

**Pall Mall
Dental**

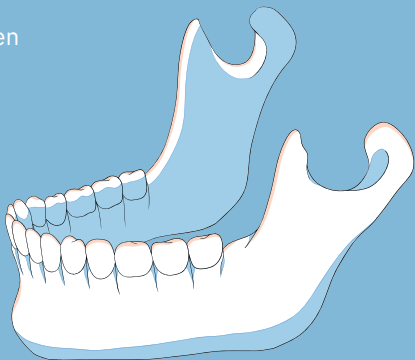


TMJ information and exercises

What is TMJ?

The temporomandibular joint or TMJ, is the joint that joins your jaw bone to the rest of your skull. You can feel it just in front of your ear hole. It can be painful for many reasons including poor posture, bad habits, growth disorder or injury and inflammation.

The TMJ is made up of the lower jaw bone (mandible) and the socket on the skull (temporal bone). There is a disc in between these two parts to allow the joint to open and close smoothly. This is held in place with muscles and ligaments.



What causes TMJ pain?

There is normally a combination of causes which can lead to pain or symptoms:

- Overactivity of the jaw muscles – sometimes from continuous grinding of the teeth
- Trauma – a blow to either the joint or the jaw bone
- Arthritis
- Stiffness or dysfunction in the neck
- Sensitivity to stress-related pain



Advice

- Massage the muscles around the joint
- Use heat or ice for 10 minutes to reduce pain
- Exercise your jaw regularly
- Consult your dentist to check if you are grinding your teeth at night
- Cut up food into smaller pieces



Avoid

- Hard, crunchy and chewy foods such as apples or whole fruits, carrots or corn on the cob
- Chewing gum, pencils or your nails
- Opening your mouth widely – stifle yawns or use your fist to support your chin as you yawn
- Resting your mobile/telephone handset between your shoulder and ear

Try the following exercises



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



Stabilisation exercises

- Maintain the jaw in a neutral position:
 - a) partially open,
 - b) knuckle width apart
- Apply gentle pressure with your thumb



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: 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

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

