

Suck Training Exercises

Strengthening the tongue muscles is key in conjunction with frenectomy treatment. These are not to be confused with the wound care exercises. Dr. Pinto may instruct you to perform these exercises before and/or after treatment. Your baby's tongue plays an important role in breastfeeding and needs to lie on the bottom of the mouth with the tip over the lower gum. As your baby latches to your breast, his/her tongue helps draw your nipple in and curves gently around to help hold it in place while nursing.

Do these **5** exercises **RIGHT** before breastfeeding. Wash your hands and be sure your fingernails are smooth and short.

“Tug-of-War” with the tongue (1)

1. Stroke middle of baby's lower lip with index finger to encourage wide opening of mouth.
2. Once open, place finger (nail side down) into the front of the mouth.
3. Your baby will suck your finger into his/her mouth.
4. If the tongue doesn't curl around your finger, stroke the roof of the mouth (palate) then gently press down on the back of their tongue (while stroking the tongue forward). This will pull your finger out of their mouth a little bit.
5. Allow them to suck it back in.
6. Pull your finger slightly out of the mouth until just before baby loses suction. Allow them to suck it back in. *Repeat 5x* or until you feel the tongue come forward over the gum.

“Walking Back” on the tongue (2)

1. Touch their cheek with a finger, moving toward their lips. Then tickle their lips a few times with a clean index finger to encourage the mouth to open.
2. Afterwards, use the tip of the index finger to press firmly on the tip of their tongue & count slowly to three before releasing the pressure.
3. Keeping the finger in their mouth, move back a little farther, pressing for 3 secs.
4. Try to avoid gagging the baby. If they gag, note distance to prevent again. *Repeat 3-4x.*

“Brushing the Gums” (3)

1. Touch their cheek with a finger, moving towards their lips, then tickle a few times to encourage them to open their mouth.
2. Massage the upper jaw by running your finger along the gumline, beginning at the left backmost point of the upper arch and moving toward the right backmost point.
3. Repeat on lower jaw.
4. Massage the inside of cheeks, nail side towards the cheek surface. Extend high enough to feel the bottom of their cheekbones from the inside of their mouth.

“Lip-Wall Massage” (4)

1. Hold lip and cheek tissue between index finger and thumb, gently massaging to relieve tension. Massage entire circumference around entire mouth.

“Sunshine” (5)

1. Gently massage cheeks, chin & lips in strokes extending outwards from mouth (mouth as sun, strokes as sun rays).