



## MANAGING SPEECH INTELLIGIBILITY

You can attempt to maintain your present levels of intelligible speech in order to help others better understand you. The following suggestions should be beneficial:

### 1. SLOW DOWN

Do not try to talk as rapidly as you did before. Your oral muscles and breathing may not be able to keep up with your thought process and the rate at which you want to say words. Think in terms of concentration on a slower speaking pace.

### 2. OVERARTICULATE

Attempt to overexaggerate movements of your tongue, lips and jaw. Make sure they make all of the necessary contacts with the teeth or roof of your mouth, etc., while talking.

### 3. PHRASING

Try to use some phrasing in your speech. Rather than trying to say too many words in one breath, attempt to include more pauses for breathing.

### 4. STRATEGIC PAUSES

#### - Syllable Tapping

On words with more than two syllables, try to pronounce them by breaking the words into syllables. For instance, intelligibility becomes in-tell-i-gi-bil-i-ty, ensuring that each segment, or syllable, is evenly stressed.

### 5. CONVERSING

Before starting a conversation, you may want to tell the listener that you are attempting to control your speech intelligibility during the conversation. Ask him to be patient. Most listeners don't know how to react when they hear someone with different speech patterns. They may want to finish the sentence for you or add a word to help you out. You can put them at ease by telling them how you want them to react.

## HOME THERAPY IDEAS

6. You may want to try steps 1 through 4 by yourself in front of a mirror. Start out by reading the word lists; read aloud from a newspaper; then try some of this control with family members before conversing with others outside of the home.
7. Tape record some of your practice sessions. You can play them back and attempt to practice those aspects of your speech which are important to you.
8. You may have limited control over voice quality, pitch, loudness or articulation. The speech pathologist will assist in designing specific therapy tasks to help you compensate in each of these areas.
9. Always work to monitor your own performance to assure that your standard of performance is as good as possible.
10. There are other means of communicating if you are unable to express yourself verbally. There are non-verbal communication aids, such as a word board. You point to words on the board to communicate. There are many electronic communication aids available. They require minimal body movement to activate a switch which indicates your communication need. Modifications can be made to operate the aid by mouth or other means.

Consult your speech pathologist about an appropriate aid since assessment, followed by close instruction on use, is necessary. If at all possible, attempt to have a choice of aids from which you can select as being the most appropriate for you.