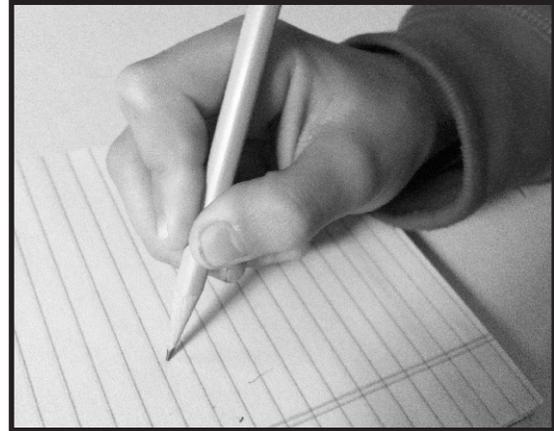


# Dynamic Tripod Grip

## What is the dynamic tripod grip?

The dynamic tripod grip is holding a writing utensil resting against the middle finger while the thumb and index finger control the pencil, pen, marker or crayon. There are a variety of other functional ways to grip a writing utensil but the dynamic tripod grip has traditionally been considered the preferred grip for writing speed, control and form.



## Why is it important?

The dynamic tripod grip is considered an efficient way to hold the writing utensil for legibility and writing endurance. Inefficient or immature grasp patterns can result in writer's cramp, improper letter formation, decreased writing speed or too much or too little pencil pressure on the paper.

## How can you help a child develop the dynamic tripod grip?

The most beneficial way to develop the dynamic tripod grip is to encourage it in young children. Once a grip pattern has been established it can be difficult to modify. Check to see that young children are keeping the ring and pinky fingers tucked into the palm. The pencil (eraser pointing towards body rather than the ceiling) should rest on the middle finger with the index finger and thumb controlling the pencil movements. The thumb and index finger should form a circle.

Here are some tips on encouraging a dynamic tripod grip:

- make sure the child is sitting with proper posture for writing practice - hips, knees at 90 degrees and feet on the floor, elbows should be bent at least 90 degrees
- use small pencils ie golf pencils, broken crayons or broken chalk
- provide verbal cues for the child to use the proper fingers
- put a rubber band or draw dots on the pencil where the fingers should be gripping the pencil
- write on vertical surfaces ie easels, hang paper on wall or put on a slant board on desk
- try different pencil grips to encourage the dynamic tripod grip (ask your occupational therapist for pencil grip recommendations)
- practice daily using the proper grasp by keeping writing interesting and motivating. Write letters to people or shopping lists. Practice simple drawing skills.
- try holding a few cotton balls or pom poms under the ring and pinky fingers to encourage stabilization on that side of the hand
- practice activities that utilize a pincer grasp - tweezers, tongs, picking up small objects, toothpicks, thumbtacks, etc.

### References:

Case-Smith, Jane (2005). *Occupational Therapy for Children* Fifth Edition. St Louis, MO: Elsevier Mosby.  
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