

How to Treat Jaw Pain

TMJ, or temporomandibular joint disorder, refers to any condition which causes pain in the jaw joint, located just in front of the ears. There are a variety of causes of jaw pain and often multiple factors lead to TMJ. A few simple tips can help you get relief and treat jaw pain.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Apply gentle pressure with the heels of your hands to tender areas in your jaw, holding for up to 30 seconds and repeating several times a day. If the pain is tolerable, you can slowly open and close your mouth as you apply pressure to help relieve tension and pain in the jaw.
2. Use pressure to treat jaw pain. However, extensive deep massage is not generally recommended as treatment for jaw pain, as the joint is extremely delicate and deep work can cause more harm than good. Never apply more pressure than is comfortable and refrain from pressure work if it seems to aggravate symptoms.
3. Stretch your neck and shoulder muscles as often as possible, as dysfunction and reduced range of motion in the upper body can place strain on the jaw. If getting a massage to treat jaw pain, make sure that your therapist focuses more on your neck and shoulders than the jaw itself. Additionally, cranial sacral massage, relaxation techniques and acupuncture can all help to reduce tension and relieve pain.
4. See a dentist to find out whether your jaw pain might be caused by grinding your teeth or clenching your jaw while sleeping. Often caused by emotional stress, relaxation and stress reduction techniques can often help reduce night time grinding, but your dentist may have other treatment options as well. Some relaxation and stress reduction techniques are: yoga, deep breathing, and/or a trip to the chiropractor. Also available is having a bruxism splint made and/or referral to a specialist.
5. Ask your dentist about other possible causes of jaw pain, such as abscessed molars, impacted wisdom teeth or an exaggerated over or under bite. Often treating dental problems is all you need to treat jaw pain.
6. Give your jaw a break and do not chew gum and/or chewy candies as the constant movement of your jaw muscles will only aggravate the problem. If you chew gum on a daily basis, overuse of the muscles may be the sole cause of jaw pain, an easy fix if you can simply spit out the gum.