

Preparation Activities for the Lips & Tongue for Good Resting Postures

Choose from the following activities to get the lips closed and the tongue on top in preparation for establishing good oral resting postures. Select only the tasks that are needed and work the muscles until your goals are met.

Activities for Lip Flexibility

- _____ 1. **Pucker-Up:** (*Lip stretching; Relax upper lip muscles*) With your thumb and index finger, grab the middle part of the upper lip. Take hold firmly, and pull and rotate the lip. Stretch the lip tissue.

- _____ 2. **Teeth Cover-Up Lip Stretch:** (*Improve lip flexibility via firm stroking*) Stretch the upper-lip over the top of the upper teeth. Apply firm, downward strokes with both index fingers to stretch the upper lip muscle.

- _____ 3. **Lip Pinch and Pull:** (*Improve lip flexibility through stretching*) With gloved fingers, reach your thumb up inside the left portion of the upper lip. Place your index finger on the surface of the lip "on top" of your thumb. With moderate pinching pressure, slowly slide, pull and stretch the lip down. Now progressively move to the right side, pinching and pulling the upper lip down slowly as you move across the top lip.

- _____ 4. **Lip Ballooning:** (*Improve lip flexibility through pressure stretching with air, underneath the lips*) Close your lips and force all the air in your mouth into the space above your upper lip. Your upper lip should "balloon" out. Do the same with the lower lip, if needed.

Activities to Generate Lip Tone and Awareness

- _____ 1. **Toothette Squeeze:** (*Improves lip muscle tone and/or lip flexibility to generate lip closure*) Hold the Toothette like a toothbrush. Then, bite your teeth together, smile and spread your lips wide. Place the sponge end of the Toothette firmly against your teeth, between your lips. Forcefully squeeze your lips into the sponge. Keep teeth closed; only the lips compress and tighten.

- _____ 2. **Lips Tighten-Loosen:** (*Develops muscle tone; heightens lip-awareness*) Tighten and squeeze your lips together; hold for a count of 1, 2, 3 in your mind (or on your fingers); feel the tension. Immediately relax lips, and count again, 1-2-3. Become aware of how "tight" feels different from "loose".

Activities to Generate Tongue-Palate Placement

- _____ 1. **Tongue Pops:** Squeeze your tongue up to the roof of your mouth, push up, and pop it down. Use the pop-on-top position to find the tongue's on top resting position. Make sure it is flat, not curled. To get the tongue closer to the top, just bite on a small tongue depressor (with side teeth) to keep the jaw closed.

- _____ 2. **Tongue Pops while Biting:** While biting on a small tongue depressor with your back teeth, squeeze your tongue up to the roof of your mouth, push up, and pop it down. Use the pop-on-top position to find the tongue's on top resting position. Make sure it is flat, not curled.

- _____ 3. **Tickle On Top!** Tickle the roof of your mouth (on top) with a Toothette or other oral tool. To relieve the itch, rub the top with the top surface of your tongue. That's the tongue's resting position.

- _____ 4. **Squeeze-Up-Hold:** Place a Toothette on the middle of the top of your tongue, and bite firmly on the stick to keep your jaw still. Squeeze up firmly into the sponge with your mid-tongue. Hold your tongue tight for a second, relax briefly, then push up firmly again. Repeat. Feel how your tongue moves UP.

Back-Tongue Retraction Task

- _____ 1. **Back-Throat Push:** (*Helps back-tongue to pull back; exercises throat muscles*) Place your fingers against your throat where you swallow, and push up. Pull and lower the back-tongue down into your throat; push down against your fingers. The whole tongue moves back and down. Feel the tension in your throat.
