



## TMJ care and advice

Smiling, laughing, talking, chewing — these all are facial movements you make daily with little to no thought. But if you have a temporomandibular joint disorder (TMD), these simple movements may cause you pain.

While most TMD symptoms resolve in a few weeks to months, some can be aggravated by certain behaviours or habits that strain your jaw and neck muscles causing a lot of pain.

Fortunately there are things you can do to relieve and manage temporomandibular joint (TMJ) pain from home.

The muscles and ligaments you use to move your mouth connect to your temporomandibular joints, which is where your skull and lower jawbone meet. Temporomandibular disorders, including arthritis, dislocation, injury or infection in your TMJ, can cause painful clicking and locking in your jaw, headaches, neck pain and ringing in your ears.

For many people TMD symptoms don't last long, but for others pain and discomfort when moving their facial muscles is chronic and can be made worse by clenching, chewing, swallowing, or grinding teeth.

### TMJ Pain Relief:

In minor cases, TMJ pain relief is possible with nonsurgical treatment options

Here are 10 ways you can help relieve pain in your TMJ and manage symptoms:

- Maintain the resting position of your jaw
- Correct your posture; Raise your chest bone, pull your shoulders back and gently squeeze your shoulder blades to straighten your back muscles.
- Get a good night's sleep
- Apply a hot or cold compress, Ice helps reduce swelling and pain, while heat can increase blood flow and relax your jaw muscles. Apply a hot or cold compress to your jaw for 15 to 20 minutes at a time using a light layer between the compress and your skin.
- Reduce stress, Try mediation techniques to help loosen and relax your jaw.
- Exercise your jaw, Jaw exercises can help increase mobility in your joints.
- Take notice of bad habits
- Avoid certain activities and foods
- To help alleviate TMJ pain, minimize wide jaw movements, such as chewing, yawning, singing, and yelling. sleep on your back and use pillows to support your neck. You should

avoid sleeping on your stomach, and if sleeping on your side, do not place your hand on your jaw.

- Do your best to keep your muscles as relaxed as possible.

#### **Bad habits for TMJ issues include:**

- Nail biting
- Chewing cheeks and lips
- Resting your jaw in your hand
- Clenching your teeth
- Grinding your teeth
- Clenching jaw muscles pushing the tongue against your teeth
- Avoid certain activities and foods, Specific activities and foods can cause you to open your mouth forcefully or move your jaw in an extreme way.
- Try to avoid the following: Yawning or yelling, Crunchy or hard foods, Taking large bites of food, Foods that require prolonged chewing, Chewing gum

#### **Exercises to help relieve TMJ Pain:**

The following exercises may be supported by further specific management from a specialist and techniques advised by a physiotherapist.

#### **Chin tucks**

Standing or sitting with upright posture, Create a double chin by drawing your chin backwards, Try and keep your head straight as you do this, Hold max 5 seconds, repeating 8–10 times



#### **Relaxed jaw**

Place the tongue lightly on the top of the mouth, Allow the teeth to come apart and relax the jaw muscles

### **Goldfish exercise**

Place the tongue lightly on the top of the mouth, Place one index finger on the TMJ, Place the other on your chin, Allow the jaw to drop down and raise back up with the help of your index finger, Monitor this exercise in the mirror to make sure the movement is straight, Repeat 6–8 times, 4–6 times daily



### **Unsupported goldfish**

Place the tongue lightly on the top of the mouth, Place an index finger on each TMJ, Allow your mouth to open and bring back closed: a) partially open, b) fully open, Monitor this exercise in the mirror to make sure the movement is straight, Repeat 6–8 times, 4–6 times daily

### **Stabilisation exercises**

Maintain the jaw in a neutral position: a) partially open, b) knuckle width apart, Apply gentle pressure with your thumb under chin and either side of jaw

