

Normalization of Muscle Function
Chapter 28- Lateral Pterygoid Muscles

In General

- At the dentist's office during prolonged procedures make sure to make arrangements to allow yourself breaks to move your jaw and neck through a range of motion.
- Ask your dentist about a bite splint if your spouse/significant other has noted teeth grinding during sleep.
- Avoid chewing gum & eating chewy candies or food (like licorice, beef jerky...etc).
- Avoid cracking ice, nuts or hard candy with the teeth.
- Break the habit of biting pens, pencils or other writing instruments

- Address postural concerns that your physician has for you.
- Perform neck and lateral pterygoid muscle stretches daily.
- Often times, stress can be a factor in jaw clenching and if you feel that you are under a lot of stress with very few outlets you should consider things like: yoga, meditation, Tai Chi or walking exercises. Discuss these options with your physician
- Vitamin supplementation with a good B complex and an additional B6 (total daily should be not more than 400 mg).

Re-Training

Place the pads of your fingers over your chin. Open your mouth comfortably and slide your jaw forward as far as it will comfortably go (figure A). Then press your jaw into your finger pads with a gentle pressure. Hold this as you inhale deeply. Upon exhalation allow your mouth to close comfortably. Repeat this 3-5 times and do it at least 3 times a day



A

Re-training Jaw Deviation

If upon opening your mouth you observe your jaw to deviate in the mirror to one side, then perform the following:

Place one hand on the mandible on the side toward which the jaw deviates. Place the other hand on the opposite cheek bone. Apply enough pressure on these areas to illicit a gentle stretch as you open your mouth (figure B). Then close your mouth maintaining the same pressure. Do this daily until full relief is obtained, then perform it 2-3 times a week.



B

Seated Stretch

Insert your clean pinky finger into your mouth between your cheek and gum. Slide your finger along your gum line, above your teeth, until your finger falls into a deeper recess behind your teeth, but in line with your gums (figure C). Lean your head upon your finger until you experience a slight discomfort. The discomfort will subside and you will be able to lean more and more into your finger. Do this 2-3 times a day until the symptoms have gone.



General Considerations: The following is an adaptation of a progressive relaxation exercise. At no time will you lose control of your mind or body. The exercise is designed to allow you to relax all of the muscles of your body in a systematic manner. You will find it relaxing and it should help to diminish both physical and emotional discomforts.

Position: You should lie down in a comfortable position in a quiet room with warm lighting. Your arms and legs should be flat by your side and a small pillow can support your head (figure A).

The breath: Breath deeply in and out through your nose with your tongue resting comfortably on the roof of your mouth. If you place a hand below your belly button and one on your chest they should be rising and falling together.

The progressive relaxation: Starting at with your dominant arm you will progress through a series of mental stanzas that will promote relaxation and comfort.

Stanza 1

I feel at peace.
My right arm is heavy.
My right arm is heavy.
I feel at peace.
My right arm is heavy.
My right arm is heavy.

Next, you are going to mentally repeat the same stanza, but you are going to progress through the following body areas in this order:

1. **Left arm**
2. **Both arms**
3. **Right leg**
4. **Left leg**
5. **Both legs**
6. **Both arms and legs**

A seventh body area can be added to direct attention to what is bothering you: "My jaw is heavy...My forehead is heavy...My shoulder is heavy." Next, you are going to mentally repeat Stanza 1 for all of the same body areas, but replace "heavy" with "warm".

Stanza 2

I feel at peace.
My right arm is warm.
My right arm is warm.
I feel at peace.
My right arm is warm.
My right arm is warm.

Stanza 3

I feel at peace.
My arms and legs are heavy and warm.
My heartbeat is calm and regular.
My heartbeat is calm and regular.
I feel at peace.
My heartbeat is calm and regular.
My heartbeat is calm and regular.

Stanza 4

I feel at peace.
My arms and legs are heavy and warm.
My heartbeat is calm and regular.
My breathing is calm.
My breathing is calm.
I feel at peace.
My breathing is calm.
My breathing is calm.

Stanza 5

I feel at peace.
My arms and legs are heavy and warm.
My heartbeat is calm and regular.
My breathing is calm.
My forehead is cool.
I feel at peace.

