

## 7 Inflate a balloon

### Exercise:

Cover the opening of a balloon with your mouth. Take a deep breath from your nose and exhale from your mouth to inflate the balloon as much as possible. Repeat 5 times.

**Purpose of this exercise:** Improves the overall tone and strength of the jaws, facial and throat muscles.



## 8 Nasal Breathing

### Exercise:

Step 1: Sit up straight. With your mouth closed and your jaw relaxed, inhale through your nose.

Step 2: Relax your body. Focus on your breathing.

Step 3: Press your finger/knuckle on one nostril and breathe out gently through the other nostril. This step allows you to determine which nostril tends to be more or less congested.

Step 4: After determining which the less congested nostril is, press your finger/knuckle on the less congested nostril and breathe through the more congested nostril.

**Purpose of this exercise:** Improves and encourages nasal breathing, which can help stabilize airway during sleep.



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# Myofunctional Therapy and Nasal Breathing Exercises



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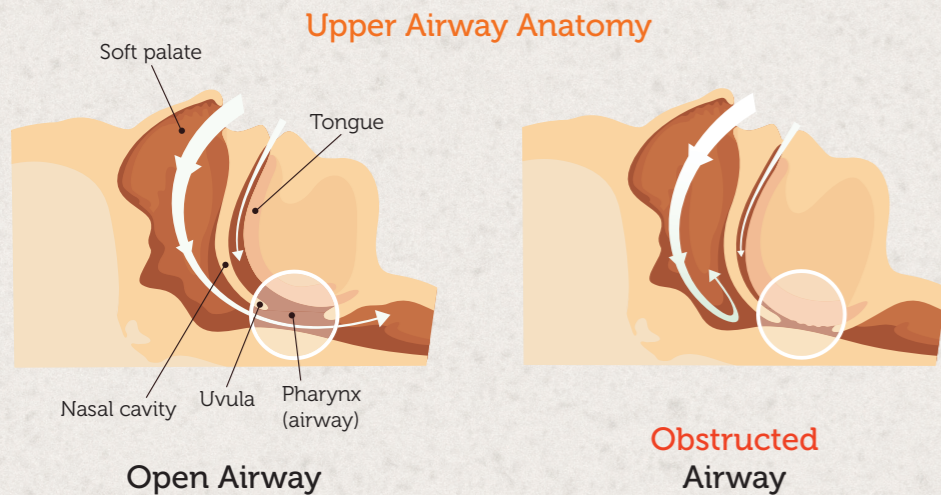
## What is myofunctional therapy?

Myofunctional therapy is a set of tongue and throat exercises that aims to increase the tone and strength of your tongue and throat muscles. For obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) patients, their throat muscles and tongue are more relaxed during sleep, resulting in a collapse of their airway. Myofunctional therapy exercises can help to increase the tone and strength of these upper airway muscles, thereby reducing the collapse of the upper airway during sleep.

Myofunctional therapy reduces sleepiness, snoring and improves obstructive sleep apnea. It complements other obstructive sleep apnea treatments.

### Nasal Breathing Exercises

Nasal breathing exercises are exercises that encourage nasal breathing. Nasal breathing is important for stabilization of the upper airway. Obstructive sleep apnea patients often breathe through their mouths during sleep. This causes their tongues to collapse backwards which will narrow their upper airway and reduce airflow.



Here are a set of myofunctional therapy and nasal breathing exercises. It takes about 5 minutes to complete the set of exercises. It would be ideal to achieve **2 sets of exercise per session** (10 minutes total), at least **twice daily**. It is recommended to practice these exercises in front of a mirror so it is easier to see what is happening.

## Myofunctional Therapy

### 1 Tongue Slide

#### Exercise:

Press the tip of your tongue on your top front teeth. Slowly slide your tongue backwards. Repeat 5 times.

**Purpose of this exercise:** Strengthens your tongue and throat muscles.



### 2 Tongue Stretch

#### Exercise:

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 of this exercise:** Increases the tone and strength of your tongue.



### 3 Gum chewing

#### Exercise:

With your mouth closed, go through the motion of chewing, as if you are chewing a piece of gum. Whilst chewing, make an 'mmm' sound. Do this for 10 seconds. Repeat 5 times.

**Purpose of this exercise:** Strengthens your throat and jaw muscles and helps to widen your airway.



### 4 Tongue Forces

#### Exercise:

Step 1: Suck 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.

Step 2: In the opposite direction, force your tongue down, until your whole tongue is resting on the floor of your mouth. Ensure the tip of your tongue is touching the back of your lower teeth. Hold this position for 10 seconds. Repeat 5 times.

**Purpose of this exercise:** Improves the tone and strength of your tongue and soft palate.



### 5 Tongue Clench

#### Exercise:

Hold your tongue gently in between your lower and upper front teeth. Do not bite too hard on your tongue to avoid causing injury. Whilst holding your tongue in between your teeth, perform 5 swallows. Repeat 5 times.

**Purpose of this exercise:** Strengthens your tongue and throat muscles.



### 6 Finger in Cheek

#### Exercise:

Press the buccinators muscle (main muscle in your cheek) outwards while contracting your cheek muscle. Repeat 10 times on each side.

#### Purpose of this exercise:

Assists in better closure of the mouth and improves nasal breathing.

