



Jaw Exercises

For these exercises, it's important to not force too much into pain. If it hurts, stop! Also, always sit in a good posture when you do these exercises.

Self-Massage :

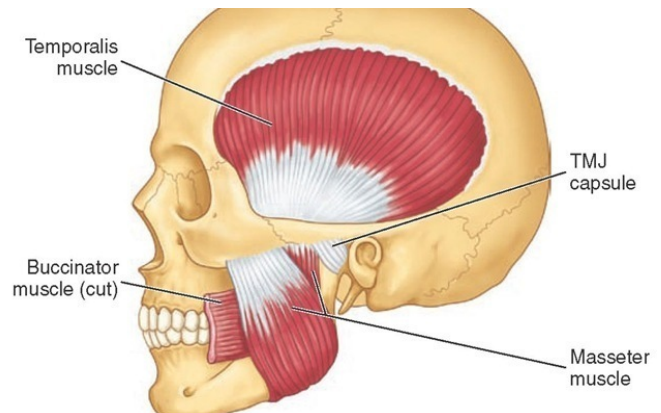
30-60 seconds each (a few times per day)

These self-massages help with pain - usually it's due to muscle tightness:

1. Place your palms along the masseter muscle (on your cheek just in front of the bottom of your earlobes) pulling up towards your temples. While pushing on the muscle, slowly open your mouth (you can stop and work through areas that are tight/tender).

2. With your tongue on the roof of your mouth, make a fist with both of your hands and push your knuckles from the back of your jaw on your cheek (just in front of the bottom of your earlobes) towards the corners of your mouth. Do it again from the corners of your eyes towards the top of your ears.

3. With your mouth open this time, follow the instructions for #2.



Relaxed Jaw: place your tongue against the roof of your mouth behind your front teeth and hold it there with your mouth open. The tongue placement ensures proper muscle use while opening your mouth. Do 10x

Goldfish: put tongue on roof of mouth and open half-way. Do 10x

Resisted opening and closing of the mouth: looking in the mirror, centre your top and bottom teeth, opening your jaw slightly. Open your mouth and hook your index finger on top of your chin and slightly resist closing your mouth (while staying centered). Next do the same thing with your index placed under your chin and resist opening slowly. Do 5-10x (it should only take 3-6 seconds to open and close your mouth each time).

Muscle slide: (front/back and side to side): put a few tongue depressors or popsicle sticks together (this helps relax the jaw while you go through the range of motion). Hold it between your teeth and slowly slide your lower jaw forward and backward, then side to side. (In a pinch where you can't find popsicle sticks, you can use a small package of post-its). Do 5-10x

Corrected opening (for clicking): if your jaw clicks, often you can see when looking in the mirror that your jaw deviates to one side when your mouth is open. It usually means that the muscles on that side are tight. With your tongue on the roof of your mouth, push on top of jaw near the TMJ of that same side and open your mouth (ex: if your jaw goes to the left, push on your left TMJ). Repeat this 5-10x. *this should help decrease the pain; if it causes pain, stop*

Other things to help the jaw:

- Chiropractic jaw adjustments
- Acupuncture
- Self trigger point work (see below)
- Massage therapy (on external and internal jaw muscles)
- Mouth night guards

If all else fails and pain is still there, it may be good to consult with a dentist who specializes in TMJ dysfunction

Specific Trigger point work:

A trigger point is a small knot in your muscle. These muscle knots can cause pain where it originates or further away, in a spot that seems completely unconnected.

Using two fingers, push on the muscle while supporting with your other hand. Make little circles with it about 10-12 times. Don't push harder than 5/10 level of pain (0= no pain, 10= most pain you could imagine).

Work along the common trigger points in the temporalis and masseter muscles (marked with an X on the picture beside).

You can also work inside the masseter. To do so, close your mouth but put your index finger along the outside of your teeth (inside your mouth) until you reach the muscle. Use your other hand on the outside of your mouth and work the trigger points from in and out at the same time.