

YOGA FOR YOUR FACE: *5 Moves to Bring Back that Youthful Glow*

by Bliss Wood - www.blisswood.org

There are 43 muscles and 14 bones in the face, not to mention various nerves, arteries, veins, and blood vessels that all work together to create your beautiful face. Your facial muscles absorb stress and hold onto cellular memory just like other parts of your body, so it is wise to give it a workout, just like you'd exercise your legs or biceps. It's also important to relax and restore your face, as you would any other part of your body.

Unless you relax a muscle, it becomes stiff, and even painful. A regular workout program is great, but there's a delicate balance between exertion and rest. Our body needs both and this includes our face.

Tense muscles are contracted muscles and constrict blood vessels, limiting the flow of blood and nutrients to your face which can cause lines and wrinkles! Moreover, this tension can cause headaches and neck pain that can radiate into the shoulders.

Your face works hard all day. It supports seeing, breathing, chewing, speaking, laughing, crying, kissing, frowning, smiling, sneezing, and a whole slew of other activities that are taken for granted.

The simple suggestions in this article are a few exercises that can help relieve facial tension, increase circulation, soften lines and wrinkles, and most importantly, help you feel more relaxed and centered.

1. **Lion's Pose (Simbasana)** - Sit comfortably in Vajrasana (sitting on heels) with palms on knees. Take a deep breath. Exhale **"Ahhhhh"** forcefully, as you open your eyes and mouth wide, sticking out your tongue and looking upward. Repeat 3 times. *You may choose to sit in a chair or in Simple Seated pose. **Benefits:** Stretches and tones the tongue and facial muscles, including the muscles around eyes. Increases energy.
2. **Palming** - Sit comfortably, either on the floor or in a chair, with your back straight. Close your eyes and focus on your breath as it moves in and out of your nostrils. Feel the coolness of your inhale and the warmth of your exhale. Take a few long, deep breaths. Once centered, rub your palms together very fast until they feel warm. Once you feel a good amount of heat, cup your hands over your eyes. (eyes can be open or closed) Keep your hands over your eyes until you begin to feel a cooling. Repeat. **Benefits:** Calms the mind, relaxes the facial muscles, soothes the eyes.
3. **Kiss & Smile** - Pucker your lips, as if you were going to give someone a kiss. Exaggerate this motion. Hold for 3 seconds. Then, keeping your lips closed, smile as big and broad as you can. Hold for 3 seconds. Repeat these movements 5-8 times. **Benefits:** Increases circulation to facial muscles, releases tension in the face, and tones lips and facial muscles.
4. **Oh My!** - (1) Begin by making an "O" shape with your mouth, covering your teeth. Relax your lower jaw as you stretch the muscles of your upper lip downward, over your teeth. Hold for 3-5 seconds, then release. Repeat 3-5 times. (2) Place the palms of your hands on either side of your face, cupping your cheek bones in your palms. Your thumbs should rest under your ears and your fingers above. Gently pull the skin of your face back, creating a light tightness in your face. Make the "O" shape with your mouth, covering your teeth. Relaxing your lower jaw as in part 1. Hold for 3-5 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times. **Benefits:** Strengthens muscles around your mouth and cheeks. Reduces lines on the sides of your mouth.
5. **Cheek Pinch** - Gently pinch your cheeks from the sides of your nose toward the outer edges of your cheek bones. Pinch around your chin and jawline. Gently squeezing your cheeks until you feel a tingling sensation in your skin, and a "bright" feeling in your face and eyes. **Benefits:** Improves circulation.

