
Bell's Palsy

To help you recover from Bell's palsy faster and lessen the chances of developing permanent complications, you can participate in various therapies or exercises specifically designed to help you with your condition. Here are several options available for you to try.

Prepare for the Exercises by Doing This Massage

Before doing any exercises, you should perform simple facial massages first. You can begin by following this procedure :

1. "Using your fingers, massage and gently stretch the skin from the corner of your mouth toward the ear and then down to the jaw bone in a circular pattern.
2. Do the same circular pattern on your chin and forehead.
3. With your finger (or electric toothbrush / make-up brush / ice cube), brush the forehead in an upward direction toward the hairline, two to three times. Do the same with the cheek area, or try gentle tapping on the skin with your fingertips."

Short, Basic Exercises You Can Try at Home

The following exercises were developed by The Facial Paralysis Institute, with the goal of helping you slowly regain brain-to-nerve-to-muscle communication. It's important to follow the instructions correctly, but do not force your muscles if they are not ready yet.

1. "Sniffle, wrinkle nose and flare nostrils.
 2. Curl your upper lip up, and then raise and protrude the upper lip.
 3. Try to smile without showing teeth, then smile showing teeth.
 4. Using your index finger and thumb, pull the corners of your lips in toward the center. Slowly and smoothly push out and up into a smile. Continue the movement up to the cheekbone. Use firm pressure.
 5. Try to close the eye slowly and gently, without letting your mouth pull up or your eyebrow move downward.
 6. Try to raise your eyebrows, and then hold for 10 to 15 seconds. Pause and repeat.
 7. Gently wink with one eye, and then try the other one. Do it to the best of your ability, and do not push it.
 8. Open eyes widely, but without involving your eyebrow. Stop if you see any inappropriate muscle actions."
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Here's an eye exercise you can try from **The Bell's Palsy Association**. It can help you regain control of your eyelids:

1. Look at the floor.
2. Place the back of your index finger on the affected eyelid to help keep it closed.
3. Using the opposite free hand, lift the affected eyelid up, working along the brow line.
4. Try and press the eyelids together.
5. Squint both eyes as if you're looking into the sun.

Mime Therapy

Mime therapy is a method introduced in the '70s by Dutch mime artist Jan Bronk and otolaryngologist (ear, nose and throat doctor) Pieter Devriese. The goal of mime therapy is to help people diagnosed with **Bell's palsy** recover control of their facial muscles and overall symmetry.

The first session starts with a massage exercise that lasts 10 to 15 minutes. This typically consists of circular strokes (effleurage) and kneading to both sides of the face. Then, stretching will be done to relieve the affected muscles. When the warmup is complete, do the following exercises:

- Basic movements: You will be taught specific exercises such as the forehead wrinkle, eye closure, smiling, snarling and lip pucker. These will be done at varying speeds and intensity.
- Jaw movements: Relaxing the lower jaw, exercises of the mouth and eye movements will be performed.
- Lip closure exercises: These involve filling the cheeks with differing amounts of air, along with eating and drinking exercises while keeping the eye open.
- Expression exercises: You will be guided to use your muscles to recreate common facial expressions, such as anger and astonishment.

Be sure to look for a Registered Physiotherapist who can help you work through these exercises properly.



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