

## All Hands

Laura Brooke: I'm Laura Brooke with the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness, and I'm going to share some strategies focusing on our hands.

Our hands are the forgotten part of our body when we're stretching and thinking about flexibility. And the reason I like to focus on them is because we're using our hands so much more with technology.

Think about what your hands do all day long.

And what the research has shown is that we've got more arthritis in hands at an earlier age than ever before. And, obviously, that's related to our use of technology, our texting, our typing, all of that.

So I'm going to show you some simple strategies that you can just do – you can literally pick your fingers up from your computer and say, "Oh, I'm going to do one of my hand stretches."

So we're going to begin with web spaces.

Bring your hands up and spread your fingers as far apart as you can.

When you think you've got them spread as far as you can spread them a little more.

Feel that stretch.

You don't want them to hurt, you want to feel the stretch.

Feel it between the fingers.

Feel it on the top of the hands.

Feel it running up the forearms.

Web spaces.

You can play with web space, or you can just stay still, right above your computer. Or you might take it a little bigger.

Imagine yourself in a bubble.

The web spaces just feeling along that iridescent wet bubble.

Up and down, web spaces.

Stretching. Web spaces.

This strategy is called bear claws.

So bring your imagination in, bring your big tree in, we're climbing trees.

We're bears.

So what I want you to do is to cup your hands and really feel it across the back of your hands, all the way down each finger.

And just imagine yourself climbing a tree, bear claws.

So you're really gripping, gripping, feeling it all the way across the inside of the arm, the outside, the back of the hand.

Bear claws. Up the tree.

Again you're going to feel that stretch all the way down the forearm as well.

Bear claws.

We're going to do some finger stretches.

This is going to feel really good.

I want you to just start by warming up your fingers by touching your fingers, letting them kiss, touching your thumb to each finger a couple of times.

Run through that, see how that feels.

That may be enough.

You should be feeling it across the outside of your thumb area, along the inside of your arm, and on the back of your hand.

Fast, slow, OK.

Hopefully that feels good.

Now, the next level is what I call finger dips.

So you've got a little pond in the middle of each hand and you're letting each finger dip into the pond.

Oh, feel that stretch.

Dip, dip, dip, dip, dip. With each finger you notice a little bit different spot in the arm where the stretch radiates to.

It's fascinating, our bodies.

OK, dip, dip. Back to finger touches.

You're going to feel it all the way up your arm.

It's amazing. Everything's attached.

Finger touches.

This hand movement is called stir the pot.

This one's one of my favorites because my thumbs, I don't know about yours, but my thumbs feel all the things I do with my thumb.

So what I want you to do is to just imagine you have a little pot of warm oil, and you're just stirring that pot with your thumbs.

Big circles. Your pot can get bigger. It can be a small one.

Don't forget to stir the other direction.

Oh yeah. Both directions. Big circles, big as you want, stirring the pot.

You'll feel that all the way up through the thumb maybe even up into the inside of the arm.

You can do this when you're waiting at a light behind the wheel of your car, at your desk, just any time.

Stir the pot.

Really working that thumb.

Stir the pot.

This movement is called catch, shake, release.

I like to catch, shake, and release lightning bugs.

You can.

You can do something else; stars, whatever you want.

Imagine that you're catching lightning bugs.

So you're pulling in, pulling in, catching, catching, feeling it across the back of the hand.

So pulling them in, pulling them in, pulling them in, feel that.

Pulling them in, pulling them in.

They're all around you.

Catch, catch, catch. Now we're going to take them and lightly shake them.

So just let your fingers circle, and shake them, shake them, shake them.

Whatever is in there, lightning bugs, shake them up.

Shake them high, shake them low, shake them all around.

Shake them, shake them, shake them. Behind you, in front of you, above, all around.

And now we're just going to let them go.

Let them all go.

So we're flicking, flicking, flicking, flick, flick, finger flicks to let them go.

Eyes are following.

Catch, shake, release.