

Myofunctional Therapy Exercises for Sleep-Disorder Breathing

by Sarah Hornsby RDH, Myofunctional Therapist

<http://www.myfaceology.com/sleep-apnea/>

- 1) Tongue brushing
- 2) Suction and hold
- 3) Tongue trace
- 4) Left, right, up, down
- 5) Jaw resistance
- 6) Forcing air
- 7) Yawn pulls
- 8) Ahhh sounds
- 9) Eee ooo aaaa
- 10) Finger in cheek
- 11) Reach for the ceiling (bonus: add swallow)

1) Tongue Brushing

1. Using your toothbrush, brush the top and side of your tongue.
2. Keep your tongue in the floor of your mouth, or stretched outside of your mouth about half way.
3. Brush the following sections of your tongue each times each.
 - a. Left side
 - b. Top (down the center)
 - c. Right side
 - d. Tip
4. Repeat this cycle three times.

2) Suction and Hold

1. Start by making a “click” with your tongue. This will demonstrate the feeling of your tongue being suctioned to the roof of your mouth.
2. Next, try sticking your tongue to the roof of our mouth without letting it unstick to make a clicking sound.
3. Once your tongue is “suctioned” to the roof of your mouth, open wide, and bring your cheeks back into a smiling position.
4. How this position for 10 seconds, then rest for 2 second.
5. Repeat 6 times.

3) Tongue Trace

1. Start with your mouth open about halfway and back in a smiling position.
2. Slide the tip of your tongue from the backside of your upper front teeth, along your palate towards the back of your throat.
3. Repeat 20 times.

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4) Left, Right, Up, Down

1. Open your mouth wide.
2. Stick your tongue out as far as it will go, out the left side of your mouth.
3. Count to 10.
4. Repeat this for the right side of your mouth, then up toward your nose, and lastly, down towards your chin. Hold each position for 10 seconds as well.
5. Repeat the whole cycle (Left, Right, Up Down) three times.

5) Jaw Resistance

1. Place your hand underneath your chin.
2. Attempt to open your mouth while using your hand to push against your chin, creating a resistance.
3. Hold for 5 seconds, then rest for 2 seconds.
4. Repeat 10 times.

6) Forcing Air

1. Take a deep breath, and purse your lips together.
2. Exhale and using your diaphragm and abdomen, force the air out from between your pursed lips. This should feel similar to blowing up a balloon.
3. Force the air out for 5 seconds.
4. Repeat 10 times.

7) Yawn Pulls

1. Looking in a mirror, open your mouth wide, and find your uvula. This is the area in the back of your throat that hangs down to form a ball or oblong shape.
2. Watching your uvula, try to make yourself yawn by raising that part of your throat upwards. If you can't yawn, that's okay, just focus on the movement instead.
3. Hold this position for 5 seconds, then rest for 2 seconds.
4. Repeat 10 times.

8) Ahhh Sounds

1. Looking in a mirror, start with your mouth open wide, and your tongue inside of your mouth.
2. Make an "ahhh" sound for 5 seconds, while pushing your tongue downward, towards the floor of your mouth at the same time.
3. Repeat this 8 times.

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9) Eee, Ooo, Aaa

1. Start by moving your cheeks back to form a big smile. You can say the eee sound out loud, or do this silently. The goal is to use large, over-exaggerated movements so that your facial muscles have to work hard
2. Hold the "eee" position for 10 seconds.
3. Repeat this with the position used to say "oooh", and then the position used to say "ahhh". Remember to use exaggerated movements.
4. Repeat the "eee-ooo-aaa" cycle three times.

10) Finger in Cheek

1. Open your mouth about halfway, and place your first finger inside your cheek.
2. Push your finger so it moves your cheek outwards.
3. Contract your cheek and lips so that the muscles resist the pushing.
4. Repeat 10 times for each cheek.

11) Reach for the Ceiling

1. Tilt your head back so that you are looking at the ceiling.
2. Stick your tongue out as if you are attempting to touch the ceiling with it.
3. Hold this position for 10 seconds.
4. Repeat 5 times.
5. Bonus: To make this exercise even more challenging, try to gently bite your tongue and swallow in position.