

What Mouth Exercises Can Help Stop Snoring?

There are various types of exercises meant to strengthen the tongue, facial muscles, and throat through specific training techniques. Each of these exercises can be grouped together in various ways and performed two to three times per day.

Tongue Exercises

- **Tongue Exercise #1: Tongue Slide**
 - Place the tip of your tongue against the back of your top front teeth. Slowly slide your tongue backward with the tip moving along the roof of your mouth. Repeat 5-10 times.
 - *Purpose: Strengthens tongue and throat muscles*
- **Tongue Exercise #2: Tongue Stretch**
 - Stick out your tongue as far as you can. Try to touch your chin with your tongue while looking at the ceiling. Hold for 10 – 15 seconds and increase the duration gradually. Repeat 5 times.
 - *Purpose: To increase tongue strength*
- **Tongue Exercise #3: Tongue Push Up**
 - Stick your tongue upward against the roof of your mouth and press your entire tongue against it. Hold this position for 10 seconds. Repeat 5 times.
 - *Purpose: To improve tongue and soft palate tone and strength*

Face Exercises

- **Face Exercise #1: Cheek Hook**
 - Use a hooked finger to lightly pull your right cheek outward, and then use your facial muscles to pull your cheek back inward. Repeat 10 times on each side.
 - *Purpose: Assists in closure of mouth while breathing*
- **Face Exercise #2:**
 - Tightly close your mouth by pursing your lips. Then open your mouth, relaxing your jaw and lips. Repeat 10 times.
 - *Purpose: Improves tone and strength of jaws and facial and throat muscles.*

Breathing Through Your Nose

Practice breathing through your nose.

1. With your mouth closed and your jaw relaxed, inhale through your nose.
2. Then, take a finger or knuckle and close off one nostril.
3. Breathe out gently through the open nostril.
4. Do this about 10 times while alternating between nostrils.
5. You may even notice one nostril tends to be more congested than the other, and choose to work on breathing through the congested nostril.

Purpose: Improves nasal breathing, which stabilizes the airway during sleep

Pronouncing Vowel Sounds

Saying different vowel sounds involves the muscles in your throat, so deliberately repeating these sounds can help tone those muscles.

- Repeat the vowel sounds *a-e-i-o-u*.
- Start by saying each normally, and then adjust how much you stretch out the sound or how rapidly you say the vowel.
- Repeat the same sound 10-20 times in a row, and then change to a different sound.
- You can combine sounds (such as *ooo-aaah*) and repeat those as well.

According to an article published in *Chest* by Leto and colleagues* in 2015, these exercises can absolutely help with snoring and likely mild sleep apnea. Here's what you need to do (repeat each of the first 4 exercises 20 times):

1. Push the tip of your tongue against the hard palate and slide the tongue backwards
2. Suck the tongue upward against the palate pressing the entire tongue against the roof of the mouth
3. Force the back of the tongue against the floor of the mouth while keeping the tip of the tongue in contact with the inferior (lower) incisors (front) teeth
4. Elevate your soft palate and uvula (the punching bag at the back of the mouth)
5. Stick your finger in your mouth and press against the inside of your cheek; try to resist the force of your finger with your cheek muscle (10 times each side)
6. During normal eating/feeding: try to alternate chewing on both sides of the mouth, using your tongue to push the food back without pursing your lips or squeezing your cheeks