

Chewing Exercise

1. Pretend that you are taking a bite of a big piece of bread. Now begin to chew it on your back teeth, very slowly in a relaxed, circular motion with your jaw. Your mouth is closed. Imagine that your muscles are flaccid, as you chew in slow motion. Now add a *hum* sound, moderately loud, as you continue to chew. Keep breathing slowly and easily as you chew with a hum. Good. (Demonstrate humumumumum.)
2. Now you are going to do something that your mother told you never to do. You are going to chew with your mouth open. Let your jaw move down and around while you continue to chew the imaginary bread on the back of your teeth, with the humming sound. Let the sound come out your mouth, not your nose, and keep it at your optimum pitch. (Have them pinch their nose to make sure there is no coming out of it.) Take a breath every few chews, so that you have plenty of air. Good. (Check their pitch on the keyboard and if it is too low, because this is very relaxing, play their optimum pitch and have them chew and hum that sound instead.) (Demonstrate, yawwyawyawyaw.)
3. Now you are going to add counting to the chewing. It is most important that you think chewing, not counting. You'll be counting to ten, three times, in three different ways. If you cook a steak, you can cook it well done, medium or rare. We are going to start with well done.
 - a. Well Done
 - i. Chew as if you were eating a steak that has been cooked well done. Therefore, you have to chew a lot. Be very sloppy, mushy as you chew, not tense and strong. The point is to be very relaxed as you chew and count. So now chew as you say each number from one to ten. Give each number about three to five chews. Keep your voice on as you say, "wu-uu-un-une" (chew, chew, chew, chew), (take a belly breath), "to-oo-oo-wo" (chew, chew, chew, chew), (take a belly breath), three-ee-ee-ee, etc., until you reach 10. Take a breath before each new number and think chewing not counting. (Have them elongate the vowel sound.)
 - b. Medium
 - i. Now chew as if the steak was cooked medium, and you don't have to chew it as much. Continue to chew sloppy/mushy, like you are full of Novocain from the dentist. Chew: one-two-three (take a belly breath); four-five- six (take a belly breath); seven-eight-nine (take a belly breath); ten. Say the three numbers together, like they are one big word. In other words, keep your voice on; don't let it stop. Remember to think chewing, not counting.
 - c. Rare
 - i. Now chew as if the steak was cooked rare and you hardly have to chew it at all. Chew: one-two-three-four-five (breathe); six-seven-eight- nine-ten. Take a breath half way through and keep your voice on.

4. Count to ten with the chewing attitude only.
 - a. Return to the feeling of chewing and maintain that feeling while you count to ten. Don't chew, but retain the feeling that you just felt while chewing. Stop half way through the count and take a breath. Say the first five numbers all together, like they are one big word, and then say the last five numbers together, keeping the chewing attitude. Speak at a normal rate.
1-2-3-4-5, 6-7-8-9-10.
 - b. What do you notice? What is the difference between you old voice and this voice? How does your throat feel; more open or more closed? More relaxed or more tight? How does your voice sound; more smooth or more scratchy? How is your air; more flowing or more constricted? That's right. Your throat is more relaxed, you feel more air coming through your throat, and your voice is smooth and clear. This is how it should feel all the time when you speak.
5. Practice this chewing exercise three times a day for three days:
 - a. Chew with mouth closed with a *hum*.
 - b. Chew mouth open with a *hum*.
 - c. Chew while counting to ten three times
 - i. Well-done
 - ii. Medium
 - iii. Rare
 - d. Count to ten with the chewing attitude only; 1-5, 6-10.
 - e. Begin to add the chewing attitude to short words and phrases, saying the days of the week and the months of the year, or while reading aloud, to begin to make it a habit. Notice how your voice will naturally want to flow into the facial mask and speak at your optimum pitch.
6. When we chew, the vocal cords are open and relaxed. We have superimposed the feeling of chewing over the feeling of talking to help relax the vocal cords. Additionally, using correct exhalation from the midsection, allows the vocal cords to vibrate naturally, resulting in a smooth and relaxed voice. Without air, the vocal cords cannot vibrate and there is no voice.

From Dr Friedrich Brodnitz