

TMJ Pain - Supportive Care & Stretching

TMJ (temporomandibular joint) discomfort is common and often improves with simple self-care and gentle movement. This handout includes exercises to help reduce tension, improve jaw mobility, and ease pain.

- **Eat soft foods** and avoid chewy, crunchy, or wide-opening bites during flare-ups.
- **Apply warm compresses** to the jaw muscles for 10–15 minutes before stretching.
- **Avoid clenching or grinding** during the day; remind yourself to relax your jaw.
- **Stretch gently** 1–2 times daily — no pain should occur with these exercises.
- Seek care if symptoms worsen or if you experience joint locking, clicking with pain, or significant asymmetry in motion.

On the next pages, you'll find simple stretches designed to reduce stiffness, improve mobility, and support your TMJ pain recovery.

Take your time, breathe through each stretch, and focus on gentle, controlled movement.

Start with the ones that feel easiest, and gradually work your way through the full routine 1–2 times daily.

Resisted Jaw Opening



- Sit upright with good posture.
- Place your thumb underneath your chin.
- Slowly try to open your mouth while gently pressing up with your thumb to resist the motion.
- Hold for 5 seconds, then relax your jaw.
- Repeat 5-10 times, 1-2 times per day.

Chin Tucks



- Sit or stand tall with your shoulders relaxed
- Gently pull your head straight back (like you're making a double chin), keeping your eyes level
- Hold this position for 3-5 seconds, then relax
- Repeat 10 times, 1-2 times per day

Lateral Jaw Stretch (Isometric)



- Place two fingers against one side of your jaw
- Try to move your jaw sideways into your fingers without actually letting it move
- Hold the resistance for 5 seconds, then relax
- Repeat on the opposite side
- Perform 5 repetitions per side, 1-2 times per day

Controlled Jaw Opening



- Keep your tongue on the roof of your mouth (just behind your front teeth)
- Slowly open your mouth as wide as you can without pain, keeping the tongue in contact with the roof of your mouth
- Pause briefly at the bottom, then slowly close your mouth
- Repeat 5-10 times, once or twice daily