

# Facial massage

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**Author:** Advanced Physiotherapist  
**Department:** Plastic Surgery  
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## Introduction

Facial massage is a vital part of your therapy and is useful at every stage of facial rehabilitation. It can:

- Improve relaxation, circulation and can reduce areas of tenderness
- Identify parts of the face that feel too tight or too loose
- Preserve the idea of movement in your face
- Keep the face supple
- It helps you stay in tune with changes in your face

When you massage, feedback from your face and your fingertips reminds your brain to pay attention to both sides of your face.

Massage can and should be performed on both sides of the face.

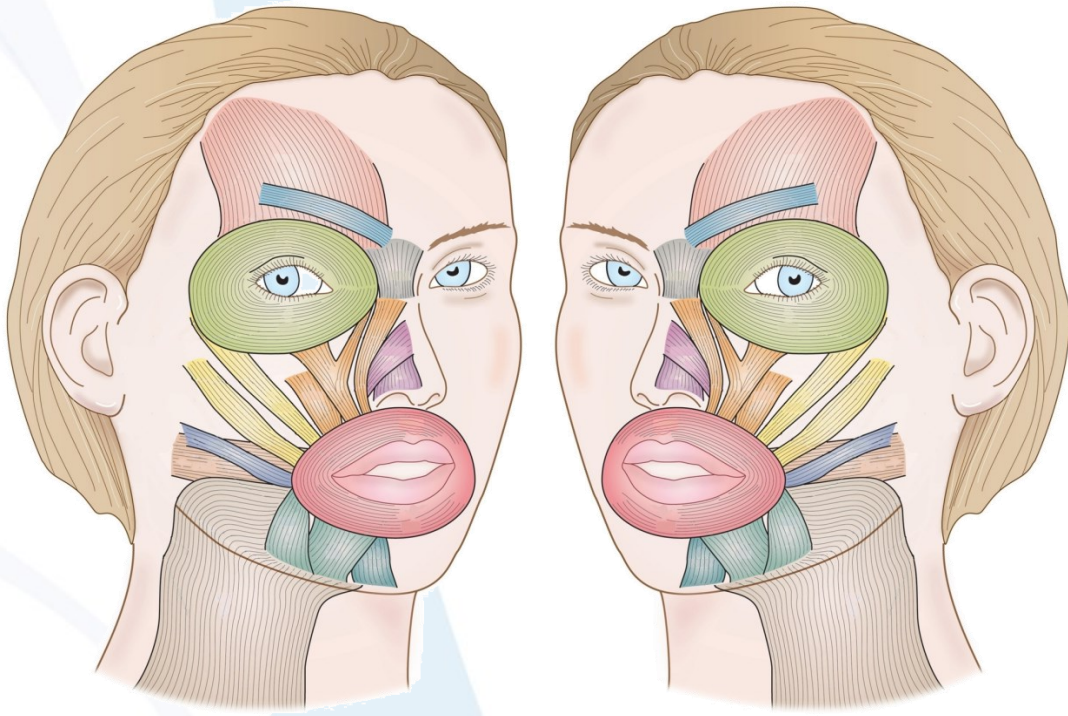
It is most effective if you can perform it in an unhurried way, in a quiet, calm location where you can focus on the massage in a relaxed way.

It is an important foundation for other exercises.

**Ensure you dedicate 2 minutes to each area of the face at least once every day.**

### **Before starting to massage:**

- Sit or lie comfortably
- Let go of any tension in the muscles around the face, neck and in the scalp. Allow your hands to rest palms up on your lap and part your lips slightly so your fists and jaw are not clenched
- Settle your breathing to a slow rhythm – breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth
- Consider the anatomy of the facial muscles to remind you to massage in wide circles to encompass all the tissues and to massage deeply enough to move those tissues
- You can use a small amount of moisturising cream if your skin is dry, but it is not always necessary
- Follow or seek the advice of your therapist if you have any unhealed or irritated areas of skin – it is advisable to avoid directly massaging over them but you might be able to massage around them



### The facial muscles beneath the skin

#### General principles for massage

- Concentrate – what can you feel?
- Use the pads of your fingers and apply moderated pressure – enough to move the muscles underneath the skin but not distort your features
- Start from the forehead and work downwards
- Include both sides
- It should **not** be painful. Stiff muscles can be tender so make sure you use a pressure you can tolerate. If you cause pain, you will tense up and that is counterproductive

## Technique

### Massage sequence



#### Relax....

Be aware of differences in tension between and within each side of the face.

If a particular area of the face feels tense such as the cheek, gently touch the area to encourage relaxation. Allow your mouth to open a little if it helps.

If closing the eyes is difficult or increases tension in the face just lower your gaze to the floor



#### Forehead

Work in slow, firm circular motions across the whole forehead. Massage up to the hairline and down on to the eyebrows.

Some people find a slow zig zagging across the forehead feels effective, with one hand moving up while the other moves down alternately.



#### Temples

Work in slow, firm circular motions into both temples.

The circular muscles around the eye attach to the eye socket so massage from the hair line to the edge of the eye socket.

Take care near the eye.



### **Lower Eye**

Using your index finger pads, slowly glide along upper cheek bone towards the nose and back so you encompass the lower eye socket.

Take care to avoid the delicate skin of the lower eye lid.



### **Cheeks**

Visualise 3 areas of the cheeks – upper, middle and lower aspects.

Work in slow, firm circular motions across the cheeks.

Start either side of the bridge of the nose, circling out along the cheek bone to the ear.

Then work from, circling under the cheek bone to the ear.

Finally, massage from corner of mouth along jaw line to ear.



### **Chin**

This area can feel tight and tender too.

With your first 2 fingers or thumbs as shown, circle over the area between the lower lip and the chin.

Ensure you include the whole area.



## Neck

Use the opposite hand to the side being massaged.

Using the pads of the fingers, massage in circular motions from the jaw line down to the collar bone at the front, middle and back of the neck.

A massage video is available on the link below and is produced by the specialist facial palsy team at Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJb4L06J9Go&t=3s>

It can be useful to follow a video instruction in 'real time' for your first few attempts to build your confidence.

## Massage tools

Some people like to use tools like facial rollers to help with facial massage.

Tools can be helpful but should only be used alongside the hands-on techniques above, not instead of them.

Always discuss additions or alterations to the techniques above with your facial therapist first.

## Useful Contacts

**Facial Palsy UK** is a national charity dedicated to helping those affected by facial palsy, regardless of the cause of the palsy. Their mission is to promote access to the best information, treatment and support available.

<https://www.facialpalsy.org.uk/>

Email: [info@facialpalsy.org.uk](mailto:info@facialpalsy.org.uk)

Enquiries: 0300 030 9333

The Facial Palsy UK Cheshire and Mersey Support Group is held every other month in Liverpool – for further details go to:

<https://www.facialpalsy.org.uk/support/local-groups/cheshire-mersey-facial-palsy-group/> or call the number above.

**Changing Faces** is a national charity helping those with visible difference from any cause such as birthmarks, scarring, facial palsy. They have some excellent self-help sections on their website and a counselling service.

<https://www.changingfaces.org.uk/>

Email: [info@changingfaces.org.uk](mailto:info@changingfaces.org.uk)

Enquiries: 0345 450 0275

### **Plastic surgical secretaries.**

Vanessa Baron, secretary to Mr Benson and Helen Martin 0151 430 1864

Maria Naylor, secretary to Mrs Harper Machin 0151 430 1044

Pam Giblin, secretary to Mr Iqbal 0151 430 1401

**Email for Helen Martin - [Helen.martin@sthk.nhs.uk](mailto:Helen.martin@sthk.nhs.uk)**

Whiston Hospital  
Warrington Road,  
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR  
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

St Helens Hospital  
Marshall Cross Road,  
St Helens, Merseyside, WA9 3DA  
Telephone: 01744 26633

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[www.sthk.nhs.uk](http://www.sthk.nhs.uk)