



Facial Exercises

You have dozens of muscles in your face and just like other muscles in your body, it is important to exercise them to keep them strong, supple and toned.

One way to exercise your facial muscles is to stand in front of the mirror and practice different kinds of expression – laughing, smiling, frowning and looking surprised so all the muscles used in these actions get a good workout. But there are certain exercises that can tone specific muscle groups. Choose the exercises for the areas that you are concerned about and make this a daily routine.

This workout is not only designed to tackle problem areas that have already developed; it also encompasses preventative measures. In addition, the exercises help to relieve stress, anxiety and tension. Once you start to see a change you will wonder why each and every one of us doesn't take a few minutes out each day for a facial keep-fit session.

Warming up

Put on loose clothing and jog on the spot, or have a brisk walk. Make sure the place you exercise in is warm and find a firm, comfortable seat or if you prefer, you can stand in front of a mirror. Start by loosening your shoulders. Do this by placing one hand on each shoulder and move your elbows clockwise, first one at a time and then both together.

With your head vertical, turn to look over your left shoulder and then your right. Repeat 5 to 10 times. Looking straight ahead, slowly tilt your head from one side to the other until your neck feels more flexible.

With your hands by your sides, swing your shoulders to meet your chin, first to the left and then to the right. Repeat 5 to 10 times. Raise your shoulders to your ears and then let them drop. Repeat 5 to 10 times.

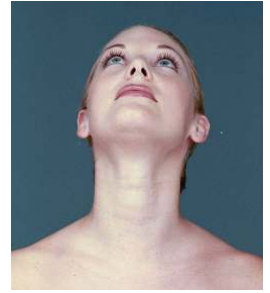
Let your jaw drop. While breathing slowly, make the biggest smile you can and hold it for as long as possible. This is particularly satisfying as it releases a lot of deep-seated tension. Finish the warm-up by shaking your hands.

Tackling problem areas (Repeat each exercise 5 to 10 times)

Forehead

* Place your thumbs on your temples and your index fingers at the top of your hairline. Push your index fingers up and your thumbs outwards to give yourself a stretched look.

* Using the index fingers of both hands placed on the inside edge of the eyebrows, gently pull apart any frown lines. Be careful not to pull up or pull down in any unnatural direction and gently stretch the skin towards your eyebrows.



Eyes

* Trying not to move your head from the vertical, look up then look down. Look out of the corner of your eyes, first to the left, then to the right.

* Place the thumb and first finger of each hand on either side of a crow's foot wrinkle (corner of the eye) and stretch carefully and gently. Repeat up to 10 times, holding for 5 seconds each stretch.

Mouth

* With your mouth open slightly, bring the corner of the left side of the mouth out as far as possible. Now do this with the right side of your mouth. Repeat 5 times.

* Puff up both cheeks and hold for a few seconds. Repeat this 10 times. This helps to reduce laughter lines. You can also pass a bubble of air slowly around your mouth area, first in a clockwise direction and then anti-clockwise. Repeat 5 times in each direction.

Chin & Jaw

* Use the back of your hand to tap or gently slap under your chin. Repeat with the other hand and increase the speed.

* Place both thumbs under your chin to provide gentle resistance and push your chin down. Continue this symmetrically around the jaw line. This will tone up the chin muscles and help reduce a double chin.

Nose

* Gently hold your nostrils between your thumb and index finger to offer gentle resistance and flare your nostrils as you slowly breathe in. Now slowly breathe out. Repeat this 5 times.

* Using your index finger, push the tip of your nose up and hold it firmly in place. Now pull your upper lip down over your teeth and hold for a second before releasing.

Complexion

* Using the middle fingers of both hands, make small circular movements from the top of the bridge of the nose down towards the nostrils.

* Use the thumbs and index fingers of both hands to gently pluck and pinch all over your face. Alternatively, tap all over your face with your fingers. This helps to improve the circulation and the general condition of your skin.

... and smile!

