

OT TIP OF THE WEEK



Hand Endurance: Forearm vs Hand Muscles

Good handwriting relies on:

- **Extrinsic muscles** (forearm): powerful muscles used for gripping.
- **Intrinsic muscles** (hand): smaller muscles responsible for precision and control.

When intrinsic muscles are weak, students often compensate with a tight "death grip," overusing their forearm muscles. This can lead to cramping, discomfort, and tired hands within minutes.

Why Fine Motor Precision Activities Matter

Activities such as squeezing tennis balls, tearing paper, and using therapy putty not only give calming sensory input, but they also help strengthen the small hand muscles needed for efficient handwriting, **reducing compensatory motor patterns that cause fatigue**. They also support important everyday skills like fastening buttons and zips, opening packaging and using utensils.

Key message

When children's hands feel stronger and tasks feel easier, they're more likely to engage, persevere, and see themselves as capable learner

Sometimes the answer isn't more writing—it's giving their hands a chance to train first.