

“Tapping” the R Sound Strategy

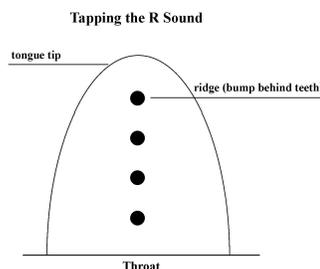
A strategy I have found that helps with students who struggle with correct tongue placement for /r/ is one I learned at a workshop by Pam Marshalla. The strategy is called "Tapping" the R sound.

Below is the diagram I made in Publisher for this strategy (mimicking Pam’s diagram), and I use it on my students who can't seem to get /r/ or /er/ otherwise. Basically, you teach the student 4 progressive positions in order to achieve R. **Position 1** is L on the alveolar ridge, **Position 2** is slightly farther back (a distorted L), **Position 3** is a little farther back than Pos. 2 (a distorted R), and **Position 4** is the R position (for a retroflex or curled R).

You "train" the student by starting with position 1 saying "LA" (short "a" as in father) and then moving the tongue tip back slightly with each position, saying the consonant-vowel combination until the "RA" is achieved at position 4. Once you establish success, you can move to other vowels and this eventually leads to words. Once the student understands the placement concept and achieves some success, you can also have them move from position 1 directly to position 4. Sometimes, you may also find that a correct /r/ is achieved at position 3.

You can reverse this strategy for final position /er/ by starting with "AL" and moving the tongue tip back slightly through each position until the vowelized "AR" is achieved. Again, you can move to other vowels once success is achieved.

When moving to words using this strategy, my CVC Word Lists have been a great resource for follow-up practice. I have had great success with this strategy when nothing else worked! If you'd like a copy of the diagram below as a jpeg or pdf file, please email apmummy@gmail.com.



Adapted from Pam Marshalla's workshop on apraxia as well as articulation therapy.

Adapted by Ana Paula G. Mummy, MS, CCC-SLP, from Pam Marshalla's workshop on "Successful R Therapy"