

SELF-CARE

Learn Self Massage Techniques to Manage Stress Levels During COVID-19

AUTHOR: IRIS BURMAN,
LICENSED MASSAGE THERAPIST





Overview

Reasons for stress, discomfort or pain in these days of isolation and social distancing

- Eye strain from too much screen time
- The demands of kids at home
- Stresses from the “new normal”
 - a. Homeschooling and child care
 - b. Pets
 - c. Work/home balance or loss of work and income
 - d. Front line working
 - e. Learning new technologies
 - f. Concern for the unknown
- Change in activities
 - a. Stiff from inactivity
 - b. Sore from over activity



Tools for self-massage

- Hands, forearms, elbows
- Pressure tools:
 - a. Wooden/plastic objects
 - b. Balls and rollers
 - c. Home-made: two balls in a sock; knotted towel
- Vibrators



Sensing

Identify your stressors

- Visual: notice any swelling, bruises, discoloration, cuts, etc.
- Feeling: identify aches, pains, discomfort
- Emotion: notice influences from separation; loneliness; concern



Doing

- Go to a quiet or calming place
- Follow contours: bones and muscles
- Sense for quality of tissue (hard, soft, pliable, etc.)
- Respect “edge of receptivity”
- Compare one side to the other
- Sense for change in tissue



Care for yourself and stay safe



[Watch instructional video here.](#)



Head, Neck, Face

1. Sit somewhere quiet or away from the fray

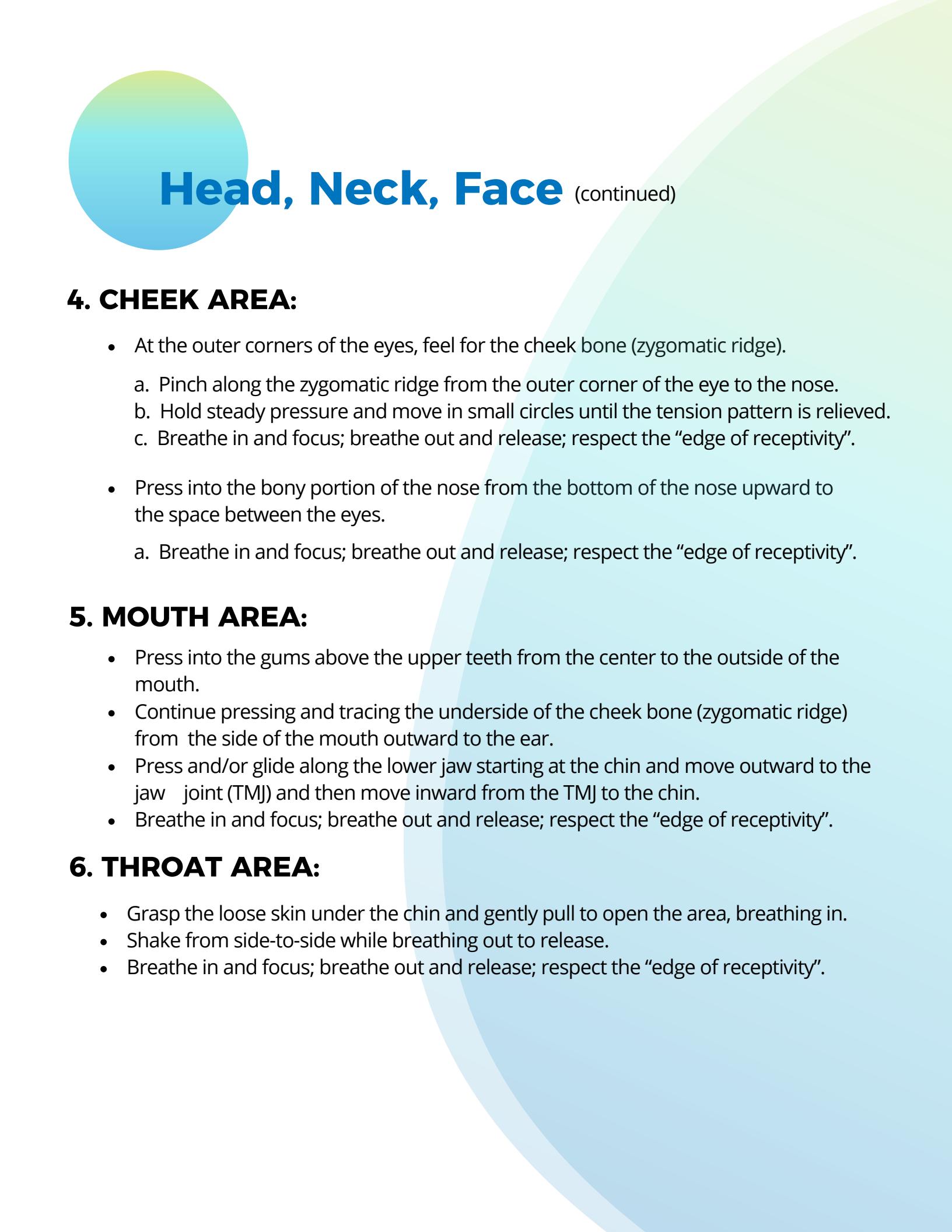
- Rub hands together to generate heat
- Cup warmed hands over eyes
- Take in a deep breath and slowly exhale
- Repeat breathing for a minute or so (at least 10 breaths)

2. FOREHEAD: Start with the muscles on your forehead (frontalis) - these start above the eyebrows and goes up to the top of your head

- Press and rub in a circular motion with flat fingers
 - a. Move the surface tissue over the deeper. Sense for freedom of movement and sensitivity.
 - b. If here is pain, go as lightly as needed but stay there (even if you only hold it in place).
 - c. Sense for a release or easing of tension or discomfort.

3. EYE AREA: Move to the eye area (remove contacts if you wear them)

- Press thumbs into the upper middle edge of eye socket at the top of the nose.
 - a. Hold steady pressure and move in small circles until the tension pattern is relieved.
 - b. Breathe in, focusing on the area, and breathe out releasing the tension; repeat.
 - c. Be gentle but firm, respecting the “edge of receptivity”.
- Following the contour of the upper eye socket (orbital ridge) from nose outward to temples
 - a. Pinch along the orbital ridge stopping to release any points of sensitivity.
 - b. With the first two fingers, press into the temple with direct pressure and circular rubbing.
 - c. Breathe in, focusing on the area, and breathe out releasing the tension; repeat.
 - d. Be gentle but firm, respecting the “edge of receptivity”.



Head, Neck, Face (continued)

4. CHEEK AREA:

- At the outer corners of the eyes, feel for the cheek bone (zygomatic ridge).
 - a. Pinch along the zygomatic ridge from the outer corner of the eye to the nose.
 - b. Hold steady pressure and move in small circles until the tension pattern is relieved.
 - c. Breathe in and focus; breathe out and release; respect the “edge of receptivity”.
- Press into the bony portion of the nose from the bottom of the nose upward to the space between the eyes.
 - a. Breathe in and focus; breathe out and release; respect the “edge of receptivity”.

5. MOUTH AREA:

- Press into the gums above the upper teeth from the center to the outside of the mouth.
- Continue pressing and tracing the underside of the cheek bone (zygomatic ridge) from the side of the mouth outward to the ear.
- Press and/or glide along the lower jaw starting at the chin and move outward to the jaw joint (TMJ) and then move inward from the TMJ to the chin.
- Breathe in and focus; breathe out and release; respect the “edge of receptivity”.

6. THROAT AREA:

- Grasp the loose skin under the chin and gently pull to open the area, breathing in.
- Shake from side-to-side while breathing out to release.
- Breathe in and focus; breathe out and release; respect the “edge of receptivity”.

Head, Neck, Face (continued)

7. SCALP:

- SIDE OF SCALP: the side of the head above the ears (temporalis muscle) from the top of the ear to the top of the head
 - a. Press and rub in a circular motion with flat fingers and finger tips.
 - i. Move the surface tissue over the deeper.
 - ii. Sense for freedom of movement and sensitivity.
 - b. If there is pain, go as lightly as needed but stay there (even if you only hold it in place).
 - c. Sense for a release or easing of tension or discomfort.
 - d. Breathe in and focus; breathe out and release; respect the “edge of receptivity”.
- BACK OF SCALP: back of the head from the top of the spine to the top of the head
 - a. Press and rub in a circular motion with flat fingers and finger tips.
 - i. Move the surface tissue over the deeper.
 - ii. Sense for freedom of movement and sensitivity.
 - b. If there is pain, go as lightly as needed but stay there (even if you only hold it in place).
 - c. Sense for a release or easing of tension or discomfort.
 - d. Breathe in and focus; breathe out and release; respect the “edge of receptivity”.

8. HAIR PULL:

- Run your fingers through your hair to get a good grip on as much of it as possible in that area.
- Pull outward from the skull and move in circles. This will move your scalp along the skull.
- Move to a new area of the scalp and repeat until you have covered the entire scalp.
- Breathe in and focus; breathe out and release; respect the “edge of receptivity”.



[Watch instructional video here.](#)