

Dysarthria Treatment Exercises

The following exercises are designed to target various aspects of speech affected by dysarthria. Consistent practice and integration into daily communication are essential for progress.

Tongue exercises

Tongue strengthening

1. Tongue push forward:

Stick out your tongue and place a flat object (like a spoon) against it. Push against the object with your tongue while also pushing against it with the flat object. Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 10 times.

2. Tongue push-up:

Press down on your tongue with a flat object or the roof of your mouth while simultaneously pushing up with your tongue. Hold for 4 seconds and repeat 8 times.

3. Tongue push to the side:

Extend your tongue as far as possible to one corner of your mouth while pressing against a tongue depressor or similar object. Hold for 3 second, then switch sides and repeat

Tongue range of motion

1. Tongue extension:

Stick your tongue out as far as possible and hold for 4 seconds. Relax and repeat 10 times.

2. Tongue retraction:

Pull your tongue back into your mouth, trying to touch the roof of your mouth with the back of your tongue. Hold for 3 seconds and repeat 8 times.

3. Tongue side to side:

Move your tongue tip to the left side of your mouth, hold for 2 seconds, then to the right side, holding again. Repeat this sequence 10 times.

4. Tongue tip-up:

Place your tongue on the alveolar ridge (the area behind your top teeth) while opening your mouth as wide as possible. Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 10 times.

Additional exercises

1. Effortful swallow:

Swallow hard using all the muscles in your neck and face, repeating this exercise 5 times.

2. Mendelsohn maneuver:

Swallow and hold when you feel your Adam's apple rise; maintain this position for 3 seconds, then relax and repeat 5 to 10 times.

Lip exercises

Lip range of motion

1. **Lip retraction:** Smile widely and hold for 6 seconds, then relax. Repeat this 12 times.
2. **Lip protrusion:** Pucker your lips as if preparing to kiss and hold for 5 seconds. Relax and repeat 10 times.
3. **Lip retraction and protrusion:**
Alternate between smiling and puckering your lips with exaggerated movements. Relax and repeat 10 times.
4. **Lip stretch:**
Open your mouth as wide as possible to feel a stretch in your lips and jaw. Hold for 4 seconds and repeat 8 times.
5. **Lip rounding:**
Practice making "kissing" shapes with your lips, each time pointing it in a different direction like the hand of a clock, holding each position for a few seconds.
6. **Changing lip shapes:**
Use food like peanut butter or jam on your lips and try to remove it using only your lips, enhancing movement and coordination.

Lip closure

1. **Lip press:** Press your lips tightly together for 5 seconds, then relax. Repeat this 8 times.
2. **Lip press on tongue depressor:** Firmly press your lips around a tongue depressor while you or someone else tries to gently pull it out. Hold for 4 seconds and repeat 6 times.
3. **Puff cheeks:** Fill your cheeks with air, hold for a moment, then move the air from one cheek to the other 4 times without letting air escape from around your lips or nose. Relax and repeat 10 times.

Breath support exercises

1. **Diaphragmatic breathing:**
Sit up straight and place one hand on your stomach and the other on your chest. Inhale deeply through your nose, allowing your stomach to expand while keeping your chest still. Exhale slowly through pursed lips, feeling your stomach contract. Aim for a count of 3 seconds in and 3 seconds out, gradually increasing the duration as you improve.
2. **Breath control exercise:**
Inhale for 3 seconds, hold your breath for 3 seconds, and then exhale slowly for 2 seconds. Repeat this cycle 5 times.
3. **Voiceless sound practice:**
After mastering diaphragmatic breathing, practice making voiceless sounds (e.g., "sss," "fff," "shh") as you exhale. Start with short sounds and work towards longer durations, focusing on maintaining steady airflow throughout.

4. Counting exercise:

Take a deep breath in and count out loud while exhaling. Every fifth number, inhale. Count until 20.

5. Gargling exercise:

Take a deep breath, tilt your head back slightly, and gargle air only for about 5 repetitions. Then, gargle with voice at a medium pitch for another set of repetitions.

Articulation exercises

Most lip mobility exercises help greatly with articulation, but here are some exercises that focus more on speech than lip movements:

1. Tongue twisters:

Practice simple tongue twisters (e.g., "She sells seashells") to enhance articulation and tongue agility.

2. Sound production practice:

Work on specific sounds that are difficult by using phonetic placement cues (e.g., guiding how to position the tongue or lips). For example, practice the /k/ sound in isolation, then in simple words like "cat" or "kite."

3. Slow speaking practice:

Practice speaking slowly and deliberately, emphasizing each syllable. This can help improve clarity and reduce slurring.

4. Word lists:

Create lists of target words that contain specific sounds or syllables that need practice. Repeat these words multiple times, gradually increasing complexity (e.g., from single words to phrases).

Voice modulation exercises

1. Pitch glides:

Start at a low pitch and gradually glide up to a high pitch, then back down.

2. Vocal sirens:

Produce a siren-like sound by sliding through different pitches (high to low and back).

3. Sustained vowel sounds:

Choose a vowel sound (like "ah," "ee," or "oo") and sustain it for as long as possible while maintaining a steady volume.

4. Volume control practice:

Practice speaking or singing phrases at different volumes (soft, normal, loud). Start with a familiar phrase and gradually increase the loudness while maintaining clarity.

5. Rhythmic speech drills:

Use rhythmic patterns while speaking phrases or sentences. Clapping or tapping out a rhythm can help in maintaining a steady pace and improving speech fluency.

6. Singing familiar songs:

Engage in singing familiar songs, focusing on pitch variation and expression.

7. Emphasis exercises:

Choose sentences and practice emphasizing different words each time you say them.

Additional notes

Ethan struggles primarily with differentiating /r/, /l/, and /w/ sounds. Exercises emphasize articulation and sound production to target these areas. Progress is being tracked to refine strategies.

