

## THE MUSCLES OF THE TONGUE

When we explore all of the ways a tongue changes shape and makes various “excursions” in a given day, it makes sense to address these areas immediately when we begin our program of treatment. As you read through these brief descriptions of the muscles of the tongue, consider how essential it is that we maximize them in order to achieve our goals for acceptable speaking, chewing, and swallowing functions.

### Intrinsic

These muscles originate within the tongue. They are responsible for changing the shape and size of the tongue.

- Superior Longitudinal: Shortens, widens, draws up the edges of the tongue; helps form the “bowl.”
- Inferior Longitudinal: Depresses and elevates tongue tip, shortens, widens; allows for the “lingual palatal seal.”
- Transverse: Narrows and elongates the tongue; draws the edges upward and aids in achieving tongue groove; used to create “skinny tongue.”
- Vertical: Flattens, broadens, and depresses the tongue.

### Extrinsic

These muscles originate from elsewhere in the body and attach to the tongue. They connect with surrounding bones and help the organ move up and down, from side to side and in and out.

- Genioglossus: Strongest tongue muscle; forms the majority of the body of the tongue; protrudes the tongue and retracts it; pulls the tongue tip back and down.
- Styloglossus: Raises and withdraws the tongue; helps create trough of tongue.
- Palatoglossus: Raises the back of the tongue; constricts the anterior fauces.
- Hyoglossus: Lowers the sides of the tongue and slightly retracts it.