

# Exercises for facial weakness

Information for patients





## Why do I need to exercise my face?

These exercises have been designed to help improve your control of the muscles in your face. This will help to increase the symmetry of your face (help both sides move and look the same). This can also help with eating and speech.

Sit or stand comfortably in front of a mirror whilst practicing your exercises. You can assist the weak muscles by using your fingers to help with the movement. Your therapists will teach you specific techniques as needed.

All exercises need to be gentle and are aimed at relearning the movements for natural appearance and use of your face. The focus is on keeping symmetrical at all times.

You may be asked to think of a feeling related to each exercise, as this can help the muscles to work better.

Each exercise should be done ..... times ..... a day. This will be guided by your therapist and how quickly your muscles tire.

## Exercises:

Start by looking at your face in the mirror. Try to relax your face to make it symmetrical as possible.

1. Place your fingers at the corners of your mouth keeping your lips together. Try to draw the corners of your mouth straight back as if to say 'ee' using your fingers to encourage the movement.



*Muscle: Risorius*



*Muscle:  
Zygomaticus Major*

2. Place your fingers just outside the corners of your mouth onto your cheeks. Try to draw the corners of your mouth upwards and outwards as in smiling using the fingers to encourage the movement.

3. Place your fingers above your eyebrows. Try to raise your eyebrows as in surprise or fright using the fingers to encourage the movement.



*Muscle: Frontalis*



*Muscle: Levator Labii Superioris*

4. Place your fingers on the space between your upper lip and nose. Try to show your top teeth using your fingers to encourage the movement.



*Muscle: Orbicularis Oris*

5. Place your fingers on the corners of your mouth. Keeping your lips together move your lips forward as if to whistle or say 'oo' using the fingers to encourage the movement.

## Progressions

Start these exercises only as instructed by your therapist.

1. Try to bite down firmly with your back teeth. Clench the jaw to tighten the muscles.



*Muscle: Temporalis*



*Muscle: Procerus*

2. Place your fingers either side of your nose. Try to wrinkle your nose using the fingers to encourage the movement.

- Place your fingers above your eyebrows. Try to draw your eyebrows together as if frowning using the fingers to encourage the movement.



*Muscle: Corrugator Supercilii*



*Muscle: Mentalis*

- Try to lift your chin by pushing out your bottom lip as if pouting. You may see some wrinkling of your chin.



*Muscle:  
Levator Anguli Oris*

- Place your finger on the crease between the corner of your mouth and nose. Try to raise the corner of your top lip as if to show your 'canine' tooth or sneer on one side.

6. Try to press the inside of your cheeks firmly against your side teeth and draw back the corners of the mouth as when pursing your lips as if to playing the trumpet.



*Muscle: Buccinator*

7. Try to push your lower jaw forward. This may expose your lower teeth.



*Muscle: Pterygoideus Medialis and Lateralis*

As with all exercises technique is very important. Therefore if you are unsure please stop and contact your Therapist.





## Directions to Facial Therapy Department:

We are situated on Level LG1 of the West Wing. Turn right out of the lifts and follow the blue signs to ENT & Plastics Outpatients.

Therapy Department Telephone: **01865 231 181**  
8am-4.30pm

This telephone is in a patient treatment area, therefore you may need to leave an answerphone message. We will return your call as soon as possible.

Emily McMullen, Clinical Specialist Plastic Surgery Physiotherapist  
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If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

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