



Tools for the Hands



Sometimes when kids are having difficulty sitting still, having something to do with their hands can give them an opportunity to “fidget” while keeping the rest of their body still. Additionally, children who have a tendency to get nervous/anxious with unfamiliar situations or transitions can benefit from hand tools to help them feel more grounded, while at the same time giving them something comforting and familiar to fidget with.

Every child has different preferences. Some kids like playing with small everyday items that they can just fidget with, some kids really like deep pressure to their hands, and some kids like getting resistance to the muscles of their hands by squeezing small items. Experimenting with different types of hand tools can help your child identify what works best for them.

Some examples of Tools for the Hands...

- Small everyday items to fidget with
 - Elastics/rubber bands- child can put the rubber band around fingers and stretch against the resistance for deep pressure to the hands
 - Paper clips or paper clip chains- an item small enough to fit in the pocket to fidget with. Also an item that wouldn't stand out for older children to have as a fidget toy in school or in public
 - Click pens- BIC makes a series of pens (Atlantis) that make little to no noise when clicked
 - Jewelry- the elastic “for a cause” bracelets are great because they are gender-neutral and practically everyone has one. They make a great fidget because they are always on the body and are ready at a moment's notice to use when needed.





- A smooth stone... or a rough one depending on your child's individual sensory preferences
 - Cotton balls or pompoms- they can keep them right in their pocket to fidget with
- Homemade hand fidgets-
 - Balloon Hand Fidgets- double up the balloons before filling them if you want to make it sturdier. Use a funnel to fill the balloon with sand, rice, beans, flour, or sugar and tie the end.
 - Gel Bags- use a freezer bag if possible as they are thicker and sturdier. Fill the bag half full with hair gel. Add glitter or sequins for visual appeal. Secure the end with duct tape.

Examples of Tools for the Hands continued...

- Tools that provide deep pressure/resistance to the hands
 - Putty or Play-Doh- if using as a warm-up tool or before a time that the child will be expected to concentrate on something else, hiding small items like beads or coins in the putty can provide an opportunity for resistance
 - Finger pulls- providing traction to each individual finger and holding for 5 seconds
 - Hand squishes- place hands at midline clasped together, squish and hold 5 to 10 seconds.
 - Any squishy tactile balls can provide varying types of resistance

While there are many different Tools for the Hands that you can find around your house or make on your own, there are many tools that are available commercially as well. Doing a search on Amazon.com for "hand fidgets" will list hundreds of options available to purchase. A few specific ones that some children have found helpful are...

- Tangles- they make many different sizes, colors and textures that are appealing to just about anyone
- Desk Buddy Sensory Bar- looks like a ruler and can fit easily either on or in a child's desk





- Koosh balls- all different sizes and colors
- Handheld massager

Some other websites you might use in trying to find the right-hand fidgets for your child are...

- www.therapro.com
- www.funandfunction.com
- www.officplayground.com
- www.pfot.com

Remember to do some experimenting to see what works best for your child and what kind of fidgets will work and/or be the most appropriate in different environments.

Questions?

I am here to help! Contact Jamie via phone or email anytime!

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