Facial Exercises Work

By Carolyn Cleaves

I am the owner/founder of Carolyn’s Facial Fitness - a company that teaches facial exercises to help one look younger, firmer and fit on the face and neck. Recently I have read a few comments by reputable people saying that facial exercises don’t work and that they in fact, make lines worse on the face. Actually, the truth of the matter is just the opposite. Facial exercises can reduce lines [1]. As a wrinkle becomes shallower with facial exercises, it flattens out and looks wider, at first. As the muscle develops, it literally pushes out the wrinkle. But I get ahead of myself. I will explain this phenomenon later on. Maybe some of these people observed this “event” when first encountering facial exercises? This too would have made me think that facial exercises make the lines worse. Could it be they didn’t know that with continued facial exercising and proper technique, you can reduce these lines to almost nothing? [1] It should be noted, however, that working the face does stretch the fibrous tissue at bound-down spots and that having more flexibility will free up the "stuck spots". It's also unlikely, but possible to "overdo" it and injure an area, so moderation and patience are an important aspect of what the CFF program is all about. [5] Let me explain.

My research reveals that a deep wrinkle is caused by skin adhering to underlying tissue. Because the muscles in the face are often attached one end onto the bone and the other one into the skin, whenever the muscle contracts, the skin is pulled down, creating a valley - what we call a wrinkle. One very effective method to alleviate wrinkles is to paralyze these muscles with Botox® so the muscles cannot contract and you can’t see the valley so well. The problem is, as soon as the paralysis wears off, the wrinkle is back. This can become a very expensive even risky endeavor. A more sensible and permanent approach for deep wrinkles is not only to strengthen muscle, but also to free up the skin. You can free up the skin with facial exercises. [2] That is, you can actually de-tack - release this wrinkle and rub it out. [3]

Let me explain even further how I understand Botox® works and how facial exercises work as well, when it comes to wrinkles. Wrinkles are usually formed by repetitive facial movements. Since Botox® injections paralyze and therefore relax the muscles completely, the wrinkle eventually smooths out and appears to be gone. Only this explains to me why the deadening or paralysis and therefore complete relaxation of the muscle with Botox® injections will make the wrinkle seem to be gone. The muscle tension is gone - the wrinkle can’t be seen, even though it is still attached.

When performing facial exercises, you are tensing the muscles and working them “against” pressure. We call this muscle resistance training. The muscle becomes toned, which means it’s either bigger because you’re building muscle fiber or shorter because you’re literally shortening the muscle fiber. [4] This can be seen with rounder, higher, firmer cheeks and jowls that lift up as well. Just try it yourself. Tense a muscle in the face, like contracting your cheeks and release. The muscle you just tensed, is now more relaxed. So, in fact, the muscles in your face, as they tone with facial exercises, consequently, also become more relaxed. I will now explain my understanding of how it works.

Wherever on the face we can move the skin voluntarily, there are muscles attached to the inner part of the skin and we have, therefore, the potential to make a wrinkle - a line, a fold or a furrow. [4] In the rest of the body the muscles are attached bone to bone and slide underneath one of the layers below the skin and above the muscles, called the fascia. Therefore, wrinkles do not usually occur in the rest of the body. When we exercise the face, the muscle fibers literally smooth out, shorten and/or build, lifting up
the attached skin on the face and neck with the newly toned muscles. Remember, the muscles become more relaxed as you're performing facial exercises. The result is a tighter, firmer face that is not only smoother and firmer looking; it’s less wrinkled, more youthful looking and more defined as well. Fine lines easily smooth out as the muscle fiber builds and pushes out the wrinkle so it appears flatter and smoother. Deeper wrinkles can also be released with proper technique and literally smoothed out. [1] This is not wishful thinking. This is a fact. There are thousands of people exercising their faces and having this result.

So how do facial exercises achieve a similar effect of getting rid of wrinkles which Botox® achieves through paralysis of the muscles? It seems to be paradoxical. With Botox® you paralyze the muscle and keep it from moving and with facial exercises you exercise your muscle and move it a lot. *Both methods relax the muscles of the face and since these muscles are attached to the skin, the consequences in BOTH cases are less visible wrinkles.* Facial exercises also build the muscle fiber and because it’s attached to the skin, the wrinkle fills out as the muscle tones and the results are a smoother looking face and neck. Furthermore, as the face and neck become more toned from facial exercising, there is no loss of expression. In fact, you may find your face MORE expressive! While Botox® may be a conveniently quick albeit expensive procedure, facial exercises are much less expensive but require that you perform them on a regular basis. Both achieve a similar result when it comes to wrinkles.

It’s also been suggested in much of my research that moisture is also a factor in preventing wrinkles from forming. [4] Sometimes when first starting facial exercises, a burning sensation can be felt, especially around the lips. This is not lactic acid burn as some have claimed. Actually, with facial exercises you’re literally pumping fluid back into the tissues through exercise and this is what you feel. [6] This is just another factor that helps in not only the prevention of wrinkles, but also in the correction of lines on the face and neck as well.

Apparently, the reason Botox® injections work is because they prevent the muscle from moving. So logic says that if exercising the face creates wrinkles is true, then people who never move their faces should be in the best shape and be the most beautiful. Obviously, this is not the case. In all fairness, I don’t think those using Botox® are purporting a completely paralyzed face, but still, we all have seen these frozen-looking, unlined “expensive” faces and found ourselves involuntarily turning away. It’s just a tad bit too unnatural looking for many of us. Just today I received an email from a client who addresses exactly this issue. Here it is for your perusal:

*Hi Carolyn,*

*Just giving you a bit of an update...I LOVE the program and do it religiously every day. The thing that I have noticed is the general look of my skin has improved and my eyes seem more open. Something with the eyebrows too...they seem higher. I had trouble in the beginning with the idea of not having Botox® around my eyes again (I had done this just a few times before) because obviously it is an effective procedure. My problem with it however, was that as much as I looked younger I felt I lost something in my face...some character...even some beauty perhaps. A disaster for an actress! That's why I'm so much happier with the face exercises!*

*Anyway, I'll keep giving you the updates.*

*Thanks again for your wonderful program.*

*Warm Regards,*

*Amy*

*Ps...Friends have started to say I'm looking great. It's like having a beauty secret!*
I understand Botox® actually paralyzes the nerve endings to the muscle so the muscle does not receive the signal to move. My question is what happens to these nerve endings over time as they are repeatedly paralyzed? Can they lose their function? We don’t know, yet. Could permanent loss of function result in atrophied muscles of the face? This is a scary scenario for many of us. On the other hand, facial exercises are not always a favored option. They require some work. However, 15 minutes a workout, three times a week is not too much to ask for many of us. Facial exercises offer a natural, viable alternative to those of us wanting to look years younger and fit and are willing to make this effort. Botox® on the other hand can be expensive and possibly risky.

As we age, the loss of the subcutaneous layer of fat in the face is probably mostly responsible for facial sagging. We start to really notice its depletion around the age of 34. With facial exercises you can actually build muscle fiber that enlarges the muscle and creates lift, giving the impression of a more youthful, full look to the face. You can actually mimic the look of still having this subcutaneous layer of fat. Moreover, as you exercise the muscles of the body and the face, the skin tends to “tighten up around these toned muscles”. I have personally gained and lost around 50 pounds and when I exercised both my face and my body and the muscles toned up, my skin didn’t hang off of my legs, it firmed up as it did in my face and my neck. Much to my delight! I know many of us have had this experience from working out in the gym as well.

What’s more, ten times more oxygen comes to a contracting muscle than not. In other words, the blood supply to the skin is increased with facial exercises and this is one of the ways to maintain elastin, resulting in a healthier, more youthful-looking skin. Now, elastin is the stretchy stuff that exists throughout our body, including our faces. With facial exercises you are actually “working the elastin” (doing stretches) and the benefit is improved tissue oxygenation. [5] The old rule may certainly apply to connective tissue - use it or lose it. In other words, massaging the skin that occurs with facial exercising makes for a healthier, improved complexion. Apparently, connective tissue does respond to more oxygenation and increased blood supply by becoming suppler and firmer. Otherwise, how to explain why working out in a gym firms up the muscles and the skin? Facial exercises help all of the connective tissue to regain some, if not all (in many cases), of their suppleness.

As the muscles build and tone, the effect is noticeably lifted jowls (shortened muscle fiber [4]), higher-looking cheek bones (actually building muscle fiber in this area is most obvious), a more defined jaw line, higher eyebrows, more open eyes and younger, firmer, fresher-looking skin. Not only is this my own personal experience, it’s the experience of thousands of men and women practicing facial exercises on a regular basis. They have these incredible results from facial exercises. As an added benefit, again from my personal experience with facial exercises and as reported to me by many of my clients, is the fact that all this sliding and massaging of the skin has not only reduced blemishes, but also erased spider veins, especially on the cheeks and around the nose as well.

So, in conclusion, while I don’t believe that these “experts” are touting that the frozen, brittle look one can get from too much Botox® or invasive surgeries and fillers are a desirable look simply because one is less wrinkled or smooth-skinned after these procedures, I also have to say that my research and experience is that facial exercises have not only firmed up my face and reduced my wrinkles, but they have given me a more even and beautiful complexion as well. See for yourself by clicking here. Not all of us can afford the expensive, repeated costs of Botox®, etc.... Some of us are not inclined to involve ourselves with these more invasive solutions and some of us, on the other hand, may not have the discipline of keeping up with exercising the face to achieve a more youthful appearance. We have choice. With this article, I really want to offer facial exercises as simply another feasible avenue of approach.

Right now some people are being frightened away from even trying facial exercises with all the misinformation floating around. My hope is that they will research the newer facial exercise programs
on the market today, for my personal experience along with thousands of my clients proves that facial exercises offer another viable option in the pursuit of looking years younger - an option "in my opinion" that has a natural and less artificial look than other avenues of approach.

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Carolyn Cleaves is the owner/founder of Carolyn’s Facial Fitness – Facelift Through Exercise. A former model, schoolteacher, speaker and researcher in the field of facial exercises, she offers an easy-to-learn, easy-to-use facial exercise program with a 15-minute workout that you can use in the privacy of your own home for purchase here: http://www.carolynsfacialfitness.com/Order.html

Footnotes:

1. From the book, Carolyn’s Facial Fitness, Instructions and Workbook, by Carolyn Cleaves. (Copyright 2001). Refers to “The 3-step Wrinkle Release Technique”. Color photo-illustrations, for releasing stuck down wrinkles and rubbing them out. This book is included in the Full Kit for sale Here

2. From the book, Old Age. Its Cause and Prevention, by Sanford Bennett. (Copyright 1907). (Out of Print) Technique for rubbing out wrinkles in the chapter, “The Rejuvenation of the Face, Throat and Neck”.

3. From the book, Face Culture, by Frederick M. Rossiter, M.D., Pageant Press, (Copyright 1956) (Out of Print) He describes the updated technique for rubbing out the wrinkles, informing the reader to be sure that the muscle below the wrinkle is in contraction before attempting the rub. He also talks about how a wrinkle is formed and how over time it may become similar to a scar. You can read more on this topic by Clicking Here for the full answer.

4. From the book, Face Lifting by Exercise, by Senta Maria Runge. (Copyright 1961). She describes the importance of moisturizing the skin to prevent and correct wrinkles as well as how the muscle is attached to the skin on the face and neck in the section, “How do we Distinguish Skin Creases from Contour Wrinkles?”


6. Interview with, Salvatore Zambito, The BioMechanic, Director of Physiology, Founder of the Yoga Sûtra’s Institute, author of The Unadorned Thread of Yoga - The Yoga-Sûtra of Patañjali http://www.yogasutras.net/index.html