

Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ) Self-Care

RELAXATION EXERCISES AND BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES FOR JAW DISCOMFORT

Patient: _____

Date: _____

Practitioner: Physiotherapist Ahmad Al Hariri

1. Everyday Behavioral Rules (Jaw Ergonomics)

To sustainably relieve tension in the masticatory muscles and the temporomandibular joint (TMJ), please observe the following core principles in your daily routine:

- **The Tongue Resting Position (N-Position):** Gently place the tip of your tongue against the palate directly behind your upper front teeth, without touching the teeth. Breathe calmly through your nose.
- **Lips Together, Teeth Apart:** In an unloaded state (except when chewing and swallowing), your teeth should *never* touch ("Lips together, teeth apart"). Avoid any tooth clenching or teeth grinding (bruxism).
- **Gentle Nutrition:** In acute phases, avoid hard chewing gum, tough meats, large bites, or extreme mouth opening (e.g., when yawning—support your chin lightly with your hand if necessary).

2. Targeted Relaxation and Mobility Exercises

Perform these exercises 2 to 3 times daily. Ensure slow, pain-free movements performed in front of a mirror.

EXERCISE 1

Controlled Jaw Opening

Starting Position: Upright seated posture. Tongue tip rests loosely on the palate (N-Position).

Execution: Keep your tongue tip fixed to the palate and slowly open your mouth as wide as possible without the tongue detaching or the lower jaw deviating to the side.

Dosage: 5 to 10 repetitions, holding the end position for approx. 3 seconds.

EXERCISE 2

Gentle Mandibular Protrusion

Starting Position: Upright seated posture, relaxed neck.

Execution: Carefully slide your lower jaw forward so that your lower front teeth rest just in front of the upper teeth. Hold briefly, then slowly glide back to the starting position.

Dosage: 5 to 8 slow repetitions.

EXERCISE 3

Manual Masseter Relaxation

Starting Position: Relaxed posture while sitting.

Execution: Using the index and middle fingers of both hands, gently palpate the large chewing muscle (masseter) on your cheeks as well as the temporalis muscle at your temples. Perform light, circular massage movements with moderate pressure.

Dosage: Circle gently for 1 to 2 minutes.

EXERCISE 4

Cervical Posture Correction (Chin Tuck)

Starting Position: Upright seated posture.

Execution: Draw your chin straight backward horizontally (creating a double-chin posture) without tilting your head downward. This corrects forward head posture, which frequently contributes to elevated jaw muscle tension.

Dosage: 8 to 10 repetitions, holding each for 5 seconds.

Important Note: This self-care guide is designed to support your physiotherapy treatment and does not replace a medical or physiotherapeutic diagnosis. Should you experience sharp pain, joint locking, or dizziness during the exercises, please pause and discuss this during your next treatment session.

Created for clinical physiotherapy practice | Physiotherapist Ahmad Al Hariri