

## Speech & Language Therapy

# Swallowing Exercises for Head & Neck Patients

Radiotherapy and chemotherapy can affect your eating and drinking in a number of ways. One of the biggest impacts is on the muscles you use for swallowing, and how well they work.

Radiotherapy can make the muscles very tight and 'woody', and once this happens it can be very difficult to reverse. This may lead to long term swallowing problems, and limit the texture and amount of food you can manage. The aim of these exercises is to keep your muscles moving throughout treatment, to maintain their strength and flexibility. The following exercises target the floor of mouth muscles, jaw muscles, the voice box and the base of tongue and throat muscles, all of which impact on the swallow sequence.

**We recommend you do a set of 10 repetitions of each exercises 3 times per day.** It should take about 10 minutes to complete all the exercises. Take short breaks or sips of water in-between if needed.

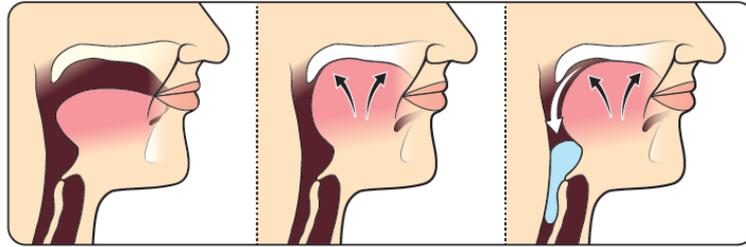
Go gently, taking care not to overdo things. You should feel a pull, but no pain. **If there is any pain, stop!** Carrying out some exercises shortly after taking your pain medications may help with this. If you are having any difficulties with the exercises, speak to your Speech and Language Therapist



## Patient Information

### Exercise 1: The Effortful Swallow

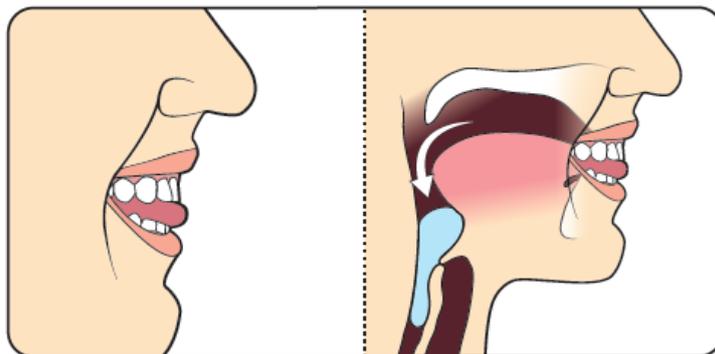
To strengthen your throat muscles



<p>Start with your tongue at rest.</p>	<p>Press your tongue against the roof of your mouth as hard as you can.</p>	<p>Swallow as hard as you can.</p>
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### Exercise 2: The Masako Technique

To strengthen your throat muscles

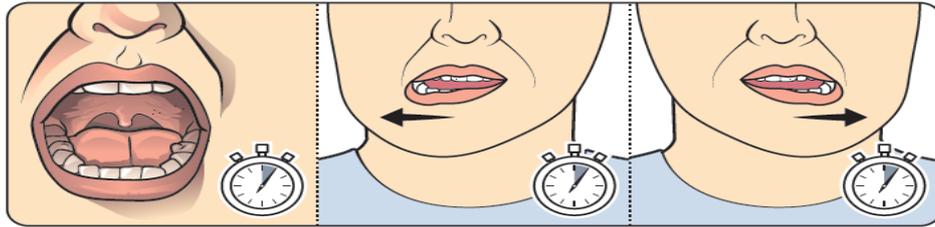


<p>Stick out the tip of your tongue; hold it between your teeth or lips.</p>	<p>Keeping your tongue in place, try to swallow your spit.</p>
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## Patient Information

### Exercise 3: Range of motion exercise

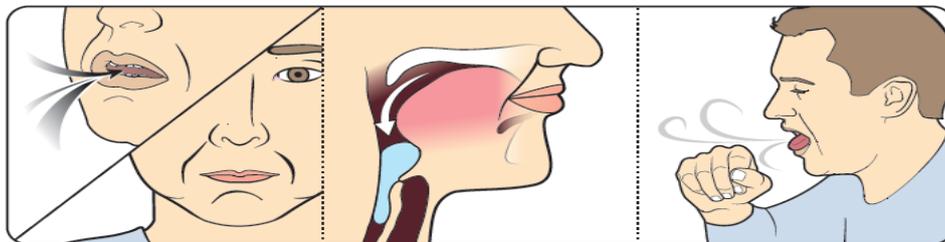
To stretch your jaw muscles



<p>Open your mouth as big as you can. Hold for 5 seconds.</p>	<p>Move your jaw to the right. Hold for 5 seconds.</p>	<p>Move your jaw to the left. Hold for 5 seconds.</p>
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### Exercise 4: The Supraglottic Swallow

To protect your airway

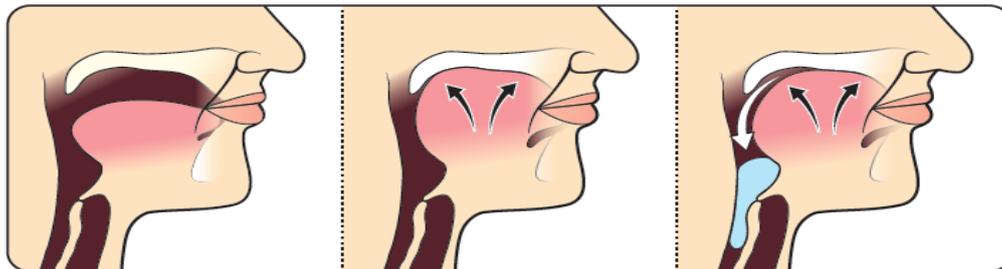


<p>Take a breath and hold it.</p>	<p>Swallow.</p>	<p>Then cough out as strong as possible.</p>
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## Patient Information

### Exercise 5: The Mendelsohn Exercise

To strengthen your floor of mouth muscles



Start with your tongue at rest.	Press your tongue against the roof of your mouth and swallow.	Before letting go, squeeze your floor of mouth & throat muscles to hold the Adam's apple up for 3 seconds.
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Please contact Speech & Language Therapy on 02476 966449 if you have any questions

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