Exercises following Bell’s Palsy
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Stage 1 - massage

Do not begin any exercises for the face until there are visible signs that the nerve is sending signals to the muscles. However, it is safe to start some gentle massage:

- Using your fingers, massage and gently stretch the skin from the corner of your mouth towards the ear and then down to the jaw bone in a circular pattern.
- Do the same circular pattern on your chin and forehead.
- With your finger (or electric toothbrush / make-up brush / ice cube) brush forehead in an upward direction towards the hairline, 2 – 3 times. Do the same with the cheek area, or try gentle tapping on the skin with your finger-tips.

Stage 2 – exercises

Preferably do the exercises in front of a mirror and concentrate on which muscles are trying to work. If the ‘good’ side overworks or movements become too exaggerated, then stop and make the movements smaller.

Exercise in short sessions but repeat the routine 2 – 3 times a day. Quality is more important than quantity.

- After brushing the forehead (see above) try to then raise eyebrows in a look of surprise. (Do not let corner of mouth move upwards)
- Brush cheek, using techniques as above, in an upward direction from corner of mouth to ear. Then smile as if saying “eee”
- Wrinkle forehead into a frown
- Close eyes slowly
- Gently wink with one eye. Repeat with other
- Wrinkle up nose as if you have smelt something horrible
- Open mouth wide as if to say “ahh”
- Pucker lips and push forwards as if to say “ooo”
- Alternate say “ooo”, “eee” and “ahh”
- Smile without showing teeth; then smile showing teeth
- Puff cheeks out with air – hold lips shut so that no air escapes. Hold for 3 – 5 seconds
- Compress lips together
- Practise reading / speaking out loud, carefully sounding out the words

NB Don’t chew gum as this exercises the wrong muscles.