

# TMJ Exercises

Note: In all the TMJ Exercises your lower teeth should remain behind your upper teeth. Most of these exercises are muscle energy techniques which relax shortened or tight muscles. Please use gloves on your hands if your fingers are in your mouth. No movement should be painful, if it is, please call. If you have questions about how to do the exercises, please call.

1. Place an elbow on a firm surface, place the chin in hands and attempt to open your mouth against resistance. Hold resistance for 3 breaths.
2. Place fingers along the surface of the lower teeth. Resistance is used to prevent the open jaw from closing (use small force). Hold resistance for 3 breaths.
3. Curl your tongue upwards, placing the tip as far back on the roof of your mouth as possible, relax your lips. While in this position, slowly open and close your mouth. This exercise helps with the clicking in the jaw when you open your mouth.
4. Place elbows on a firm surface, resting jaw on hands. Open and close your mouth through its range of motion using resistance. Do a few times with pressure and a few without.
5. Tongue pull: Get a 2x2-inch cotton gauze. Wrap the tip of your tongue with the gauze and gently pull the tongue straight out and hold. Repeat by pulling to the right and then the left and then back to center. This should take a few minutes. Do this once a day only. Great for helping with swallowing issues and a restless tongue.
6. The Midline exercise: First get a toothpick (break it in half) and a mirror you can look into. Place two halves of a toothpick between the middle teeth of your upper and lower jaw. Open and close your mouth, slowly, through a range of motion, trying to keep the toothpicks aligned in the process (this is where the mirror comes in). This helps to make the muscles on both sides of the jaw working together to create alignment.
7. Anterior neck release: While sitting up, place the thumb on one clavicle (collarbone) and index finger of same hand on other clavicle. Place your other hand over it and gently pull traction down with both hands. The tips of your finger should now rest just below the clavicle while holding the traction. Slowly raise the chin. When you feel a slight pull/stretch stop, take a few breaths in this position. If in 3 breaths there is no change, you have raised your chin too far. Back off slightly take 2 more breaths, then relax neck while maintaining hand positions/traction. The next position for your head will be rotated to one side. The position is halfway between breast-bone and elbow. Now lift chin again slowly till you feel the slight pull. Again, take 5 breaths in this position and if after 3 breaths it hasn't changed and softened/back off slightly. Relax neck/chin, come back to center and repeat the 5 breaths stretch in then center. Note: For the full series,

the positions are: center, left side, center, right side, center, and done. This is a fascial stretch, all movements slow and gentle. Your two hands maintain the gentle traction down/away from neck/head throughout. Shoulders and arms should be down and relaxed with minimal force in hands.

8. Cheek pull: Place thumb inside opposite cheek toward the back near your ear and your index finger on the outside of cheek. Lightly pinch your cheek between thumb and index finger; traction cheek out and forward. Maintain a steady pressure until you get near your lips and then release. Do other side.

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