands
- **Hand and finger strength** - being able to exert the necessary muscle strength to perform controlled movements
- **Bilateral integration** - the use of the two hands together with one hand leading (e.g. holding a jar steady with one hand while opening the lid with the other)
- **Hand dominance** - using the same hand consistently for performing tasks allowing refinement of skills
- **Hand division** - using the thumb, index finger and middle finger for movements and the fourth and little finger for stabilisation.
- **Object manipulation** - the controlled use of tools such as cutlery or hairbrush and the skilled manipulation of tools such as scissors or pens.

Three tricks to help develop fine motor skills

- **Play games** that teach proprioception and crossing the midline e.g. 'tightrope walking' the cracks in paving stones or hopscotch.



- **Use plasticine, play doh and clay** - at first just to squeeze and build up muscles of the hand and then just using the fingertips and then a combination of the two to construct models.



- **Threading activities** - start with larger items like pasta and slowly move to objects like incrementally smaller buttons.

Teal Hatch Programme



Our **Teal Hatch Programme** has exercises that activate all of the **neural pathways** (mentioned above) involved in the development of fine motor skills.

This is conveniently delivered online over a manageable 12-week period that allows for development to be **built and sustained**.

The program also provides:

- nutritional advice
- downloadable PDFs for activities of daily living
- fun fine motor skill activities.

Helping your child break free of their shell and excel.



www.hatchoutofyourshell.com