

Department of speech and language therapy

Muscular flexibility exercise sheet

Why do I need these exercises?

Sometimes we can get into a habit of tensing the muscles in our throat when we speak. This may be following a cold or throat infection, after prolonged or excessive use of our voice or on other occasions. These exercises should help to reduce the tension in your throat so that your voice can be produced more easily. You may find it useful to begin by doing some breathing or relaxation exercises if your speech therapist has already introduced you to these.

How do I carry out the exercises?

Exercises for the Jaw

Remember to keep the tongue relaxed when doing these exercises.

- Clench your teeth tightly together. Now release the tension that is keeping the teeth together and feel the difference.
- Place your fingers on either side of your face at the level of the jaw. Stroke the jaw downwards, allowing it to open gently, little by little. Feel the separation of your upper and lower teeth whilst keeping your lips together in light contact.
- Keeping the lips lightly together, chew an imaginary piece of toffee. This can be done quite vigorously for some time. Maintain a fluidity of movement and avoid tension.

Exercises for the Muscles of the Throat

- Imagine you are chewing a piece of toffee, which becomes bigger as you chew. Make the movements of your jaw more vigorous, and open your mouth to accommodate the increasing size of the toffee. Notice that your throat feels more open on completion of this exercise.
- Keeping the lips together with light contact, try to produce a full yawn. Again, be aware of the feeling of space and openness in your throat.

Laryngeal Lift and Lower

- Imitating a puppy whining, produce a high-pitched hum on a small glide, repeating this three or four times, and then glide down your full pitch range to produce a low creaky, pitch. In doing so, you will feel your larynx lift and lower. Repeat three times and then lift and lower through its full excursion on the fourth repetition. After repeating the exercise in full several times your larynx should be 're-set' at a relaxed, neutral position.

Exercises for the Tongue

- Stick your tongue out of your mouth. Make the tip into a thin pointed shape. Now spread the sides of the tongue so they become wider and flatter. Keep alternating these positions.
- Stick your tongue out of your mouth with the tongue-tip pointed. Use it like a 'pen' to draw a picture. Now try to 'write' the title of a book or a film.
- Tuck the tip of your tongue behind your lower front teeth. Flatten the rest of your tongue, but keep it in your mouth. Now bunch your tongue forward and try to push it out of your mouth. Remember to keep the tip of your tongue behind your lower front teeth.

When should I do these exercises?

Practise the above exercises first thing in the morning to help 'warm-up' the muscles in your throat, or at times when you feel your voice becomes hoarse or your throat gets tense.

How often should I do these exercises?

It is best to practise these exercises for short periods of time, on a regular basis. This helps them to have more of an effect on your voice. A good target would be to practise them five times a day, for up to five minutes each time.

What should I do if I can not complete the exercises?

If you have any problems completing the exercises, or if you have any questions or concerns about them, speak to your speech and language therapist, who will be happy to advise you.



We are currently working towards a smoke-free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS Stop Smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

Help with this leaflet:



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Document history

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