

# Exercises to Improve Swallowing

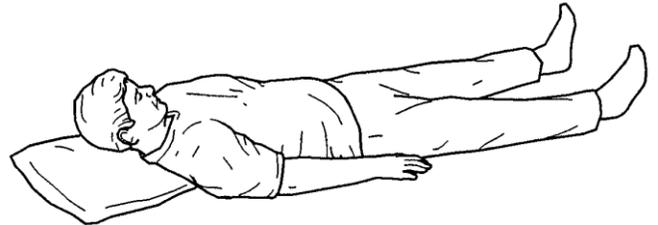
These exercises, sometimes called Shaker exercises, will help improve your swallowing. They help lift your voice box, also called your larynx. They also help lift the muscle called the esophageal sphincter at the top of your esophagus or windpipe.

**Do these exercises \_\_\_\_\_ times each day.**

You need to lie on your back for these exercises. You can do them in bed or lying on the floor or other firm surface. Rest on your back with your arms by your sides. Legs should be straight and relaxed.

Be sure to breathe slow and steady while doing these exercises. Holding your breath may put more stress on your heart.

1. Keeping your shoulders flat, lift only your head and neck to look down at your toes.
  - ▶ Hold for 1 minute then put your head backdown.\*
  - ▶ Relax and then repeat 2 more times.



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2. Lifting your head from the surface, look toward your toes and then put your head back down. Think of it as doing a sit up with your head. Keep your shoulders down and only lift your head and neck.

- ▶ Repeat 30 times.\*
- ▶ Relax.

\*Note: Your therapist may change the exercises to fit your specific needs. Try to work up to the hold times and repeats your therapist recommends.

Your neck may be sore for the first few times you do these exercises. It should lessen as your body adjusts to these exercises. Ask your doctor or therapist for neck stretching exercises to help ease the soreness.

Stop the exercises right away and tell your doctor or therapist if you:

- Feel light headed.
- Become short of breath.
- Get a headache.

✦ **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have any questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).**