

## Activities to Improve Fine Motor Mobility for Aging Hands

As we age, we notice that our bodies act a bit differently. While not everything creaks and pops, even the healthiest seniors can experience a decrease in range of motion for certain body parts. For many aging adults, fine motor mobility – especially in the hands and fingers – can become an issue, even without a diagnosis of arthritis.



Unfortunately, that lack of range of motion in the fingers, hands and wrists can lead to frustration during everyday activities. If you have ever struggled with a button or snap, or had to put down your knitting project sooner because of stiffness or pain, you already know the flood of negative emotions that can follow.

If you or your aging loved one have decreased fine motor mobility, it is important to introduce daily activities that increase that range of motion. Practice makes perfect (or at least progress) when it comes to many mobility concerns. Here are a few of our favorite ways to tie in mobility practice, through activity, in the hopes of easing stiffness and increasing independence.

### **Sorting**

While painful and stiff hands might make you want to stop using them as much, stillness can lead to more trouble. Using your hands and challenging yourself with fine motor movements throughout the day can increase range of motion. Try sorting objects to practice with your fine motor mobility and grasping.

Dump out a jar of buttons, and sort them by color into different containers. For more of a challenge, spread out different types of dry beans on a sheet pan. Then, pick up beans individually to sort them into separate containers by type. If buttons, beans or coins are too difficult for you to grab, try objects that are better suited to your level. Separate apples from oranges, sort and match socks from the laundry, or separate kitchen utensils.

### **Squeezing**

The act of squeezing your hands into fists can be beneficial for your range of motion, as well as for

muscle relaxation. While you can certainly squeeze tennis balls or ball your hands into fists throughout the day, we think it is a bit more fun and delicious to make juice.

Consider making lemonade, limeade, or orange juice as your fine motor mobility activity for the day. To make the citrus fruits ready to give their juice easier, roll the fruits on the counter as well as putting them in the microwave for a few seconds. Cut in half and squeeze into a container with your hands first, before using a juicer for assistance. You, or your loved one, will get the mobility practice you need in a unique way that can distract from any pain or stiffness.

### ***Keeping Rhythm***

Finally, try a bit of drumming to increase your range of motion and grip strength. Start simple by tapping your fingers to the beat of your favorite song, alternating which finger you are using throughout the song. Clapping is another effective way to keep the beat that can help with fine motor mobility, as is gripping a drum stick (or wooden spoon). Finally, if your senior center or park district offers drum circle activities, consider attending! These fun and social events give you the chance to use your hands in different ways, keeping your range of motion intact.

Our Visiting Angels are available to assist you in any activity that you may be unable to do due to your fine motor challenges. We love being able to serve our clients by taking out the frustration that can accompany certain dressing or daily activities. [Give us a call](#) to set up a consultation so that we can get to know your situation a bit better.

Ready to read more about senior issues that pertain to you or your loved one? Curious about other senior topics and challenges? [Check out our Family Resource Center](#) for insightful articles, caregiver tips and other important resources.

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