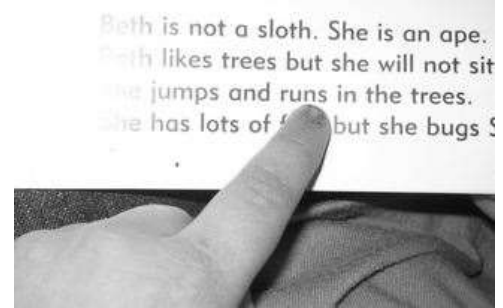


Note: These strategies are intended for at-risk readers

FINGER TRACKING FOR AT-RISK READERS

While traditional methodology tells us that after early elementary, students should be able to follow the text with only their eyes, there are many sub-groups that should be encouraged to continue to use their finger to track the words as they read. In addition to struggling readers, or those behind one or more grade levels, we have students learning English, students with Dyslexia and perhaps other undiagnosed vision problems for whom using their finger can be beneficial.

Without learning directional tracking early on, children may struggle with reading and fall behind. Gagen explains, "Poor readers have frequent tracking errors where they improperly process letters out of order. Poor readers often exhibit erratic eye movement as they look around for 'whole words' or jump around searching for familiar hunks or word families. These incorrect tracking strategies contribute to reading difficulty."



In addition to helping children focus on and process letters in the correct order, directional tracking helps them with [phonological awareness](#), or the ability to hear the sounds that make up words. As they track each letter, they can speak and process its sound, putting all the sounds together to form the word.

<http://www.grapeseed.com/us/blog/teaching-directional-tracking-to-foster-literacy-development>

Students should use a finger to track while they are reading.

Miscese Gagen emphasized why this is important in her article titled "[Directional Tracking Explained](#)." She said, "Scanning left-to-right in a straight line manner is not a natural process. Instinctively, looking all over is a superior way to gather and process information. Straight line, left-to-right processing is one of the arbitrary artificial components of our man made written English language that the student must learn and automatically apply. To read proficiently the student must not only know the individual sound but must process the letters in order left-to-right. Correct phonologic processing requires proper directional tracking." <http://www.readinghorizons.com/reading-strategies/decoding/4-steps-from-decoding-strategies-to-reading-fluency>

A pacer is a visual guide—your fingers, or a card to move your eyes down and across the lines of text with the results of increased concentration and faster reading speeds. Using your finger when reading has many benefits:

- It forces your eyes to focus on a line or section of words.
- It naturally encourages concentration.
- It forces your eyes to move in a directed pattern across and/or down the page.
- It guides your eyes to keep their place and to find the next line accurately. It involves more of your body in the reading process, which keeps you alert.