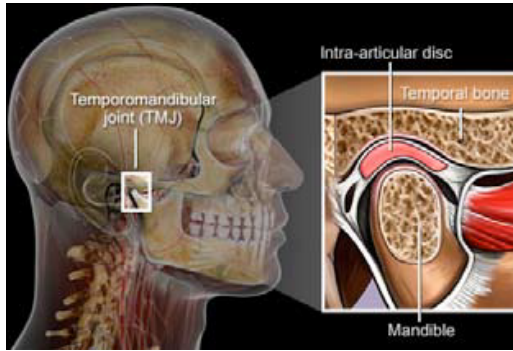


TMJ Disorder



The jaw is also known as the TMJ or Temporomandibular Joint. It can be painful as the result of injury, inflammatory disease, poor postures and habits or growth disorders. This leaflet gives you advice on managing your jaw pain.

Signs and Symptoms of TMJ Disorder



- Pain in the jaw joints and facial muscles
- Clicking, grinding or locking of the jaw
- Headaches & Dizziness
- Difficulty opening or closing the mouth comfortably
- Pain on talking, chewing (especially hard food) & yawning
- Ear pain, ringing in the ears (tinnitus) & hearing loss

Causes

- Trauma, for example a blow to the jaw either directly to the joint or elsewhere on the jaw.
- Overactivity of the jaw muscles. This can occur from continuous clenching or grinding the teeth.
- Wear and tear of the cartilage inside in the joint
- Arthritis
- Increased sensitivity to pain linked to stress

Aims of Physiotherapy Treatment

- Relief pain
- Minimise stiffness
- Restore normal function and mobility

Advice

- Apply heat or ice for 15-20 minutes on the area of pain
- Painkillers
- Massage the joint and surrounding muscles

Do

- Exercise your jaw regularly on a physiotherapist's advice.
- Be aware when you are clenching or grinding your teeth.
- Change to a soft food diet and avoid hard and chewy food
- Cut tough food into small pieces.

Avoid

- Excessive chewing - This stops the jaw from having a rest.
- Excessive mouth opening (e.g. Yawning).
- Resting your jaw in your hand or holding your telephone to your ear using just your shoulders.
- Sleeping face down, as this puts a strain on the neck.

Posture Correction

Bad posture in sitting or lying causes prolonged over-stretching of the ligaments and surrounding tissues including those of the jaw. By learning to keep a good posture, it is possible to prevent or relieve your neck and jaw pain.



Exercises

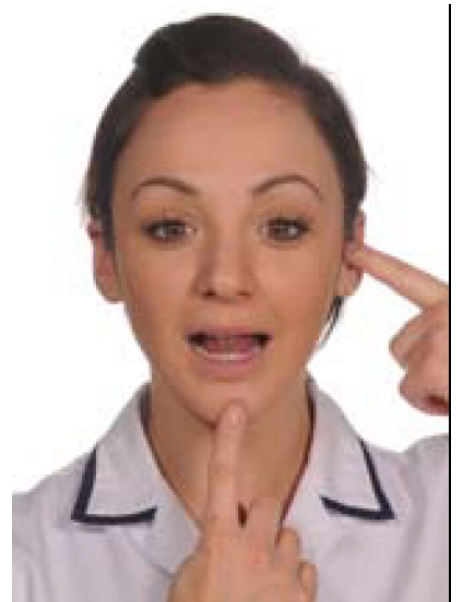
1. Relaxed Jaw Position

Place the tongue lightly on the top of your mouth behind your upper front teeth, allowing the teeth to come apart and relaxing the jaw muscles.

2. 'Goldfish' Exercise (partial opening)

1. Keep tongue on the roof of your mouth.
2. Place one index finger on the TMJ.
3. Place your other index finger on your chin.
4. Allow the lower jaw to partially drop down and back with help from the index finger.
5. Monitor this partial jaw opening in a mirror to make sure the opening is straight (tongue stays up).

Repeat 6 times, 6 times a day

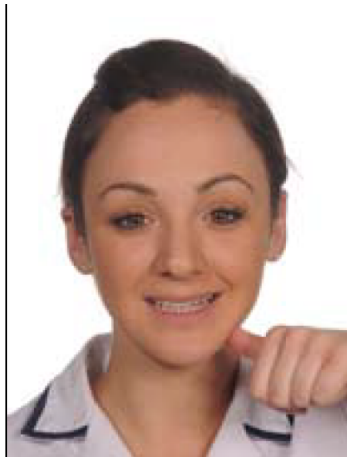


3. Mandibular Stabilisation

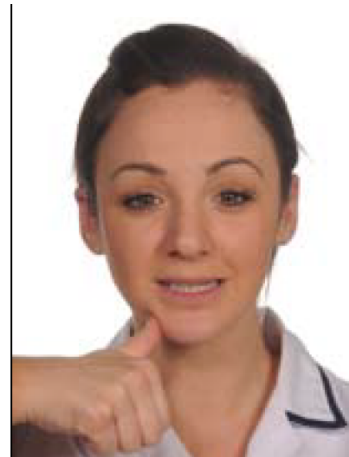
Maintaining the jaw in a neutral position, apply gentle pressure to the jaw using your index finger/thumb on:



Opening



To the left



To the right