

Handout for the Therapro webinar  
**Shoe Tying Made Simple: A Multisensory Approach**  
presented by Kelly Wilk-Downs, OTR/L - October 7, 2025

October 7, 2025



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**About the Creator of "Shoe Tying Made Simple"** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- ❖ Hello and Welcome to STMS, a 1.0 Hour CE course on some of the ins and outs of shoe tying
- ❖ Been an OT for almost 30 years, (SIPT) Certified, Autism Specialty
- ❖ Creator of STMS and WMS and other courses and products in the works!
- ❖ Housekeeping items-
  1. On Demand
  2. Break-away sessions/labs
  3. Video presentations
  4. Survey



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**The Who and the Why** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- Activity Analysis history
- What did "I" pick for my activity analysis activity back in the day?
- Need for "tool kits" and on the job training/mentorship
- Why pair a great product with a great course?
- Dear old Dad

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**The Who and The Why (Continued)** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

Learning Style Instruments for (Adults) so you know your own learning style:

- VARK- Visual, Aural, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic
  - Basic (Vark) Questionnaire
  - Questionnaire for Younger People
  - Questionnaire for Teachers/Trainers
  - Questionnaire for Athletes
  - Questionnaire for Business Profile

They also list some great strategies and helpful tips on how to present information for the visual, aural, read/write, kinesthetic and multimodal types of learners.  
VARK website at <https://vark-learn.com/> to learn about all of their questionnaires

- Felder and Silverman-first applied in the context of engineering education
- Honey and Mumford Learning Style Questionnaire-80 questions with scoring available
- Canfield Learning Style Inventory (CLSI)-describes learning styles in four dimensions

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**Purpose of This Course** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

To provide Occupational Therapists with a multisensory method that utilizes activity analysis of shoe tying instruction and incorporates evidence-based teaching techniques.

The various instructional methods that we pull from include:

- Activity analysis
- Forward and backward chaining (Najdowski, 2019)
- Scaffolding
- TEACCH- structured teaching methodology



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**Course Objectives** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Identify developmental appropriateness and pre-readiness skills that are required in preparation for shoe tying.
2. Summarize instructional strategies such as activity analysis and multisensory instruction, forward and backward chaining, scaffolding, and the TEACCH methodology while offering tips on how to adapt the required teaching strategies for shoe tying, based upon the specific learning needs of each individual student.
3. Examine the reasoning behind why "Shoe Tying Made Simple" is based upon "hand dominance."
4. Determine when and how to choose instruction for the Right-Handed, Left-Handed, and One-Handed shoe tying methods.
5. Identify specific strategies for individual and whole class instruction.

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**Tie one on Joke!** Shoe Tying Made Simple®


I just saw Paddy in the Supermarket!

I noticed one of his shoelaces was undone, and I said, "watch that you don't trip over your laces Paddy."

Paddy says "yeah it's the bloody instructions."

I said, "what instructions Paddy?"

Paddy says, "undemeath the shoe, it says 'Taiwan.'"



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What is Your Learning Style  
Do you know?



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**VARK Learning Styles Self Assessment** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

People commonly have one main preferred learning style, others may be bi-modal. I tend to score evenly in visual and kinesthetic, but yet again others may have an equal blend or lean towards being a true multisensory learner.

When you know your preferred learning style (s) you understand the best ways in which information needs to be presented to you.

There is no right or wrong learning style. The point is that when you become more familiar with your own learning preferences you will undoubtedly be more sensitive to the learning styles of your students.

There are other learning style inventories where you can delve a bit deeper and learn more about learning style preferences. I recently took the VARK business profile and it was quite interesting.

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**Why Do Some Children Have Such Difficulty with Shoe Tying** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- Use of slip-on shoes and Velcro sneakers
- Shoe tying was taught at home, children's shoe stores, or Kindergarten classroom. It's not emphasized like it used to be!
- Early technology exposure and decreased play-based motor skill opportunities
- Possible coordination or learning disability

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**Foundational Performance Skills Required in Shoe Tying** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

**Skillsset that is required for independence with shoe tying:**

1. Separation of hand, grasp and release, pincer grasp, refined pincer grasp, and in-hand manipulation skills
2. Hand strength
3. Crossing midline and bilateral motor coordination
4. Attention to task, sustained eye contact and sitting tolerance for several minutes at a time
5. Positive attitude that promotes independence
6. Language processing of shoe tying terms including: cross, tuck, pull sideways, pinch together, dot-to-dot, make a loop, hold in place, around, in, through, and the understanding of both and two.
7. Spatial awareness and concept understanding of cross, tuck, pull sideways, pinch together, hold in place, around, in, and through.

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**Foundational Performance Skills Required in Shoe Tying (Continued)** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

8. Visual sequencing/modeling
9. Visual perception
10. Rote memorization
11. Sequencing
12. Auditory discrimination, including having the ability to distinguish similarities and differences in words and sounds, and the ability to follow the song or the rhyme, etc.

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**Observational Checklist \*** Shoe Tying Made Simple®



Kuhaneck and O'Brien 2020 \*  
\* Please download this checklist from the Complimentary Downloads  
 "Observational checklist\_for\_STMS.pdf"

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**Hand Skills Required for Shoe Tying** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- 1) **Separation of Hand**  
Tuck 4th/5th finger into palm while pinching dot-to-dot on shoelace.
- 2) **Grasp and Release**  
Pick up shoelaces and drop them with ease?
- 3) **Beginning Pincer Grasp**  
Pinch dots together tightly?
- 4) **Refined Pincer Grasp**  
Undo double knot with tips of both index fingers and thumbs?

Observational Checklist  
Grading Scale:

- Not doing
- Struggling
- + Half correct to go/Close to

Kuhaneck and O'Brien 2020 \*

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**Assessing Hand Strength** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

5) **Hand Strength**  
Does student have adequate hand strength and endurance to complete the task? Does the student have a firm handshake? What is the student's overall muscle tone?



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**Bilateral Motor Coordination & Crossing Midline** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

6) **Cross Midline**  
Cross the laces to make an "X" and wrap lace around an existing loop?

7) **Bilateral Motor Coordination**  
Pinch the laces with their right or left hand, while simultaneously using the opposite hand to wrap around and tuck the lace through?

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**Attention to Task and Motivation** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

8) **Attention To Task**  
Sit and attend for at least (5) minutes?

9) **Attitude/Motivation**  
Positive attitude and desire for more independence?

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Language Skills Shoe Tying Made Simple®

**10) Language Processing**  
Understand cross, tuck, pull sideways, dot-to-dot, pinch together, hold in place, around, in, through, both and two?

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Assessing Visual Skills Shoe Tying Made Simple®

**11) Spatial Awareness**  
Is the student able to perform action terms with the proper spatial orientation (i.e. Front and back of the teaching sneaker? Toe and heel of the shoe? Can they match dot to dot on the shoelace and pinch down low and tight?

**12) Visual Sequencing/Modelling**  
Is the student able to follow visual steps and imitate or model from a picture or the instructor?

**13) Visual Perception**  
Is the student able to decipher the foreground/background and to not be visually distracted? Can they discriminate between the different colors on the shoelace?

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Memory Skills Shoe Tying Made Simple®

**14) Rote Memorization**  
Does the student possess the ability to master a step, ingrain it and then build upon it? Does the student have automaticity of action from previously learned steps?

**15) Sequencing**  
Does the student sequence the steps in the (STMS) program in the proper order without leaving steps out in the process?

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**Auditory Skills** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

**16) Auditory Discrimination**  
 Is the student able to follow along with a song/rhyming verse and to discriminate different sounds? Are they able to pair auditory commands with physical actions?

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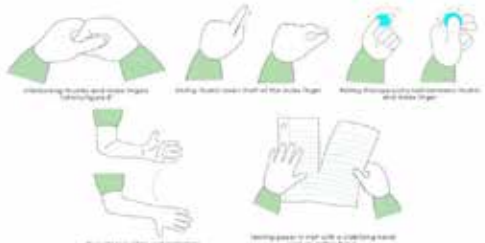
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**Specific Preparatory Movements** Shoe Tying Made Simple®



Crossing the index and middle fingers  
 Holding the index and middle fingers together  
 Holding the index and middle fingers together and moving them  
 Holding the index and middle fingers together and moving them in a circle  
 Holding the index and middle fingers together and moving them in a circle  
 Holding the index and middle fingers together and moving them in a circle

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**Tie One On Joke!** Shoe Tying Made Simple®



After weeks of bawling over tying shoes, squinting down on cement tying shoes, and having shoes in my lap to be tied, I find myself...while tying shoes...thinking, "Try and untie THESE things tonight, Mama and Dada... 'CAUSE this is how IT'S DONE!"

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**Knowing When Children are Ready to Tie Their Shoes** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

How do you assess when a child is developmentally ready to learn to tie their shoes?

- You can use developmental assessments (Peabody, DVPT, ETCH, Sensory Profile, Miller, MVPT, Bruininks-Oseretsky, Beery-Buktenica, Sensory Profile, PEDI, The Screener of Handwriting Proficiency, etc.)
- Informal Screening tools
- Developmental Checklist
- Cross reference Developmental Milestones

We know based upon developmental expectations, that typically developing children will generally learn to tie their shoe by age 5 to 6 years of age. Girls tend to have an interest in learning to tie their shoes earlier than boys.

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**Knowing When Ready Cont – What to look for....** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- Not all five, six, or even seven-year-olds may be developmentally ready to learn shoe tying. Alternatively, there may be four-year-olds who are developmentally ready to learn shoe tying.
- For many children, mastering just ONE STEP AT A TIME while incorporating a multisensory approach is quite beneficial.



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**Hand Dominance Screener** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- Before you instruct on shoe tying, you also want to ensure that the child's hand dominance is well established.
- Based on the assessment results of the child, the adult will need to decide which hand is the dominant hand.
- When determining a child's hand dominance there are some quick and easy informal things you can check to assess whether they are right-hand dominant, left-hand dominant or ambidextrous. I have found that assigning a "categorical score" is helpful when looking at tasks such as completing manual activities, writing, drawing, and coloring. Below is the categorical score that we are assigning to specific tasks.

0= Mixed Preference  
1= Left Hand Preference  
2= Right Hand Preference

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| Items needed for Hand Dominance Screener                            |   | Shoe Tying Made Simple® |
|---|---|-------------------------|
| Things you'll need:   |   |                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pencil, Crayon, iPad stylus                | <input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush   |                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paper (lined and white construction paper) | <input type="checkbox"/> Top  |                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic Eating Utensils                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Chop Sticks  |                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis Ball (Soft hand held ball)          | <input type="checkbox"/> Right-Handed, Left-Handed, and Ambidextrous Scissors |                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wooden Spoon (basic kitchen utensils)      | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's "play" hammer                             |                         |

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| Hand Dominance Screener (continued)  |  | Shoe Tying Made Simple® |
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| Hand Dominance Screener (continued)   |   | Shoe Tying Made Simple® |
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Hand Dominance Screener (continued) Shoe Tying Made Simple®

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Handedness</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Right Hand Dominant </p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Left Hand Dominant</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ambidextrous</p> <p><b>Instructions:</b> For the hammer test, hold the hammer with your right hand and tap the nail with the other hand. Which hand was used to tap the nail? (The hand that was used to tap the nail is your dominant hand.)</p> <p><b>Observations:</b> _____</p> | <p><b>Appropriateness of Scissors</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Right Hand Dominant </p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Left Hand Dominant</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ambidextrous</p> <p><b>Instructions:</b> Hold the scissors like you would use them to cut paper. Hold the right hand flat on the surface and cut the paper. Which hand was used to hold the scissors? (The hand that was used to hold the scissors is your dominant hand.)</p> <p><b>Observations:</b> _____</p> |
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Hand Dominance Screener (continued) Shoe Tying Made Simple®

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|--|--|
| <p><b>Handedness</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Right Hand Dominant </p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Left Hand Dominant</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ambidextrous</p> <p><b>Instructions:</b> Hold the pencil like you would use it to write. Which hand was used to hold the pencil? (The hand that was used to hold the pencil is your dominant hand.)</p> <p><b>Observations:</b> _____</p> | <p><b>Appropriateness of Scissors</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Right Hand Dominant </p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Left Hand Dominant</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ambidextrous</p> <p><b>Instructions:</b> Hold the scissors like you would use them to cut paper. Hold the right hand flat on the surface and cut the paper. Which hand was used to hold the scissors? (The hand that was used to hold the scissors is your dominant hand.)</p> <p><b>Observations:</b> _____</p> |
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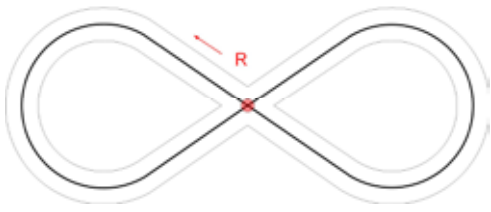
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Right Hand Figure Eight Tracing Activity Shoe Tying Made Simple®



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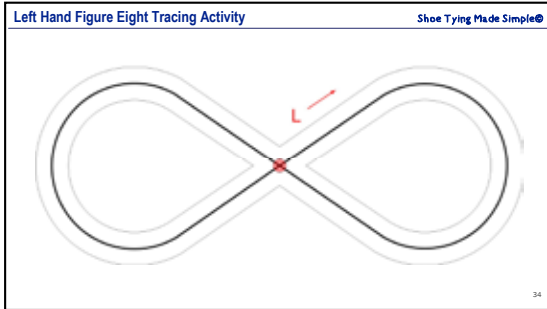
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Tie one on Joke! Shoe Tying Made Simple®

Why did the teacher tie all of her student's shoelaces together?  
She wanted to take a class trip.

When you are getting Old....  
You know you're getting old when you stop to tie your shoelaces and wonder what else you could do while you're down there.

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What makes the Shoe Tying Made Simple Method So Special? Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- Method caters to every learning style
- Segmented program, that builds upon mastery of previously learned steps
- Hand/arm exercises for challenging aspects
- Developmentally appropriate
- Unique bicolored shoelace design

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**STMS is Designed for All Learning Styles** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

The program incorporates various learning styles including:

1. Auditory—song and a rhyming verse
2. Visual—illustrated, step by step instructions and the "dot-to-dot" visual dots on the lighter half of the shoelace.
3. Tactile—pairing up dots that have a clear coat of nail polish. Stretchy, oval laces provide some proprioceptive feedback.
4. Kinesthetic—hand over hand component
5. Multi-Modal—Incorporating all styles simultaneously

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**Auditory Aspects of STMS** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

Auditory Aspects:

- The "Tie My Shoe" song and rhyming verse appeal to the auditory learner because of the child-friendly language
- Both the song and rhyming verse are "catchy" and sequential
- Beat-tempo synchronization
- Repetitive and anticipatory
- Auditory component includes prepositional lingo

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**Visual Aspects of STMS** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

Visual Aspects:

- Appealing to the visual learner. If the student is a non-reader, they can follow along using the task-analyzed illustrations.
- The visual segmented steps support the song and rhyming verse.
- The program uses a "visual guide", dot-to-dot the special markings placed on the lighter half of the teaching shoe lace.
- Visual models are incorporated for either "on" (teaching sneaker) or "off"-the-shoe sequencing (instruction on the leg).

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**Tactile/Kinesthetic Aspects** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

Tactile/Kinesthetic Aspects

1. Hand-over-hand learning so child can "feel" the steps.
2. Developmentally based preparatory exercises –rolling therapy putty in between index, first, and second fingers; sliding thumb down the index finger; forearm pronation-supination activities, etc.)
3. Add Velcro or tape over the "markings"-dots so the child has more tactile input
4. Role learning for the motor memory movements

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**Lacing Eyelets on Sneakers-Variou Styles** Shoe Tying Made Simple®



Use our Teaching Sneakers as a lacing card that is truly fun and functional, and indeed one of the prerequisite steps required before shoe tying instruction should begin. Teach children how to lace using the Shoe Tying Made Simple Sneaker as lacing cards. Discuss prepositional concepts ahead of time such as front/back, under/over, flip the teaching sneaker over, pull the shoelace through, push the shoelace through the eyelet, cross-like an "X", and making vertical, horizontal, and diagonal lines with the shoelace.

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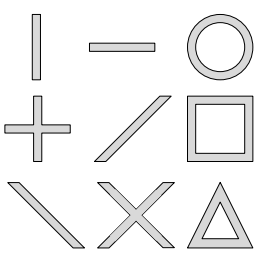
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**Developmental Progressions (VMI) & STMS Teaching Sneaker** Shoe Tying Made Simple®



- Images to the left are the (VMI) visual motor integration developmental sequences.
- STMS has developed lacing sequences with a vertical, horizontal, diagonal, and an "X" lacing pattern.
- Lacing cards can be challenging for certain students and even harder to teach.
- Concepts such as under/over, front/back can be taught while performing a purposeful task.
- Visual indicators (model) can be added to aide with instruction.

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**Pre-Readiness Skills-Lacing Sequences (Lacing Sneaker)** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- Teaching Sneakers as Lacing Cards, great beginning step!
- Practicing the lacing sequences instructs on
  - following proper sequences
  - directional concepts
  - crossing the midline
  - promoting bilateral coordination
  - the use of visual-perception skills



Precursor Lacing Sequences Included:

- Vertical Lacing Sequence: (Beginner)
- Diagonal Lacing Sequence: (Intermediate)
- Standard "X" lacing sequence: (Advanced)
- Horizontal Lacing Sequence: (Advanced)

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**Lacing: Vertical Lacing Sequence (Beginner)** Shoe Tying Made Simple®



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**Lacing: Vertical Lacing Sequence (Beginner) – Video** Shoe Tying Made Simple®



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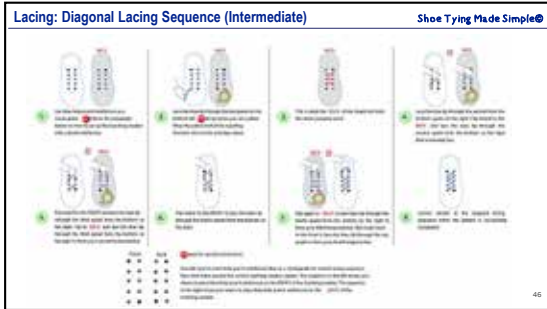
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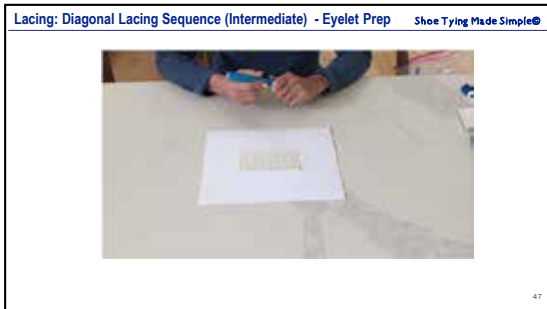
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**Break-Away Session/Lab (Practice Lacing Sequences)** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- ❖ Mark STMS eyelets using yellow/blue markers for all (4) sequences
- ❖ Practice sequences (Vertical, Diagonal, Horizontal, and "X")
- ❖ You can practice setting up your teaching shoe laces for the right or left hand dominant student on the STMS instructional board!
- ❖ Have some fun with this!



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**Activity Analysis  
 Verses Task  
 Analysis**  
 What is the Difference?

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**Activity Analysis vs. Task Analysis** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

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| <p><b>Activity Analysis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze the steps of the activity as well as the activity's requirements for body structures, body functions, and performance skills; context, and personal meaning in relation to the individual's interests and goals (AOTA, 2014).</li> <li>• For many children and adolescents with special needs, activity analysis identifies             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• barriers and supports to participation</li> <li>• individualized interventions to facilitate participation including modification of the steps</li> <li>• activities that are aligned with the needs and strengths of the child/adolescent</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Activity analysis is distinct from the practices of other professions</li> <li>• Activity analysis is the essence of occupational therapy practice and professional identity</li> </ul> | <p><b>Task Analysis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of the steps to be completed for the activity</li> <li>• For some children and adolescents, learning and sequencing the steps of the activity may be the most important part of participating in an activity</li> <li>• A number of professionals utilize task analysis including behaviorists and educators</li> <li>• Some occupational therapists use task analysis interchangeably with activity analysis</li> </ul> <p style="font-size: small;">25) O'Brien, J. C. &amp; Kuharek, H. (2020). Case-Smith's occupational therapy for children and adolescents. St. Louis: Elsevier. ISBN: 9780323512633</p> |
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**Shoe Tying Made Simple: A Multisensory Approach**  
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October 7, 2025

**Activity Analysis and Shoe Tying Made Simple** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- Activity analysis is a key factor in the "Shoe Tying Made Simple" program.
- Breaking an activity down into manageable, discrete steps.
- It's inexpensive, requiring few materials and can be used in a variety of settings (Dees, 2021).
- This method supports students who have difficulty with memory, sequencing, and attention.

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**Instructional  
Strategies Used  
With Shoe Tying  
Made Simple**

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**The STMS Program Incorporates Teaching Strategies** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

The following teaching strategies are used:

1. Incremental steps that rely heavily on instruction with occupation-based activity analysis infused with multisensory aspects; visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, etc., that are incorporate into all learning opportunities.
2. Forward and backward chaining.
3. Scaffolding technique.
4. Structured Teaching strategies (TEACCH).

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**Scaffolding Teaching Strategies** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

Another instructional approach that is enmeshed within the Shoe Tying Made Simple method is scaffolding. These strategies can include:

- Using visual aides
- Breaking up the learning into segmented steps
- Modeling
- Thinking aloud
- Using prior knowledge
- Gradual release of responsibility
- Open-ended questioning
- Pre-teaching vocabulary
- Formative and summative assessments (Drew 2021).

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**Forward and Backward Chaining** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- **Forward chaining**-student learns first step and then earns a positive reinforcement which is a key part of the method (Najdowski 2019).
  - Once mastered the initial step, they move onto the second step.
  - Sequence continues to build in a forward fashion until all the steps required in the chain are completed
- **Backward chaining**-last step is completed first (double knot).
  - Once the student is able to complete the double-knotting independently, the student would complete the last two steps in the chain
  - Sequence continues in a backward fashion until all steps in the chain are completed

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**TEACCH Methodology/Structured Teaching** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

To keep things simple TEACCH has four main principles - and all four areas include a strong emphasis on visual structure!

**Work Systems** (What work do I do? How much work do I do? When do I know when I am finished with my work? And, most importantly -What do I do next?)

**Schedules** (Where do I go and what type of next-now strip is appropriate for me to visually demonstrate how to complete the work? Do I need the easiest, most developmentally "quick system" which is the top-to-bottom format, or can I track from left-to-right?)

**Material Structure** (How do I complete this work?)

**Physical Structure** (What happens in this space?)

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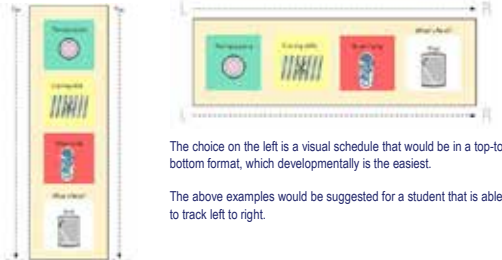
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**TEACCH Methodology-Now-Next Strip Examples** Shoe Tying Made Simple®



The choice on the left is a visual schedule that would be in a top-to-bottom format, which developmentally is the easiest.

The above examples would be suggested for a student that is able to track left to right.

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**TEACCH Methodology-Work Station Activities** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

The Work Station Activities Will:

- Be individualized, developmentally appropriate and insuring a high chance of success with minimal support
- Have materials that are "ready-to-use" and well organized
- The work environment should be distraction free, no visual clutter on the walls or surrounding the work area
- Promote working in a standardized way: either top-to-bottom or left-to-right
- Use activities that require physical manipulation
- Choose activities that require minimal support (e.g., Occasional hand-over-hand and limit verbal cues which may inhibit independence)
- The ultimate goal is for the student to generalize the skill!

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**TEACCH Methodology/Structured Teaching** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- See illustrated examples of what an individual work station and a 1:1 teaching set up. The individual work station has (3) fine motor tasks included; therapy putty, cutting and shoe tying.
- TEACCH program is "big on individualizing" the student's space, there really isn't any single format that is recommended.
- TEACH is all about the "least restrictive environment". Work "to do" is located to the left of the student and finished work is to the right of the student.
- In an inclusion model, you may find that a visual system that "travels well" and can be placed on top of a student's desk works best.
- A student in a self-contained classroom may have an object schedule that gets them to their desk and then to the materials themselves at their work system.
- Also, it is preferable to correct and respond to the student's mistakes after "Workstation Time" is completed. This will help reinforce independence. If the student has difficulty mastering the task independently, consider altering or re-structuring the activity to simplify it and then try re-teaching the task.

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**TEACCH Methodology-Individual Work Station Ideas** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

"Green means Go" and "Red means Stop". It may be helpful to choose these colors for your independent work baskets.

Trays, folders, or shoe box tasks are placed to the left of the student and arranged in a top-to-bottom format. A now-next strip should be Velcroed to the table top. Match the colors and numbers on the work tasks to the visual picture schedule on the now-next strip.

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**Structured Teaching Task #1: Therapy Putty** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

Student is seated and will check their schedule. The student then removes the top square on the now-next strip.

The student will match the corresponding work to the green Velcro square and then place the associated work task on the desk to begin work.

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**Structured Teaching Task #2: Cutting** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

When the work is completed on task #1, the student will then discard the first activity into the "finished" basket to the right of the student.

The student will then remove the next square on the now-next strip.

The student will match the corresponding work to the yellow Velcro square and then place the associated task on the desk to begin work.

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**Structured Teaching Task #3: Shoe Tying** Shoe Tying Made Simple®



When the work is completed with the cutting task, the student will then discard the second activity into the "finished" basket to the right of the student.

The student will then remove the next square on the now-next strip which is shoe tying.

The student will match the corresponding work to the red Velcro square and then place the associated task on the desk to begin work.

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**Structured Teaching Reward Activity** Shoe Tying Made Simple®



When the work is completed, the student will then discard the third activity into the "finished" basket to the right of the student.

The student will then remove the final square on the now-next strip.

This final activity is a reward or preferred activity for the student.

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**Structured Teaching- 1:1 Instruction or New Skill Introduction** Shoe Tying Made Simple®



This is an example of how to structure one-to-one sessions when introducing a new skill such as Shoe Tying Made Simple for the first time.

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**Structured Teaching- Research and Visual Schedules** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

Visual supports help by:

- Allowing students to focus
- Bringing routine, structure, and sequence to tasks
- Reducing anxiety
- Making abstract concepts more visually concrete
- Allowing ease with transitions
- Allowing an opportunity for students to express their thoughts

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Why is the “classic method” better for children with special needs?

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**Double Bunny Ear Versus Classic STMS Method** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- Shoe Tying Made Simple method instructs on the traditional-classic-universal method of shoe tying
- Developmentally, the “Double Bunny Ear” method is much harder for children, because it requires ambidexterity.
- Research also indicates that the double bunny ear knot is inferior.



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**Patented Bi-colored Teaching Laces** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- The flat, oval bi-colored teaching laces are key to a successful shoe tying experience.
- They are a special spandex-polyester blend so they "breathe" and allow "give" for a more comfortable wear experience.
- The laces lay flat when the bow is tied, but stand up when forming the initial knot.
- Half the lace is one distinct darker color and the other half is a lighter color.
- Two colors allow the child to easily discriminate when performing each step, which decreases confusion.
- The initial loop will stand up straight. This makes it easier when the child wraps the other half of the shoelace (opposite color) around the loop.
- The laces remain tied because of their particular design.



45-inch laces, preschool/kindergarten aged children  
 50-inch laces, adolescents and adults  
 70-inch laces, for use only in the Shoe Tying Made Simple Teaching Boards

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**Does the Length of the Shoelace Matter?** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

Size does matter when it comes to shoelaces? Lace length is another critical component in the process. If the laces are too short, the child will not have enough lace length to learn on!

The length of shoelaces in most Pre-K and K athletic shoes are typically too short for teaching purposes.

If the shoelace is too long, the lace is too difficult for small hands to manage and the shoelace could come untied more easily.

The initial knot needs to be taught enough for comfortable wear, but also so that the laces stay tied throughout the day.



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**Fabric Pens for Making the Dots on the Shoelaces** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- Suggest Marvy Uchida fabric pen to "mark your dots!"
- Michael's craft store or JoAnn Fabric sells the markers
- Product dries quickly and will not bleed
- You can place a coat of clear nail polish over the "dots" to ensure they "set"
- The fabric marker comes in 26 colors, has a fine point, and is water resistant



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**Marking the Laces Continued** Shoe Tying Made Simple®



- The adult will **have to mark the lighter colored half of the shoelace**. The color **used should match the darker half of the bicolored teaching shoelace**.
- Next, make an initial knot. Place your dot or "marking" on the lighter-colored lace that is just at the base of the knot. Be sure that you mark the entire portion of front and back of the shoelace at the base of the knot.
- Then make a second mark that is about four inches up from the first mark.
- **ALLOW THESE DOTS TO DRY/SET, APPROXIMATELY (2 or more hours).**

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**Shoe Tying Made Simple Teaching Sneaker** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- The "STMS" teaching sneaker literally "larger than life"
- 18-inches long and approximately 8-inches wide
- In our experience, children respond better to the larger size when compared to a regular-sized shoe
- Teaching sneaker "stays put" and does not move around
- 70-inch bicolored shoelace, enough lace-length to learn with



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**Helpful Tips Prior to Instruction** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

1. **Playing the song** and reciting the rhyme are helpful prior to instruction.
2. **Show and tell.** Explain the unique design of the laces and how this will help them learn faster.
3. Let the kids **feel** the laces. You can explain some of the neat features of the specially designed shoelaces.

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**"Tie My Shoe" Song: Blue and Yellow** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Chorus:</b> Tie my shoe. Tie my shoe.<br/>Tie my shoe with yellow and blue.<br/>Tie my shoe. Tie my shoe.<br/>I can tie and you can fool!</p> <p><b>Verse 1:</b> Cross the laces. Make an X.<br/>Tuck the top one under next.<br/>Pull the laces till they stop!<br/>We've just made our very first knot!</p> <p><b>Chorus:</b> Tie my shoe. Tie my shoe.<br/>Tie my shoe with yellow and blue.<br/>Tie my shoe. Tie my shoe.<br/>I can tie and you can fool!</p> <p><b>Verse 2:</b> Find the dots on the yellow lace.<br/>Each dot has a special space.<br/>Push together. Hold in place.<br/>Tug tightly on the loopy shoelace.</p> | <p><b>Chorus:</b> Tie my shoe. Tie my shoe.<br/>Tie my shoe with yellow and blue.<br/>Tie my shoe. Tie my shoe.<br/>I can tie and you can fool!</p> <p><b>Verse 3:</b> Now you've made a bunny's ear.<br/>Wonder what that bunny hears?<br/>Blue goes 'round the yellow one's ear.<br/>Wrap it tight and hold him near.</p> <p><b>Chorus:</b> Tie my shoe. Tie my shoe.<br/>Tie my shoe with yellow and blue.<br/>Tie my shoe. Tie my shoe.<br/>I can tie and you can fool!</p> <p><b>Verse 4:</b> Take the blue and poke it through.<br/>Pull those loops to tie your shoe.<br/>One more knot is left to do.<br/>Now you have a safer shoe!</p> |
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**Steps to Teaching the Program (Continued)** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- The teacher demonstrates, and then the child imitates.
- If you are using the Teaching Sneaker, then the toe of the shoe is pointed away from the child! Also, check to make sure it's set up for their specific hand dominance.
- Begin by making the "X." Pick up the lighter-colored lace and drape it across the shoe. Then pick up the darker lace and lay over the lighter-colored lace to form an "X." Pick up the blue (tip of the shoelace.) Take the tip under the lighter- yellow -fellow. Pull both laces tightly until they STOP! You can give a motion of your hand (stop sign with wrist extended) as a visual support to show STOP! **You've just made your very first knot!**



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**Steps to Teaching the Program (Cont.)** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- Prompt the child: **"See the dots on the yellow lace? Pinch them together and hold them in place!" Pinch down low and tight. Wow, your work is dynamite!** Check for nice tight grasp after forming initial loop. **"This is where you can play a game of "Tug of War" to demonstrate forming a nice, tight pincer grasp!**
- Now pick up the blue, or darker, remaining strand!** This is where some forearm pronation and supination come into play. The children have to grasp the darker half with their palm facing down. They take the darker half and wrap it around the "front of the loop!" You want to make sure that the child wraps the loop tightly around the lighter-colored loop. **"Look for a tighter wrap, rather than a loose wrap!"**



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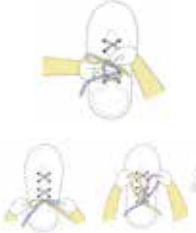
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**Steps to Teaching the Program (Cont.)** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

9. This last step can be somewhat tricky for some children, and may be the most challenging part in the process, but the bi-colored laces help to ensure sweet success! Keep in mind that, if they are having some difficulty with this step, you can encourage the preparatory exercises before beginning this step. (sliding thumb up and down the index finger)

Tell the children:

- Use your pointer finger and thumb to push the blue (or the darker lace) through the hole don't linger! Pick up the loops with your lobster pincers and pull sideways tight!
- Now let go and see what appears, it looks kind of like two bunny ears!
- Just one more double knot left to do, to make for a safer shoe!



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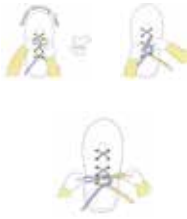
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**Double Knotting Time!** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

Instruct the child how to grasp both bunny ears from the base and go up to the middle (half-way) point of the ears and make another "X". Take time to demonstrate and then have the child imitate. Feel free to try "hand-over-hand" if you see the student struggling.

Use the following rhyme:

"Take the top loop (ear) through the opening (mouse's face) and pull sideways like you did before.  
Now your shoe is ready to run out the door!"



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**Video Showing the Shoe Tying Technique** Shoe Tying Made Simple®



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**"Tie My Shoe" Song: Pink and White Version** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Chorus:</b> Tie my shoe. Tie it tight.<br/>Tie my shoe with pink and white.<br/>Tie my shoe. Tie my shoe.<br/>I can tie and you can feel!</p>                   | <p><b>Chorus:</b> Tie my shoe. Tie it tight.<br/>Tie my shoe with pink and white.<br/>Tie my shoe. Tie my shoe.<br/>I can tie and you can feel!</p>                    |
| <p><b>Verse 1:</b> Cross the laces. Make an X.<br/>Pink over White works the best!<br/>Pull the laces until they stop!<br/>We've just made our very first knot.</p>   | <p><b>Verse 3:</b> Now you've made a bunny's ear.<br/>Wonder what that bunny hears?<br/>Pink goes 'round the white one's ear.<br/>Wrap it tight and hold her near.</p> |
| <p><b>Chorus:</b> Tie my shoe. Tie it tight.<br/>Tie my shoe with pink and white.<br/>Tie my shoe. Tie my shoe.<br/>I can tie and you can feel!</p>                   | <p><b>Chorus:</b> Tie my shoe. Tie it tight.<br/>Tie my shoe with pink and white.<br/>Tie my shoe. Tie my shoe.<br/>I can tie and you can feel!</p>                    |
| <p><b>Verse 2:</b> Find the dots on the white lace.<br/>Each dot has a special place.<br/>Push them together. Down low and tight.<br/>Wow! your work is dynamite!</p> | <p><b>Verse 4:</b> Take the pink and poke it through.<br/>Pull these loops to tie your shoe.<br/>One more knot is left to do.<br/>Now you have a softer shoe!</p>      |

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**Tie One On Joke!** Shoe Tying Made Simple®



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**Tips for Using the Song, Rhyming Verse, or Visuals** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

**Using the song or rhyming verse:**

- Play the "Tie My Shoe" song during "whole-class" instruction so that the children get familiar with the lyrics. Read the rhyming verse if this is the preferred mode and ask the children to repeat some of the verses if they are able.
- If you are going to use the rhyming verse, it is best if the instructor has it memorized so that you'll be able to correctly instruct the child as you move through the steps in the process.

**Using just the pictures or visuals:**

- A large instruction card comes with your teaching sneaker. We now have task-analyzed flashcards that come with words or without words.
- You may also blow up the STMS poster and use these for whole class instruction.

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**Important Guidelines Prior to Whole-Class Instruction** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

1. Make sure you know exactly how many right-handed and left-handed children there are in the classroom. Prepare your handouts ahead of time.
2. Make sure to send the "introductory paper" home to the parents to let them know that you are beginning whole classroom instruction and that you may need additional parent "volunteers."
3. Have each child bring from home one "teaching shoe" that has eyelets for lacing. Gym shoes or sneakers are preferable. Set up shoe using the bicolor teaching laces. Or, if you have a school budget you can get a few STMS teaching sneakers for the classroom to use.
4. Have a "classroom demonstration shoe" or teaching sneaker for teaching purposes.
5. Set up "classroom teaching shoes" for right-hand- and a left-hand-dominant child. (!) Left-handed shoe may suffice.
6. Use the STMS Instructional Poster as the visual are helpful!

Try to recruit children that are a bit older or girls that already know how to tie their shoes. Its helpful!



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**Review and Mastery** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- For best results and "real-life" generalization of this skill, let parents know what you are trying to accomplish and share the method with them.
- Recommended homework on this method suggests only doing the steps for a few minutes a night. Remember, every child is going to learn at his or her own pace. Some children may understand the method in just one sitting.
- You can always switch to regular laces once they have learned how to tie and remove the "markings"/dots if the student has the steps ingrained and mastered.
- Right and Left handed instructions are available. The child can color in their own left-hand instructions. They come in a light-grey scale.
- Modifications for the visually impaired
- You may use whatever teaching strategy best suits each individual child; forward chaining, backward chaining, scaffolding, TEACCH methodology, etc.
- Visuals of each step along the way in the process, ideal for non-readers.
- Universal method: shoe-tying is performed daily all over the world. There are various ways to tie shoes. The teaching laces were designed to be placed into children's shoes. They are soft, attractive and fun!

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**Data Collection  
for Therapists  
and Teachers**

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**Data Collection for Teachers and Therapists** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- Data tracking system to use in the schools
- Document the level of prompting required
- Document behavioral observations
- Use the form to communicate progress with the classroom teacher



Happy Shoe Tying!

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**Activity Analyzed Steps In Forward Chain** Shoe Tying Made Simple®



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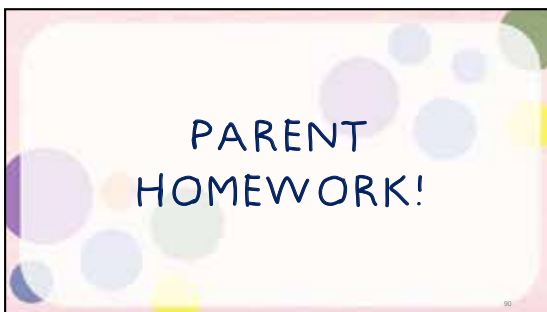
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**PARENT HOMEWORK!**

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**Important Points for Practitioners Regarding Homework** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

Specific Instructions for Parents

- Practice time or homework should be short, just a few minutes a day for each task-analyzed step.
- Be sure to send parents or caregiver examples of therapeutic exercises to accompany or accommodate the more difficult steps in the program.
- Current books on the market do not generalize the skill and, therefore, often the child is not successful when learning to tie.
- Shoelaces are longer for teaching purposes. They come in cute color selections and our families report that they are durable and extremely comfortable.
- No teacher jargon is used in the program. The song, rhyming verse, and terminology of the method are all "child-friendly".

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**Individual Homework Worksheets for Parents** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- Printable homework sheets to send home to parents "or" have the parent purchase their own forms at [www.pedocorrection.com](http://www.pedocorrection.com)
- The parent could also use the "Shoe Tying Made Simple" teaching sneaker "or" they get a pair of the bicolor laces and instruct on the log.
- Make sure to offer the child the congratulatory award after achieving the goal of shoe-tying.
- You can discuss with the parent if they are open to purchasing a new pair of sneakers for the child after the process has been mastered!

Happy Shoe Tying!

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**Individual Homework Worksheets for Parents** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- 1) Stretch Laces out to each side
- 2) Cross laces to make an "X"  
(Blue over Yellow works the best!)
- 3) Tuck the blue under the yellow and pull it through to make your very first knot
- 4) Find the dots on the yellow lace, pinch together and hold in place. Tug on this loop to make sure it is tight
- 5) Take the blue lace and wrap it around the yellow loop and let the blue strand droop!

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Handout for the Therapro webinar  
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Individual Homework Worksheets for Parents Shoe Tying Made Simple®




6) While holding the yellow loop, in your right hand, use your left thumb and pointer finger to push the blue lace through the hole, don't linger!



8) Now let go and see what appears, looks like two bunny's ears.



7) Pinch the yellow loop with the left hand, pinch the blue loop with the right hand and pull sideways



9) Criss cross the laces to make a mouse's face!

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Individual Homework Worksheets for Parents Shoe Tying Made Simple®



10) Tuck the top ear under and push through.



11) Pull sideways like you did before, now your shoe is ready to run out the door!

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Tips for Teaching Untying with Shoe Tying Made Simple Laces Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- Instruct on how to untie double and single knots.
- If the preferred method if untying initially or backward chaining, make sure you have all items "in reverse."
- If necessary, you may use a pair of plastic tweezers to help the child loosen up the double knot.
- Then have them pull one of the ends of the shoelace near the plastic coated tips to release the bow tie.
- Teach the child to then use their pointer finger under the initial knot and lift up, which will release the original knot.

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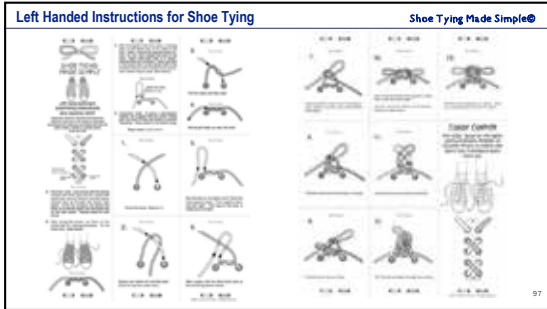
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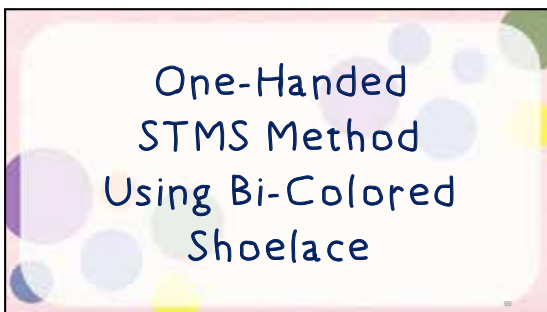
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**Modification for Hemiparesis Instruction** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- 1) Adapt and set up the shoelaces prior to instruction, be prepared and make sure the right and left handed instructions and laces are accurate.
- 2) Ensure the teaching shoe or teaching sneaker is properly stabilized. The child may also choose to wear their own shoe.
- 3) If the child has adequate core strength, balance, flexibility, and higher-level hand dexterity skills, you may be able to teach them standing up! \* Look at the visual instructions on the next slide.

Helpful tips for one-handed tying: 1) Incorporate task analysis and mastering & building at each juncture. 2) A child with hemiparesis can learn this skill but expect to adapt or make changes during the process to limit frustration. 3) Each child is different and if the task is too overwhelming, you can look to the non-tie shoelace options if the overall goal is independence.

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**One-Handed Shoe-Tying Method** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

Double-Knotting Tutorial

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**Adaptations for the Blind** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- Emphasize tactile/kinesthetic instruction
- Apply several coats of non-toxic nailpolish over the dots to "stiffen" that area.
- Try Velcro or tape over the dots
- Use lots of hand-over-hand and exercises so the child can "feel" the steps and pair with auditory input.

If further modifications are required, one could always use a different feel or style on the other half of the lace. A company called "Easy Tie" manufactures this type of a shoelace with a snap component, where you can snap together a different texture on one half of the lace.

EASY Tie brand shoelaces

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**Adaptations for the Non-Tyers** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

There are times when a child is not capable of mastering the task of shoe tying. I have come across some nice options in these instances.

- Lock Laces-great elastic shoelaces with a super closure system.
- Anon-520 beautiful color selection, stretchy elastic shoelace with an easy closure system.
- Xpand Never Tie Your Shoelaces. Elastic shoelace with (2) closure options, visible and hidden modes.
- Hickies, they are plastic and come in a variety of colors. The final closure system can be somewhat tricky so make sure that an adult sets these up for the child.

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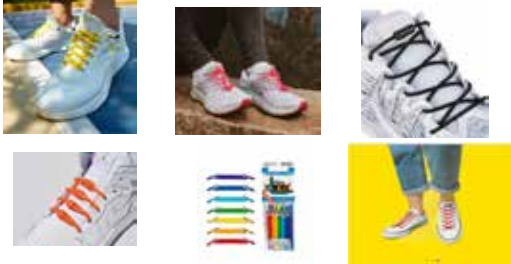
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**Adaptations for the Non-Tyers** Shoe Tying Made Simple®



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**Adaptations for the Non-Tyers: Video** Shoe Tying Made Simple®



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**Wrap-Up** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

Key learning objectives met through participation in the STMS Course:

1. Identify developmental pre-readiness skills that are required in preparation for shoe tying.
2. Summarize instructional strategies (i.e. task analysis and multisensory instruction, forward and backward chaining, scaffolding, and the TEACCH methodology) while adding adaptations using your clinical judgement.
3. You now know why 'Shoe Tying Made Simple' is based upon "hand dominance."
4. You now have skills to determine whether a student is Right-Handed, Left-Handed, or if you will need to incorporate a One-Handed shoe tying method or just use non-tying adaptations.
5. Identify specific strategies for individual and whole class instruction.

Call to action- We hope that you are now interested in teaching individual and/or whole classrooms how to tie their shoes successfully as this skill contributes to the students overall success with fine motor skill achievement and independence.

Benefits- As you can see the benefits of using task analysis paired with multisensory instruction will benefit the students you are working with greatly. You walk away with a great product where we as a company have taught thousands of children to tie their shoes successfully! We hope that you will now share your knowledge and get the kids tying!

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**STMS Teaching Sneaker** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

If you wish to get the same teacher sneaker as described in this course:  
Teaching sneakers will be available to the attendees of this presentation for the price of \$14.00 with **FREE SHIPPING**.

Please use this QR code or link below to purchase via credit card:



<https://square.link/u/UxAYsv9>

For other purchase options such as PayPal, check or P.O.:  
Please e-mail order information to [info@stms.com](mailto:info@stms.com) and include the following:

- 1) Your shipping address
- 2) The number of teaching sneakers you wish to purchase
- 3) The Method of payment you wish to use: PayPal, Check, or P.O.

For PayPal orders we will send a payment request to your e-mail.  
For Check Orders we will email you our billing address where the check can be mailed.  
For Purchase Orders please email us your P.O. number and to whom to address the invoice.

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**Structured Teaching- 1:1 Instruction or New Skill Introduction** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

- 1:1 should be presented to a student as shown above where the child is seated to the left of the instructor/teacher
- The tasks should encourage as much independence as possible
- It is always useful to use a now-next strip if the child does not utilize a timetable. It is also recommended that there is a "To Do" basket or folder to the left of the student and a "Finished" basket to the right of the student.
- With 1:1 teaching, you could incorporate the "Tie My Shoe" song or recite the rhyming verse to the student if this is appealing to them. It will help reinforce the steps and make the session more enjoyable.
- When structuring 1:1 sessions, they do NOT need to be as structured as in the independent work stations. It is recommended that you provide the level of support the student requires to be successful and will reduce their level of stress
- With regard to the shoe tying, the student will need to know how to untie first, in order to stretch the laces out to each side.
- The second step, crossing the laces to make an "X" should show mastery in 5-8 trials. This should be practiced after introducing to the student in independent work. If the child has demonstrated mastery, then you can introduce the next step in the chain. A teacher may also report this if she is working with the student on the task while the OT is not present.
- Keep in mind that you may need to alter tasks slightly so that the task-analyzed steps can be used in the student's independent work stations once they have mastered the skill.
- These 1:1 sessions are meant for introducing new skills and refining and tweaking skills that a student may find particularly challenging. The Occupational Therapist/Teacher should be problem-solving and revising the task in order to ensure success!
- If work baskets or work folders do not work for you table-top space, you may always use laminated "To Do" work cards and "Finished" cards that you would tape on the table-top. This saves space!
- Try to build in something in the child's natural interest and will be motivated to them. This could be shown visually in your "What's next?" section.

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**STMS Instructions for Individual Laces** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

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**Available Colors of STMS Teaching Sneakers** Shoe Tying Made Simple®

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