

# Swallowing exercises rehabilitate chronic dysphagia

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(HealthDay)—A novel rehabilitative swallowing exercise program aids

long-term head and neck cancer survivors with chronic dysphagia, according to a study published online Aug. 2 in *Head & Neck*.

Sophie A.C. Kraaijenga, M.D., Ph.D., from The Netherlands Cancer Institute in Amsterdam, and colleagues evaluated an intensive strength training program in 17 head and neck cancer survivors with chronic dysphagia. Swallow and non-swallow exercises were performed for six to eight weeks, allowing for progressive muscle overload, including chin tuck, jaw opening, and effortful swallow exercises.

The researchers found that the program was feasible, with an 88 percent completion rate. Exercise compliance was 97 percent. After the training period, there were substantial improvements in chin tuck, jaw opening, and anterior tongue [strength](#). All but one patient reported benefiting from the exercises.

"Some objective and subjective effects of progressive load on [muscle strength](#) and swallowing function could be demonstrated," the authors write.

The study was funded in part by Atos Medical.

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