

Instructions on “How-to” Smile

The lips consist of fleshy folds surrounding the orifice of the mouth. It is necessary to begin here because the muscles of expression act on these fleshy folds to produce the typical curvature of the lips involved in smiling, as well as to expose the teeth in full smiles. The two upper corners of the mouth should be willed to move slightly upward, the spreading the lips into a stretch, and somewhat compressing the cheeks upwards. This is called a "half smile" or a "closed lip smile" and those who are unused to this position should only hold it for 10 seconds in order to prevent face cracking. No teeth have been exposed to this point.

Once practiced, we are ready to advance to a full smile. The corners of the mouth move into the uppermost position, the lips are stretched taught, and the upper teeth becomes exposed. The amount of exposed dentition that constitutes a pleasing smile is determined by the personal taste and preference of the smiler. This position is held for 10 seconds and then repeated in reverse to a baseline limp lip position.

Once a full range of motion has been successfully practiced, one can begin repeatedly maneuvering the entire muscle range of smiling movement using the isotonic principle of physiotherapy. By performing these simple smile exercises in the mirror daily for even as little as 15 minutes a day, the brain and the muscles begin working together "learning" this new behavior that, with time, will become an unconscious act. Soon, former frowners will find themselves laughing hilariously (the eventual outcome of this positive addiction) and wantonly infecting those around themselves with the same communicable contagion. It's bliss.



1. Locate the mouth



2. Stretch it open



3. Show some teeth

The "Why"

Smile



"A smile costs nothing, but gives much. It enriches those who receive it, without making poorer those who give it. It takes but a moment, but the memory of it sometimes lasts forever. None is so rich or mighty that he can get along without it, and none is so poor but that he cannot be made richer by it. A smile creates happiness in the home, fosters good will in business, and is the counter-sign of friendship. It brings rest to the weary, cheer to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad, and is nature's best antidote for trouble. Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed, or stolen, for it is something that is of no value to anyone until it is given away. Some people are too tired to give you a smile. Give them one of yours, as none needs a smile so much as he who has no more to give."

Believed to be based on the writings of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch

Smiling is good. Evolutionarily, we want to smile. It helps us to be accepted. Researchers say that an openmouthed, sincere smile is visible from farther away than a frown; when you're smiling, you'll be recognized as having a smile at a great distance, even in a crowd. We feel better when we see it. And we feel better when we do it. And that's how a "smile virus" infects those around you. Try it sometime. Try it now.

But Smiling Is Hard. Although it's one of the most instinctive things we do (babies smile, blind people who have never seen a smile, smile), it's difficult to do on command. Someone wants to take your picture or you're introduced to a stranger or your neighbor sticks a baby picture in your face. You try and slap one on, maybe show some tooth. But whether it looks fake, lame, or scary, it's creating good feelings nonetheless.

A Little Anatomy. Any time you smile, you contract the zygomatic major, the muscle that runs from the corner of the mouth to the top of your jaw. A zygomatic major smile is easy. It's what we use to deliver a fake smile. The customer-service rep smiles like that. You're smiling like that in your driver's-license photo. It's a manufactured smile. You're not lighting up the room but you're throwing out more good than bad, but the internal and external benefits are the same as genuine smiling. So just *"fake it 'til you make it!"*

Smiles release:

Happy Hormone #1: Endorphins
Happy Hormone #2: Serotonin
Happy Hormone #3: Dopamine
Happy Hormone #4: Oxytocin

The "Mirror" Effect



Original Smile



Reflected Smile