

Using Tongs

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This exercise in using tongs has benefits for hand-eye coordination, fine and gross motor skills, and helps to enhance one's range of motion. Improving this skill can allow an individual to help serve food to others, or add an olive to a martini at a social gathering.

Having an extra set of tongs can be useful while demonstrating the steps, rather than relying verbal instructions.

MATERIALS

- One tray
- One small painter's palette divided into ten sections.
You can substitute a small muffin tin, ice cube tray, or something else with holes that can hold cotton balls.
- Ten cotton balls
Make sure that you use the same number of cotton balls as there are holes to be filled.
- One pair of kitchen tongs
- One small dish to hold the cotton balls



SETUP

1. Place the small dish containing the cotton balls and the tongs on the tray.
2. Place the tray containing the palette, dish, and tongs on the dominant-hand side of the participant.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Demonstrate the activity by slowly picking up one cotton ball from the dish with the tongs and moving it into one of the sections on the painter's palette.
2. Do this for a second cotton ball.
3. Invite the participants to complete the task in the same manner.
4. Demonstrate the activity in reverse, by using the tongs to transfer the cotton balls from the palette back into the dish.
5. Invite the participants to transfer the rest of the cotton balls back into the dish.

EXTENSIONS

Have the participants complete the same activity by using various sizes and colors of pom-poms. Pieces of sponge can be substituted for the cotton balls.

HORIZONTAL PROGRAMMING

Have the participants complete the task using tongs of various sizes. You can substitute solid objects such as golf balls, Ping-Pong balls, or marbles for the pom-poms.

VERTICAL PROGRAMMING

DOWNWARD EXTENSION: Let more impaired participants use their hands.

UPWARD EXTENSION: Have the participants manipulate objects that tongs are normally used for, such as olives or ice cubes.

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

P: The participants are not able to use the tongs.

S: Try larger tongs, or let them use their hands, if necessary.

S: Grip strengthening exercises may be needed before this activity can be used.

*Find this manual and other resources for memory care at
www.cen4ard.com*

