



## Writing cramp

[Home page](#)  
HANDWRITING

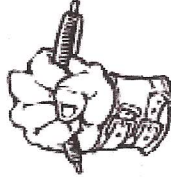
[Movement](#)  
[Model](#)  
CIRCUMSTANCES

[Activity](#)  
[Pen hold](#)  
**Cramp**  
[Left hand](#)  
[Repairs](#)

[Glossary](#)

Writing cramp is a misery. It spoils exams and sometimes hamstring careers. It can be avoided, but is seldom given the attention it needs.

### Try the gorilla grip for yourself

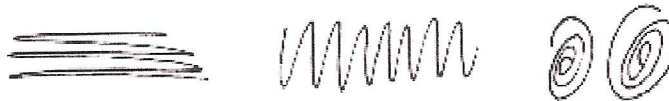


Make a fist, and keep it hard and tight. In a minute or two, the tension will spread up your arm. If you keep it a while longer, it will reach your shoulder. It may even start affecting muscles in your back. (Now let go before it's too late.)

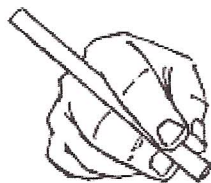
The usual cause of writing cramp is misplaced concentration. You tighten your grip to write better. Sympathetic tension affects other muscles. Soon your hand hurts.

### What to do?

When this happens to a pupil of yours, begin by soothing the child. Remind him from time to time to relax his grip. Make sure the penhold is correctly formed: that the tips of the thumb and middle finger form a cleft.

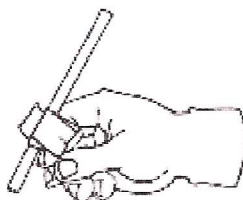


Use fast scribble exercises to loosen the muscles: horizontal and vertical zigzags, spirals to the left and right. This can take some time, but is time well spent. Let the child wiggle his hands. Some suggest that the child stand up for a moment. He should put his palms flat on the desk, and bend the fingers back by leaning gently forward on them.



If scribbles are not enough, use the between-the-fingers grip. The pen goes between the first and second fingers, and the child can start writing again.

The between-the-fingers penhold has given good results. Most children who use it can change to the grown-up grip with the rest of the class. A few may even prefer to keep it.



If other remedies fail, try the tape method. Let the child form a primary grip, but without a pen. Then tape the pen to the top of the index finger. (Masking tape is easier to use than cellophane tape.)

Of course, the tape method won't do for long. But at this stage,

the tension and feelings of incompetence are often more difficult to deal with than the mechanics of the grip itself. The tape method can help solve the problem.

The tape method should always be a game. It must never feel like a punishment. Children who suffer this kind of stress may need medical help.

---

Copyright © 1998-2001 Gunnlaugur SE Briem. All rights reserved.  
Updated 01 February 2001.

