



Jigsaw Therapy Services

Multi-disciplinary Training, Consultation and Therapy Services

Occupational Therapy General Stretching exercises for the arm/elbow.

You may want to massage the arm prior to working. Prior to work, look at the child's level of reach to ensure you understand where the resting extension is. When working gently extend past the resting point to provide a slow controlled stretch. Observe the child's reactions and body language and feel the tension in the arms to be sure not to cause discomfort.

Working in standing frame.
(using motivating items)

- When using equipment or toys in the class, place them at varying distances to encourage reaching.
- Hold items out for the child to reach forward for. Start with items in reach and gradually increase the distance to encourage extension of the elbow, use motivating items e.g. favoured toys, hand bell to ring, push button toy a toys car to grasp and move. Encourage reaching to front, side and across midline.
- Place items on the tray and encourage them to pick up, reach and drop them into a box/pot held at arms length.
- Using a ring and stick- repeat the above to place the ring on the stick. Help the child be successful by lining up the ring to the stick.
- Blow bubbles and encourage the child to reach and pop them or clap them to pop them. Use unpopable bubbles to blow them on to the tray for them to reach and pop.
- Hold item up in the air and encourage the child to reach and take them.
- Hold items at full reach for left and right arms to reach and hit a balloon off your hand, a ball, a swinging item etc.
- Place a ball in a sock to dangle for them to touch and swing it.

Lying on tummy over a beanbag or wedge cushion. Place a weighted blanket over the child legs for grounding.

- Place skittles in a line for them to reach and knock over.
- Build a tower for them to reach and knock over.
- Place items in a line in front of the child for them to pick up and put into a box.
- Hold a box of toys at their arm's length away for them to choose a toy. Give them a few minutes explorations and remove it before offering further items. Repeat 5 times each hand.
- Lying over the wedge, hold their hands and gently shake their arms to encourage relaxed muscles while gently extending the arms. Place hands on the floor palms

down. With firm pressure rub from shoulders down the arm to the hand to gain slightly more extension.

- As above, Place a hedgehog ball under their hands and help them roll the ball around in their palm on the floor.

Table top Work

- Using a hedgehog ball under both hands, with arms out-stretched move their hands to roll the ball on the table keeping it under their palms.
- Encourage them to grasp a pool noodle or twisted tea towel with one or both hands and gently pull the noodle away to extend the arms.
- Playdoh and rolling pin work with support to encourage extension at the elbows.
- Place items at arms length for them to pick up.
- Stand on the opposite side of the table play tug of war over the table gently to stretch.
- Place maraca's out of reach and encourage them to reach and pick up or rock them to make a noise.
- Encourage them to shake them to the side, above their head, in front.
- Place tactile items to explore on the table e.g. carpet tiles with different textures, spikey and spider balls, plastic grass tile, fur pieces, foil cover card board, Christmas bead strings to roll hands on.
- Place spinning items just out of reach to grasp. Flashing items or push button toys.
- Gentle, passive flexion of the arm.



Use table grab poles to encourage stretching when sitting.

Gym ball work/soft play

- Sit in long sitting with child supported between your legs, encourage/support the child to push away a ball. Use a ball on elastic to be able to pull it back.
- Holding the child's hands hand over hand (in long sitting with support). Extend the arm and rock side to side to gently weight bare through left then right arm in a rocking motion.
- On tummy over a gym ball to reach and knock over skittles on the floor in front. Support at the hips to control rolling.
- On their tummy over a roll, gently pull their hands to roll them forward and back.
- Play row, row, row your boat. Be gentle to slowly work up to full arm extension.
- Build a tower with soft play blocks to promote reaching up for placement. Pass items to the child encouraging them to reach.
- Using a pole with ribbons on. Encourage the child to hold the pole horizontally with 2 hands with you. Move the pole up and down and shake it down to move the ribbons.
- Hoop pull. Holding opposite sides of the hoop you pull gently to encourage stretch.

