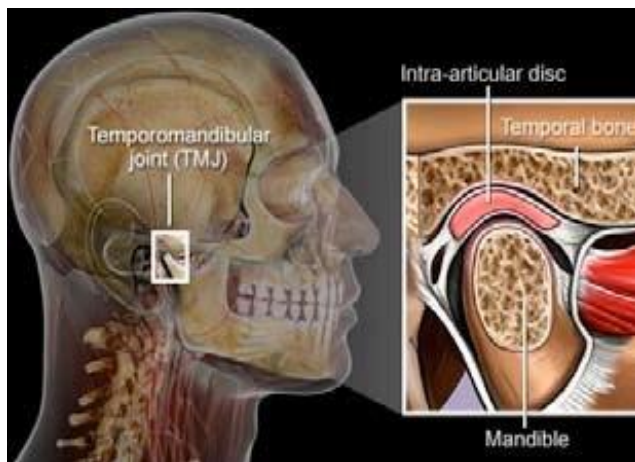




TMJ PAIN

WHAT IS THE TMJ?

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.



The TMJ is made up of several parts: the lower jaw (or mandible) and the socket (or temporal bone). In between the mandible and the socket is a disc. The disc allows the joint to glide smoothly on opening and closing. The joint is also held in place by muscles and ligaments.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF TMJ DYSFUNCTION?

Pain is the most common symptom of TMJ problems, although not everyone gets pain. Symptoms can include:

- 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

WHAT CAUSES TMJ PAIN?

There are a number of causes and frequently it is a combination of these rather than one single cause:

- 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

DO

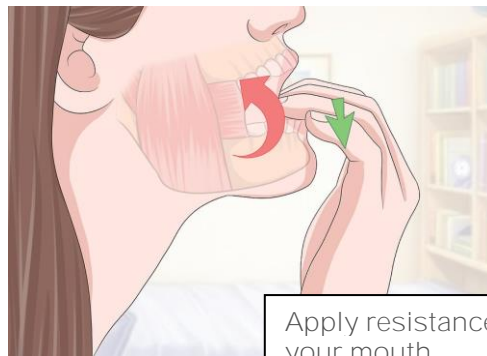
- Exercise your jaw regularly on your physiotherapist's advice.
- Be aware when you are clenching or grinding your teeth.
- Change to a soft food diet and avoid hard and chewy foods.
- Cut tough food into small pieces.
- Consult us to see if you need a bite guard.



Apply resistance while closing your mouth. Open your mouth, and place two fingers under your bottom lip. Press gently, applying a little downward resistance, while closing your mouth. This will help strengthen your jaw muscles to ease your TMD. Perform this exercise six times per session, six sessions per day.

AVOID

- Excessive chewing (e.g. nails, gum, pen tops & your cheek). This stops the jaw from having a rest.
- Excessive mouth opening (e.g. yawning, eating hamburgers, biting into apples).
- 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.

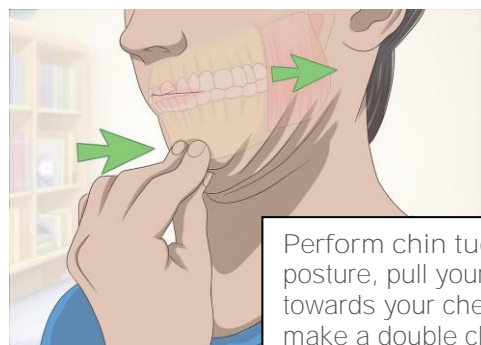


Apply resistance while opening your mouth. Strengthening your jaw will help alleviate symptoms. Place two fingers under your chin and press gently, applying a little resistance, while opening your mouth. Perform this exercise six times per session, six sessions per day.

ADVICE FOR PAIN

- Apply heat or ice for 15-20 minutes on the area of pain
- Painkillers and/or muscle relaxants
- Massage the joint and surrounding muscles
- Exercises (see below). Never persevere through any exercise that is painful or uncomfortable, especially when applying resistance.

2



Perform chin tucks. With good posture, pull your chin straight back towards your chest, as if trying to make a double chin. Hold this chin tucked position for three seconds. This helps build the muscles surrounding your TMJ, taking some pressure off the joint. Repeat this exercise 10 times per day.