

Recovery Exercise Kit



Once your medical doctor clears you (usually after the acute inflammation phase has passed), gentle rehabilitation can begin. This guide is informed by physical therapists specializing in facial neuromuscular retraining.

Principles of Neuromuscular Retraining (NMR)

NMR focuses on quality of movement over quantity. The goal is not to "build muscle strength" (the muscles are fine; the nerve is the issue), but to reconnect the brain's pathways to the facial muscles.

- **Do Not Force It:** If a muscle won't move, pushing harder will cause surrounding muscles to compensate, leading to synkinesis (unwanted, linked facial movements).
- **Small Movements:** Focus on tiny, symmetrical movements rather than large expressions.
- **Relaxation First:** Always start by massaging and relaxing the non-paralyzed side of your face, which often becomes tight from overworking.

Core Home Exercises

Perform these in front of a mirror in a quiet room, 2-3 times daily for 10 minutes.

1

Eyebrow Raise

Attempt to raise both eyebrows gently. If the affected side does not move, use your fingertip to gently assist it upward to match the healthy side.

2

Gentle Eye Closure

Look down and slowly close your eyes. Do not squeeze tightly. Use the back of your index finger to gently smooth the affected eyelid down if needed.

3

The Symmetrical Smile

Attempt a tiny, closed-mouth smile. Stop the moment your face becomes asymmetrical. Hold for 5 seconds.

Mirror Therapy

Mirror therapy uses visual feedback to help trick the brain into reconnecting with the paralyzed side. Sit in front of a mirror and focus intensely on achieving symmetry, using your hands to physically guide the paralyzed side into position.

