

## HANDWRITING TIPS

I am aware that several parents are concerned about their children's handwriting during the lockdown, so here are a few tips and ideas to help, both now and in the long term. I am a Childrens Occupational Therapist who specialises in supporting Children with Handwriting difficulties.

Handwriting is highly complex using motor, visual perception and cognitive skills. It is a skill that needs to be practiced regularly. Here are some things you can integrate into what you are doing at home that will help establish good habits and make a long-term impact on your children's handwriting.

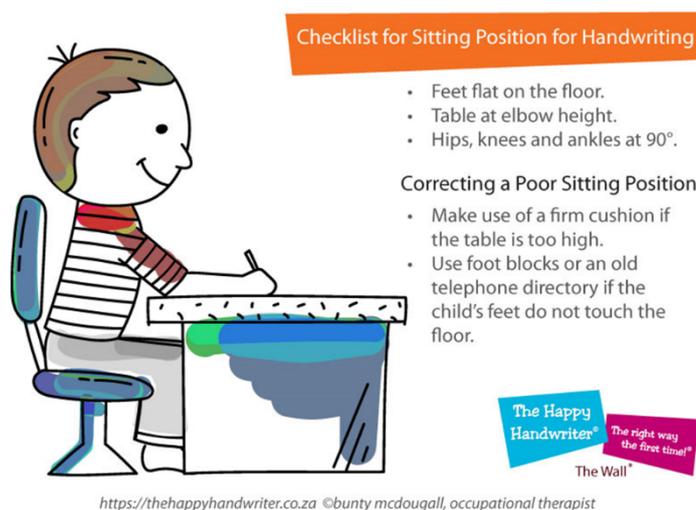
**Warm up activities** – These are really important, Chair push ups, wall push ups, hand and finger stretches should be done before writing.

<https://www.growinghandsonkids.com/handwriting-warm-up-activities-for-kids.html>

**'The P Checks'** - Posture, Pencil grip, Paper position and Pressure.

These preparations are crucial to produce efficient handwriting, they are relatively easy to implement and make a huge difference.

**Posture**- Sitting posture is really important, if your child's body is well supported with feet flat on the floor and their hips and knees at 90-degree angle, they can focus upon their fine motor skills.



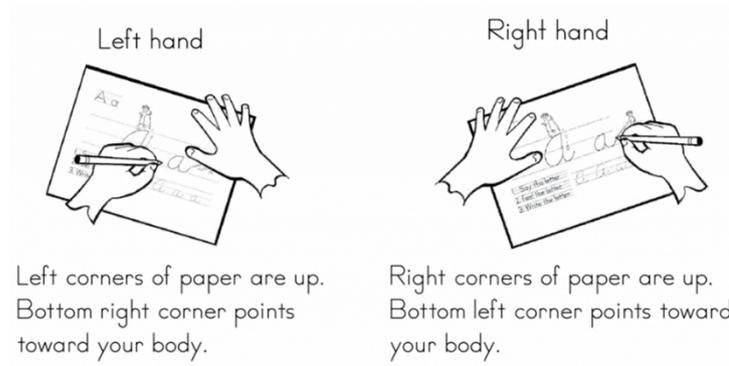
**Pencil Grip** -The most efficient pencil grip is a dynamic tripod grip, but having a 'functional' pencil grip is most important (i.e. it is comfortable and does not cause any pain). It becomes hard for a child to change a pencil grip after aged 8-9 years.

Ideas to help develop a tripod grip- use small chinks and tiny crayons will help.

If children have hyper mobile joints in their fingers and thumbs, try chunky barrelled pencils, round pencil grips, egg shaped or round crayons. These will help support their hands and joints.

Try a variety of pens and pencils to see what is most comfortable for your child. A rubber band wrapped around the shaft of a pencil will prompt them where to place their fingers.

## Paper Position –



To help remind children where to position their paper you could put a piece of electrical tape on the desk or download a free paper position mat.

<https://www.schofieldandsims.co.uk/downloads/WriteWell/writewell-writing-mat-for-right-handers.pdf>

<https://www.schofieldandsims.co.uk/downloads/WriteWell/writewell-writing-mat-for-left-handers.pdf>

**Pressure** – Pressing too hard can make writing tiring, result in many broken pencil leads and sore hands. It can often be a sign of poor shoulder, core stability or poor sensory feedback. Developing good postural stability through PE sessions and exercises to develop core, shoulder and hand strength. The warm-up exercises will help develop this strength.

Also, try different pencils; retractable pencils, light up pens and pencils with a different HB.

## Other tips

- Make sure your child is using both hands when writing, their non dominant hand is just as important as their dominant hand as it stabilises the paper.
- Choose one aspect of handwriting to work on and make a prompt card to stick on your child's table as a reminder.
- This link to a Handwriting pattern book is a great resource to help with fluidity and helps to develop cursive handwriting by practicing patterns and it is fun. You can also practice these patterns in drawings, chalking on walls and paths.

<https://nha-handwriting.org.uk/shop/handwriting-patterns-playbook/>

I hope this is helpful and if you have any questions, please feel free to email me.

Happy handwriting

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