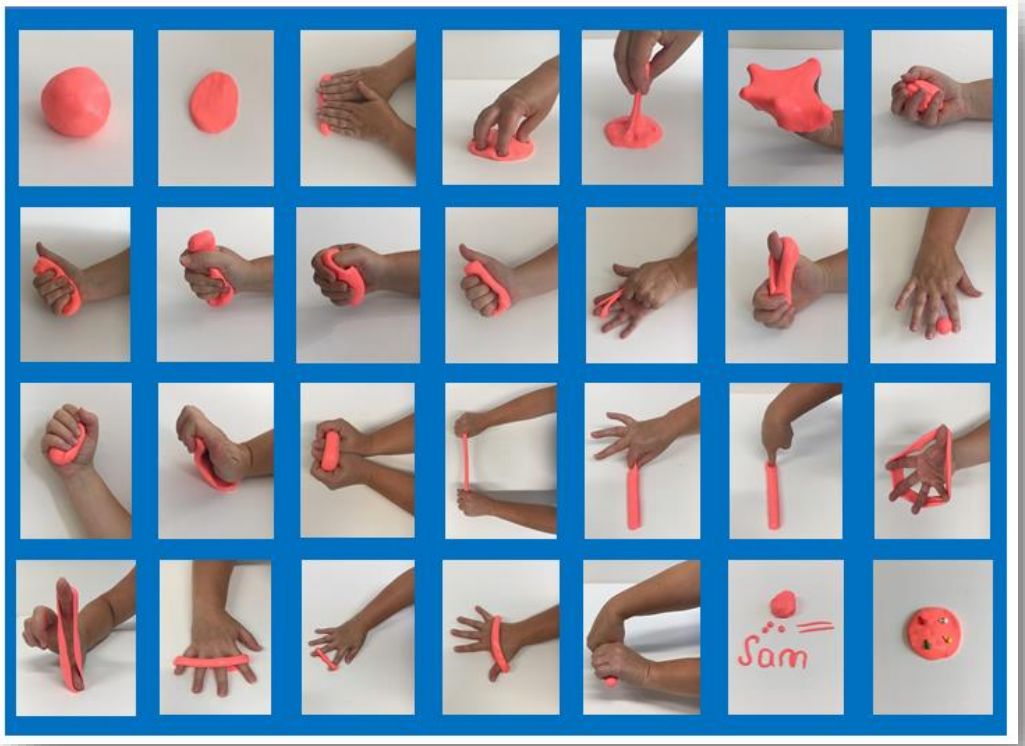
SCS
Specialist Children's Services

# Theraputty Activities




**Theraputty activities will help to develop your hand strength and ability to control fine finger movements.**

**Activities to be complete:** (therapists to tick which activity you want child to complete)

| Hand Warm Up to be complete prior to starting activities! | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | 9. | | 17. | | 25. | | 33. | |
| 2. | | 10. | | 18. | | 26. | | 34. | |
| 3. | | 11. | | 19. | | 27. | | 35. | |
| 4. | | 12. | | 20. | | 28. | | 36. | |
| 5. | | 13. | | 21. | | 29. | | 37. | |
| 6. | | 14. | | 22. | | 30. | | | |
| 7. | | 15. | | 23. | | 31. | | | |
| 8. | | 16. | | 24. | | 32. | | | |

***Please complete _____ of the above ticked activities _____ times per week.***

*Choose different activities each time in order to complete all activities in your programme.*

**Place the putty on a clean smooth surface, preferably a table. When the theraputty is excessively stretched it can break down into fine strands; care should be taken with these as they can 'stick' to carpets and clothing.**

***Theraputty should be kept in an air tight container.***

## Theraputty Advice

- Use theraputty as advised with the activity sheet provided.
- Wash hands before and after using theraputty to keep it clean and avoid cross contamination and/or infection.
- Ideally each child should use the same piece of theraputty at each session.
- Place the theraputty on a clean smooth surface preferably a table. When the theraputty is excessively stretched it can break down into fine strands; care should be taken with these as they 'stick' to carpets and clothing.
- To remove fine bits of putty from the table surface daub with a large blob of theraputty.
- Theraputty is available in a range of strengths or resistances. The different strengths are colour coded as follows:
    - Tan: extra-extra soft
    - Yellow: extra soft
    - Red: soft
    - Green: medium
    - Blue: firm
    - Black: extra firm

  We normally only work with yellow, red and green theraputty when working with children and young people. As a rule of thumb we would use yellow with nursery and early years primary school children, red with mid to late primary school children, and green with older children. Obviously some children may be stronger than others but it is better to start with a softer resistance and work up to a firmer strength.
- There are a number of suppliers online who can provide the various colours in different quantities ranging from individual sized tubs up to pots containing enough for an entire class.

## Sitting Posture

Follow these tips for the best posture when carrying out table top activities:

- Sit at a table (preferably for your height)
- Feet flat on floor, (use a box to rest your feet on if your feet don't quite touch the floor)
- Ankles, knees and hips should all be at 90º angles
- Ensure your bottom is right back on the chair, sit up tall with back straight

# Hand Warm Up Exercises

Carrying out the following hand exercises prior to fine motor or drawing tasks helps the child's hands prepare for activity. The exercises are aimed at increasing the tactile and proprioceptive sensory messages the child receives from their hands. By doing this the child will have an increased sensory awareness of what their hand muscles and joints are doing. This should help improve motor control and aid motor memory for learning movements involved in fine motor tasks such as writing.

1. Briefly rub hands, palms together, then the back of each hand. If tolerated hand cream can be used.

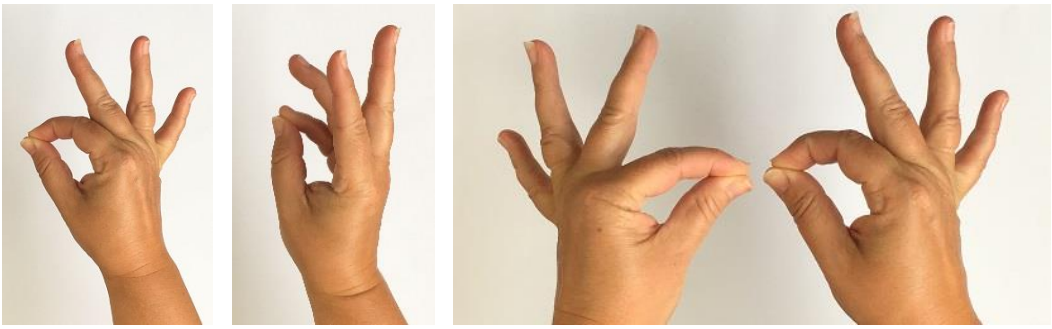
2. Press hands and fingers together with palms flat, squeeze then stretch fingers out wide. Repeat 5 times.

3. Hook fingers of both hands together and pull in opposite directions.

4. With palms together and fingers straight, press fingers together firmly. Hold for 10 seconds, and then shake out the hands to relax fingers.

5. Place palms together, fingers straight, separate palms slightly, keeping finger tips touching. Rotate thumbs around each other, away from the body then towards body. Ten times each way.

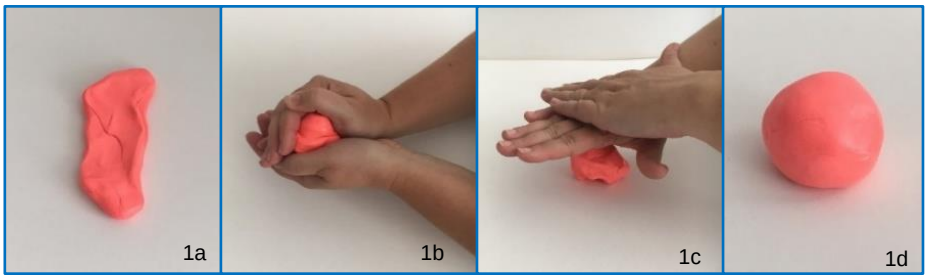
6. With hands separated, preferred hand first, ask the child to touch their thumb with each fingertip in turn, beginning with the index finger and back again. When mastered separately, carry out with both hands at the same time.



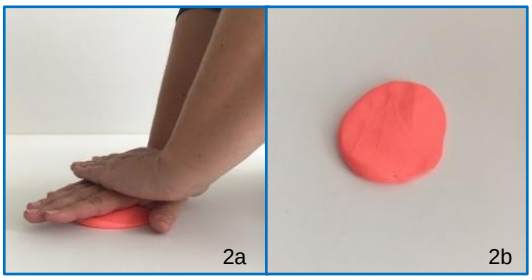
7. Put your hands on the table (palms down). Now copy your partner who is pretending to play the piano, by lifting one finger at a time from the table.

**Note:** It may be beneficial to have a break during fine motor tasks and carry out hand aerobics to help maintain a high level of sensory messages.

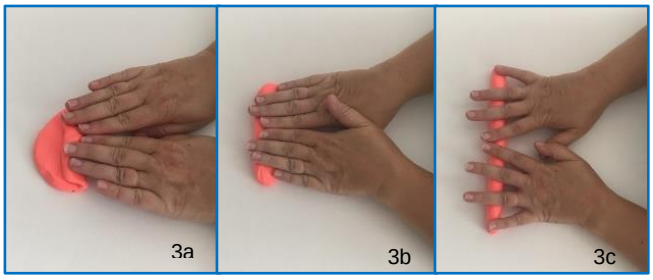
1. Rolling a ball: Start to mould the putty between both hands into a ball shape. Place the putty on a table/smooth surface and roll the putty into a large ball using both hands together.



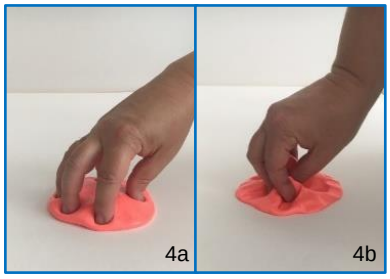

2. Pancake: Complete activity 1. Flatten the ball to make a pancake (from a standing position) with one hand on top of the other and arms straight. Shoulders should be immediately above hands and the child should not be leaning too far forward i.e. arms should be at 90º to hands.



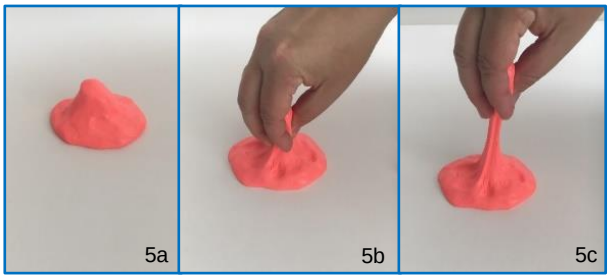

3. Sausage: Complete activities 1 and 2. Start to roll the edge of the pancake together into a sausage using both hands. Roll the putty forwards and backwards (arms and hands moving only, do not rock body back and forth while rolling). Start with fingers together when rolling then begin to spread these out as you continue to roll.



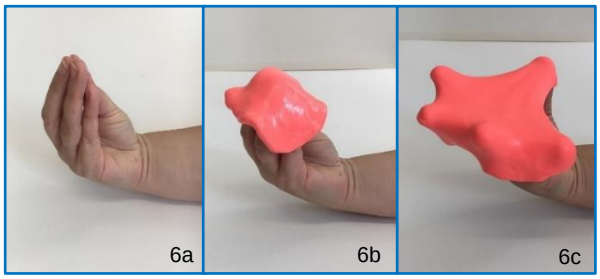

4. Volcano: Complete activities 1 and 2. Firmly secure the pancake to the table by pressing the edges down, then place fingers and thumb lightly around the edge of the pancake. Press fingers and thumb into putty and slowly pull fingers together towards the centre. Carry out exercise with both hands.




5. Cone: Complete activities 1 and 2 then shape the putty into a cone and stick the base to the table (5a). Place fingers and thumb over the top of the cone and lightly hold the putty (5b). Pull up on the cone, bringing the thumb and fingers together (5c). Carry out exercise with both hands.

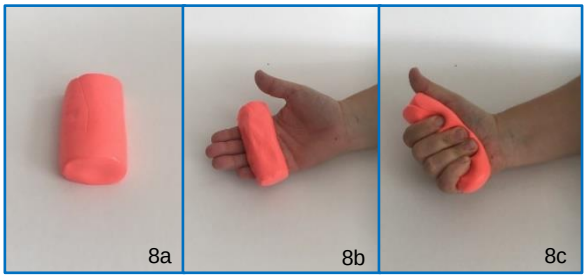


6. Finger Spread: Complete activities 1 and 2. Pick up the pancake from the table and close one set of fingers together (6a). Place the pancake over the top of closed fingers (6b). Start to slowly open out fingers spreading putty out (6c). Open fingers out as wide as you can. Carry out exercise with both hands.

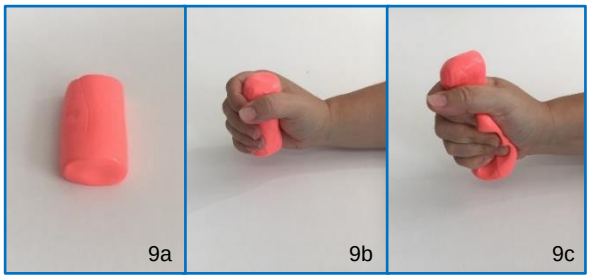



7. Full Grip: Gather all the putty into the palm of your hand. Squeeze the putty with the fingers against the palm of the hand in a kneading motion, rolling it over and around in the hand while exerting as much pressure as possible against the resistance of the putty.

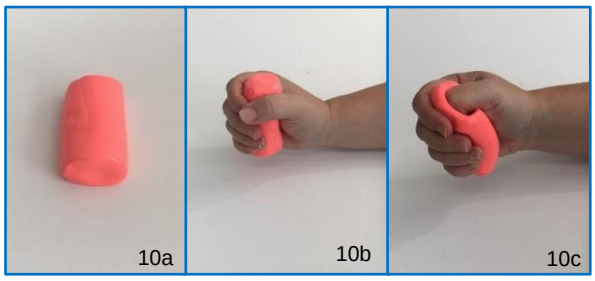
8. Fingers Only: Complete activities 1, 2 and 3. Form the putty into a barrel shape (8a). Place arm on table with the palm facing up. Put a roll of putty at the base of the fingers (8b). Curl the finger tips into the putty without moving the big knuckles (8c). After the fingers have pressed into the putty, fold over and repeat. Carry out exercise with both hands.



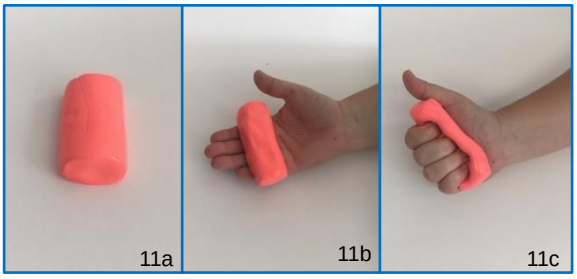

9. Squeeze: Complete activities 1, 2 and 3. Form the putty into a barrel shape (9a) and place in palm of your hand. Bend fingers around it making a fist and squeeze (9b). Carry out exercise with both hands.



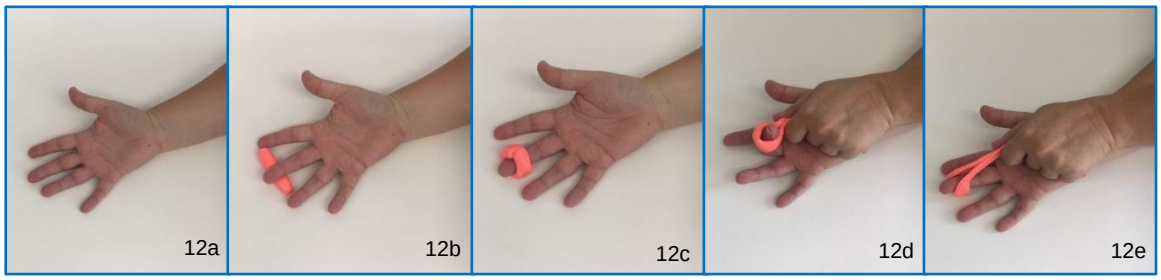

10. Thumb Press: Complete activities 1, 2 and 3. Form the putty into a barrel shape as per picture 1 and place in palm of hand. Press thumb into the putty with as much force as possible until the thumb has pressed through to the palm. Reform and repeat. Carry out exercise with both hands.



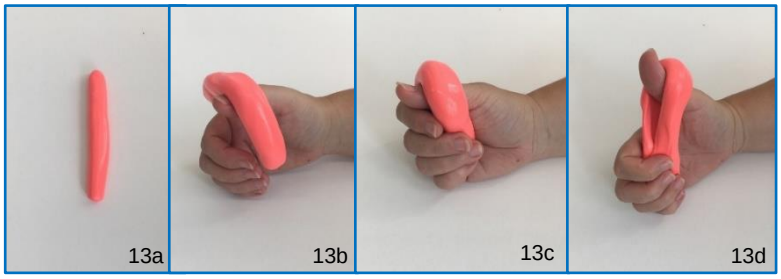
**11.** Finger Dig: Complete activities 1, 2 and 3. Form the putty into a barrel shape (11a) and place in palm of hand (11b). Dig fingers into the putty until they press through the palm of the hand and form a fully clenched fist (11c). Release the fingers, roll the putty over to reshape and repeat. Carry out exercise with both hands.



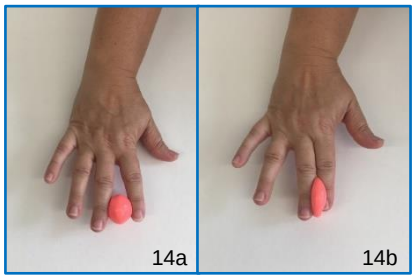

**12.** Finger Extensions: Complete activities 1, 2 and 3 using a smaller amount of putty than normal. Wrap putty over tip of middle finger (12b-c). Bend middle finger in towards the palm of the hand (12c). Grab the putty with the other hand then extend finger to a fully opened position with as much force as possible (12d-e). The degree of resistance is controlled by the thickness of the putty held over the fingertip. Repeat with each finger. Carry out exercise with both hands.




**13.** Thumb Extension: Complete activities 1, 2 and 3 using a smaller amount of putty than normal. Wrap putty over the tip of thumb while it is bent toward palm of hand. Hold the loose ends down and extend the thumb to an open position with as much force as possible. Control the degree of resistance by the thickness of the putty held over the thumb tip. Carry out exercise with both hands.

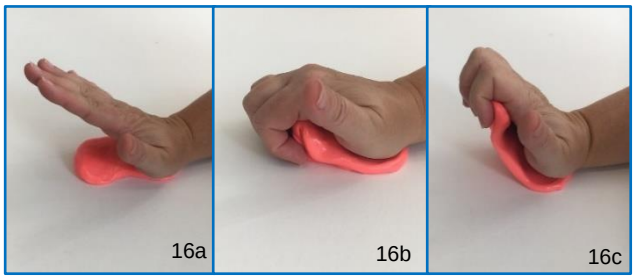



**14.** Fingers Scissors: Complete activities 1 and 2 using a smaller amount of putty than normal. Place the small ball shaped putty between index and middle fingers and squeeze until fingers meet. Repeat with all fingers. Carry out exercise with both hands.

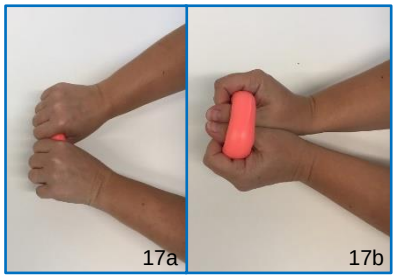


**15.** Wrist Rotation: Hold the putty in one hand. Grip putty tightly and rotate the wrist in a circular motion, first in one direction, then in the opposite direction, while pressing into the putty with as much force as possible. Carry out exercise with both hands.

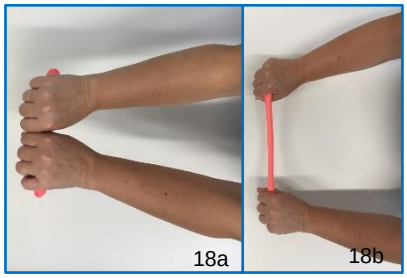
**16.** Wrist Extension: Complete Activities 1 and 2. Rest your forearm on a table (palm down over pancake shape). Grip the putty with the fingertips and begin to peel putty from table moving wrist only keeping forearm on table. Raise wrist up to its full extension with as much force as possible. Carry out exercise with both hands.



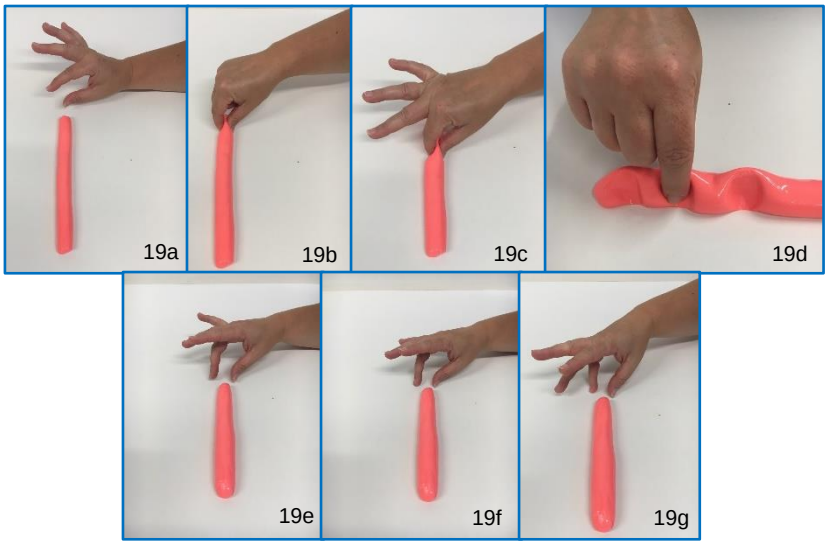

**17.** Rainbow: Complete Activities 1, 2 and 3. Hold end of putty in each hand and bend putty so that both palms are facing inwards and make the putty into a rainbow shape.



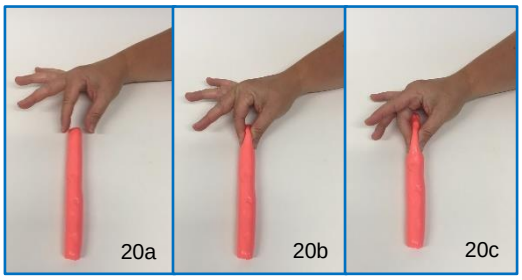

**18.** Stretch: Complete activities 1, 2 and 3. Hold the putty with both hands in front of your chest (keeping arms out straight). Pull it apart until it is thin.



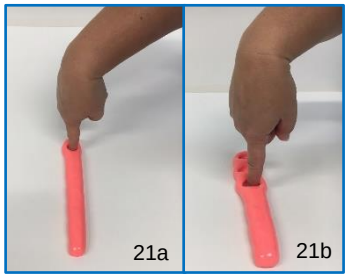

**19.** Pinching: Complete activities 1, 2 and 3. Using the tip of thumb and index fingers, start pinching with the fingers held vertically above the putty, and continue to pinch along the entire sausage. Roll out a new sausage and repeat instructions above with the tip of the thumb and the next finger (until all fingers (e.g. index, middle, ring and pinkie) have pinched the sausage of putty). Carry this exercise out twice with both hands.



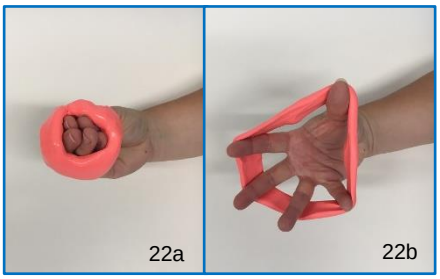
**20.** Side Pinching: Complete activities 1, 2 and 3. Start pinching with thumb and the side of each finger. Repeat with all fingers. The fingers not being used for pinching can either be pointed out, or tucked into the palm. If a child struggles to isolate their 'pinching finger' they may need adult support to hold the other fingers out the way.



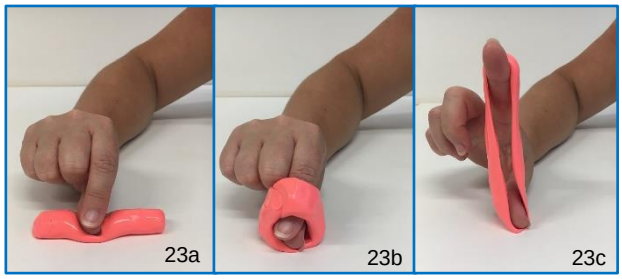

**21.** Finger Press: Complete activities 1, 2 and 3. Push the index finger into the putty repeatedly along the entire length of the sausage. Roll out a new sausage and repeat instructions until all fingers (e.g. index, middle, ring and pinkie) have been pushed into the sausage of putty. Carry out exercise with both hands.



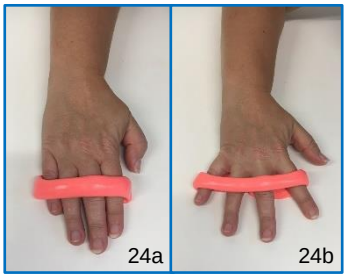

**22.** Doughnut Stretch: Complete activities 1, 2 and 3. Fasten ends together to form a doughnut. Place thumb and fingers in the hole and stretch fingers outwards against the putty. Carry out exercise with both hands.



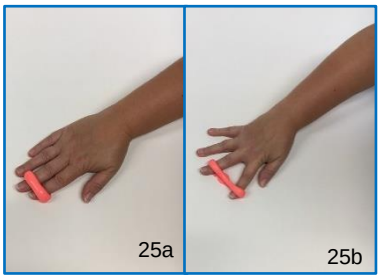

**23.** Mini Doughnut Stretch: Complete activities 1, 2 and 3. Hold the index finger and thumb together and wrap putty round them to form a doughnut. Stretch the finger away from the thumb. The thumb can be stabilised against a table top. Carry out with the thumb and the next finger (until all fingers (e.g. index, middle, ring and pinkie) have been used. Carry out exercise with both hands.



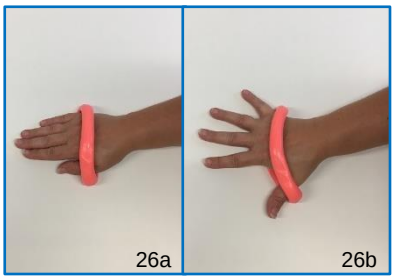

**24.** Finger Stretch: Complete activities 1, 2 and 3. Fasten ends together to form a doughnut. Place doughnut around the four fingers at the middle joint. Spread fingers apart, sideways against the putty. Carry out exercise with both hands.



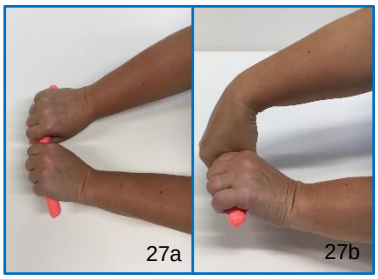
**25.** Mini Finger Stretch: Complete activities 1, 2 and 3 and make a small sausage. Fasten ends of small sausage together to form a doughnut. Wrap around the top of two fingers together then spread fingers apart. Repeat for all fingers. Carry out exercise with both hands.



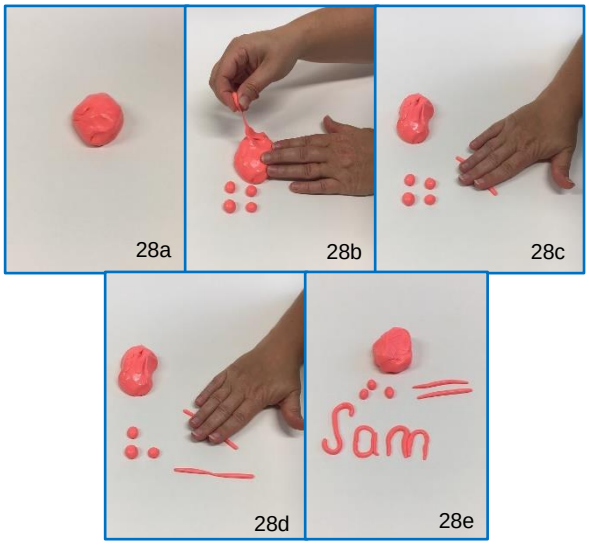

**26.** All Finger Stretch: Complete activities 1, 2 and 3. Fasten ends together to form a doughnut. Place doughnut about the base of the fingers. Keep fingers straight and stretch thumb sideways and spread fingers apart. Carry out exercise with both hands.



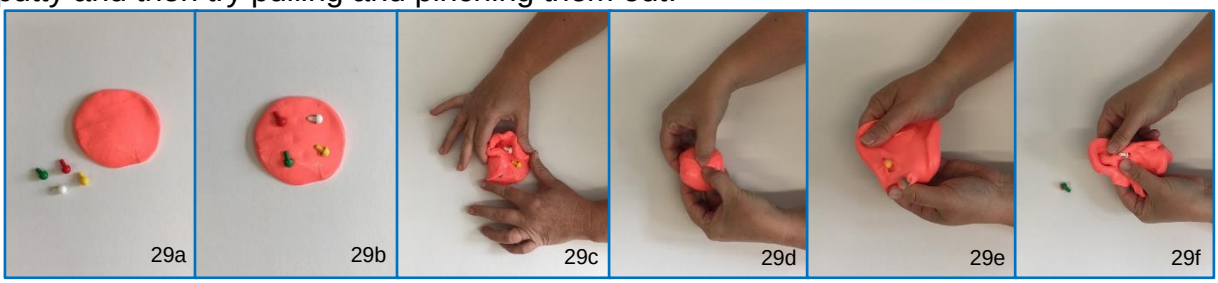

**27.** Twist: Complete activities 1, 2 and 3. Hold the end of the putty in both hands, twist the putty forward and backwards (like ringing a cloth) with both hands. One hand moving forwards whilst other hand moving backwards.




**28.** Make Your Name: Complete activity 1. Hold the ball in one hand and make a cone shape. With thumb and finger pads of other hand, pinch off small pieces of putty by twisting and pinching at the narrow end of the cone. Then roll into small pea shapes. Take the pea shapes and then roll into long sausages. Use the long sausages to create your name.




**29.** Hide and Seek: Try hiding small objects (beads, marbles, small pegs, pennies) inside the putty and then try pulling and pinching them out.



## Other theraputty activities to try:

30. **Cookies:** Use a rolling pin to flatten it out then use cookie cutters to make shapes.

31. **Spaghetti:** Take a large amount of theraputty and pull it apart using two hands to create long, stringy pieces of spaghetti. Lay the spaghetti out on a table / plate in a round shape. Then take smaller pieces of theraputty and roll into small balls (meatballs) and place on top of the spaghetti.

32. **Mushrooms:** Make small pieces of theraputty, roll into balls and use your thumb to flatten the balls into pancakes. Then use your thumb to push into the pancake to create the top of a mushroom. Take small pieces of theraputty and roll out into stalks for the mushroom. Place the stalks into the top of the mushrooms.

33. **Fried Eggs:** Use two separate pieces of theraputty. Roll the larger of the two pieces between two hands to create a ball shape and then flatten on to the table. Repeat this task for the smaller piece of putty and place on to larger piece to create a fried egg.

## Theraputty Animals

34. **Let's make a caterpillar!** Roll the ball to make the body, like a sausage, make some eyes and decorations using small pegs. Push them in with your fingers.

35. **Let's make a snail!** Roll the theraputty into a sausage, take one end of the theraputty and roll it into a shell shape for the snail; leave enough for the head of the snail.

36. **Let's make a Spider!** You could now make a spider and make eight legs by pinching bit of putty with your fingers, pull gently out and stick on the body to make the legs. Make some eyes for the spider by pushing the pegs in with your fingers. Using a plastic fork, make swirly designs on his back to make him look hairy!

37. **Let's make a crocodile!** Roll the putty into a long snake and make spikes—start by pinching using the index finger and thumb then try thumb with different fingers.

    What else can you make?