

PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR TEMPROMANDIBULAR DISORDERS (TMD)



1. The purpose of this therapy is to influence your lower jaw to function freely and without pain. Many situations cause the malfunction of your lower jaw. Examples are: accidents, surgery, developmental defects, peculiar oral habits, many fillings placed over numerous years, naturally occurring malocclusion (poor bite), orthodontics, psychological stress, clenching or bruxing (grinding) of teeth, and other conditions.
2. The following self-administered treatment will usually relax the jaw muscles considerably if you are consistent in carrying out the exercises. Approximately 80 percent of patients with muscular jaw problems feel better when doing this therapy, but some patients feel worse. Please tell us if this treatment does not help you. Even if you feel better after doing the exercises, additional treatment may be necessary.
3. These exercises should be accomplished one time per day (unless directed otherwise).
4. A convenient time for the exercises may be before bedtime. If this time is not acceptable for you, please select another convenient and relaxed time.

5. **THERAPY**

HEAT: Apply heating pad, hot washcloth, hot water bottle, or other heat source to the affected areas for 5 minutes before beginning exercises.

EXERCISES: Carry out the following exercises for 1 minute each (a total of 5 to 10 minutes). **DO NOT PERFORM ANY MOTION THAT IS PAINFUL.**

- **Open-close:** Place fist under front of jaw to resist opening movement. Be gentle. Open and close jaw 30 times in one minute.
- **Forward:** Move jaw forward and back with fist on front of chin.
- **Right:** Move jaw to right with fist on right front of chin to resist movement.
- **Left:** Move jaw to left with fist on left of front of chin to resist movement.
- **Neck turn:** Sit up very straight. Rotate head as far right as possible and then gently force turn once every 2 seconds for 30 seconds. Turn head to left and repeat.

HEAT: Apply heat for another five minutes.

6. Further treatment such as a plastic bite splint to assist in making you bite in the correct position (occlusal splint), or slight, careful trimming of teeth and fillings to make your teeth and jaws come together correctly (occlusal equilibration), may be needed to assist in your treatment.
7. Please call if you have any questions.