

Remember the **80/20 Rule**: 80% of success in healing pain conditions is based on self-care while 20% is based on treatments. Self-care HEALS jaw pain with these 5 steps: **HEALS**– Heat/ice/massage; **E**xercise; **A**nalgesics; **L**ifestyle; and **S**train and stress reduced. See <https://www.youtube.com/@PainPreventionProgram> for videos of these handouts and Calming Kate relaxation videos.



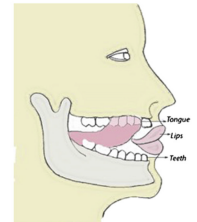
Heat, ice & massage: Apply heat or ice to sore muscles and joints. This will help improve healing, reduce the sensitivity of muscles and joints, and encourage healing. *Trigger Point Massage* with a thumb or finger for a few minutes to provide a deep massage to the tender trigger points within tight muscle bands. This will reduce their tenderness, relax the muscles, and reduce the pain.



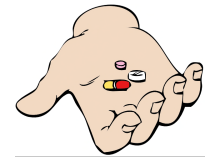
Exercise: *Stretching and strengthening of the jaw.* For stretching, gently and gradually increase range of motion by placing two fingers between your front teeth for a count to 10: Rest and repeat 6 times per day. When 2 fingers are comfortable, then increase to 2 knuckles, then 3 fingers to full range of motion **To strengthen**, push the jaw to each side and forward without moving it. Repeat 6 times.



For a relaxed jaw posture: Keep your lips closed, teeth apart, tongue up in the “n” position, breathe through the nose, and let jaw hang like a hammock between 2 trees. **Sitting:** Sit with bottom back against chair then lean back with head up balanced over the neck, and shoulders relaxed back and down. **Standing:** Chest up, head up, balanced over the neck, and shoulders relaxed back and down. Be mindful of maintaining balanced relaxed postures during the day.



Analgesics: Use anti-inflammatory and pain-reducing medications as needed. Use of over-the-counter ibuprofen, naproxen, acetaminophen, or aspirin (without caffeine) can reduce inflammation, joint, and muscle pain. Consider using a combination of ibuprofen and Tylenol before bedtime to relieve pain with sleep. Avoid opioid medications since it increases pain over time.



Lifestyle: Eat pain-free softer diet. Eat a soft diet to reduce strain on the jaw. Soft diet consists of well-cooked or soft protein foods, fruits, vegetables, eggs, smoothies, soups, and yogurt. Eat smoothies by using a blender to blend fruits and vegetables to protect the jaw until it heals. Make sure your diet includes healthy portions of protein and vegetables. Avoid sugar and simple carbohydrates that cause inflammation. Avoid caffeine that cause headaches and sleep disorders. Avoid tough chewy foods. Cut foods into small bites.



Strain reduced to the jaw: Avoid muscle tensing habits that put strain on the muscle and joints. Never touch your upper and lower teeth together except during eating. Use reminders such as stickers or timers. If jaw pain or oral habits are noticed, replace negative habits with positive habits. TATU is Teeth apart, Tongue up where it sits when you say the letter “n”



- Teeth clenching and grinding (bruxism)
- Touching or resting the teeth together
- Biting cheeks, lips, or tongue
- Pushing the tongue against the teeth
- Hard chewy foods and biting objects like pens
- Tensing your jaw or pushing it forward or to the side
- Jaw strain from musical instruments, snorkel, scuba
- Opening mouth too wide too wide or too long

Be careful with the jaw. Avoid injury to the jaw by avoiding excessive prolonged opening with yawning, dental visits, singing, and biting hard foods, such as hard breads, tough steaks, candy and gum. Chewing on both sides alternatively. Use a pain log to review daily activities that aggravate the pain and modify these activities. Do not chew gum.

