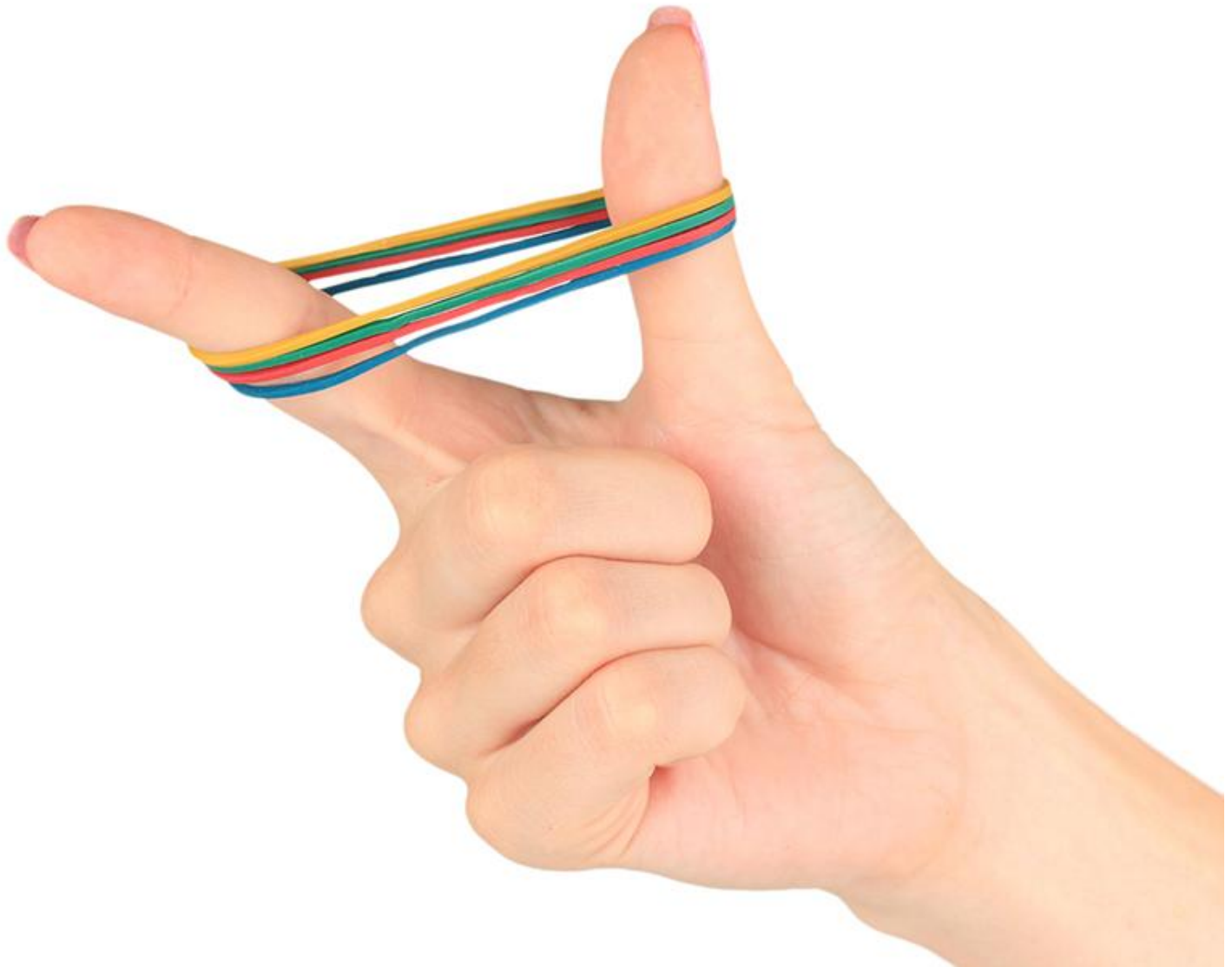


# How to Improve Fine Motor Skills in Hands

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To improve fine motor skills after stroke, you need to **rewire the brain** through exercise.

In this article, you'll learn how exercise helps rewire your brain, and then we'll dig into some great hand exercises that can help improve your hand function after stroke.

## Improve Fine Motor Skills with Repetition

When you have difficulty with fine motor skills after stroke, it's because your brain cannot properly communicate with your hand muscles. In order to get your brain and your hands communicating again, you need to rewire your brain by activating neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity is the mechanism that rewires your brain and allows you to form new neural pathways.

Neuroplasticity is activated through repetitive practice. Whenever you practice something, specific neural pathways in your brain are triggered.

When you're learning something for the first time (or re-learning, in the case of stroke recovery), these pathways are new and require lots of repetition in order to grow stronger. But in time, the connections will strengthen and your brain and muscles will start to communicate like normal again.

That's why movement gets easier with practice! The more you practice using your fine motor skills, the stronger those skills will become. That's why rehab exercise is the #1 treatment for motor impairments after stroke.

Now that you understand why practice is so important for recovery, let's dig into some great hand exercises to help improve your fine motor skills after stroke.

## Simple Exercises for Fine Motor Skills

These simple exercises might be a little too tedious for some, but they can be very effective if you're willing to put in the time:

- Moving beans from one bucket to another
- Putting pegs in a pegboard
- Using rubber bands to exercise your fingers
- Squeezing a stress ball

In order for these exercises to be helpful, they must be repeated over and over. If that might sound daunting, you can try upgrading to these more creative exercises:

## Creative Exercises for Fine Motor Skills

It's time to get in touch your inner child! By bringing a little youthful creativity into your rehabilitation routine, you can reduce boredom and spark a little extra motivation.

### **Stacking Pennies**

Create penny towers by stacking one penny on top of the next. While this might seem tedious at first, it can become a fun, personal challenge to see how high you can get your penny tower.

### **Playdough**

Grab some playdough and get shaping! Even if you're just squeezing and stretching, it will still help strengthen your finger muscles.

## Finger Paint – Yes, Really.

We know, we know! Most people think that finger painting is just for kids. But hear us out first. Finger painting can be an effective and **therapeutic** fine motor skills exercise. It allows you to express your feelings visually – even if it doesn't really look like something.

## Tabletop Exercises for Fine Motor Skills



If you're looking for more guidance, you see our [hand exercise guide with pictures](#) article on 4/10/2017. It guides you through 9 different exercises of various difficulty levels.