

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

Place the pads of your thumbs under your chin. You will be using them to gently resist opening of your mouth. Open your mouth as far as you comfortably can. When you reach your limit try to open your mouth more into your thumb pads for 5 seconds. When you are done opening then your mouth will most likely open a little bit more. Remember our goal of at least 2 finger widths. Stop this exercise if you experience TMJ pain. Otherwise, do it daily until relief is obtained and the 2-3 times a week for maintenance.

*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.

Re-Training



Re-training Jaw Deviation



Self-Message

Insert your clean index finger into your mouth feeling along your cheek until you hit the bone of your jaw (figure A). Then slide your finger back along the bone until you find a fleshy part at the tip of your finger. This is the medial pterygoid muscle. Stroke the muscle in a front to back and back to front manner until the tenderness is relieved or for 5 minutes. Do this 2-3 times a day until the symptoms have gone.

If you experience a need to gag during this experience you should place your tongue firmly against the roof of your mouth as far back as you possibly can without cutting off the ability to breath through your nose.



Acupressure



Sometimes there may be a tender point that does not go away with massage. Then apply a deep and steady pressure to this point and it should eventually dissipate (figure B). You don't have to massacre yourself to be successful just press on the point to illicit the feathers edge of pain and follow that edge until it disappears.

More Acupressure



There may be another tender point at corner of your jaw just below the angle. By applying a deep and steady pressure these points will disappear (figure C). Remember to press on the point to illicit the feathers edge of pain and follow that edge until it disappears.

Re-Training

*Place the pads of your index and middle finger on the ledge formed by the prominence of your chin and your teeth. You will be using them to gently resist closing your mouth. Open your mouth as far as you comfortably can. When you reach your limit try to close your mouth gently against the force of your two fingers for 5 seconds (figure D). Upon relaxation your mouth will most likely open a little bit more. Repeat until at least 2 fingers width separation between the teeth. Stop this exercise if you experience TMJ pain.*

