Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Exercises to Improve the Function of Jaw Joints & Reduce Associated Facial Pain v8

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Exercises to Improve the Function of Jaw Joints and Reduce Associated Facial Pain

Patient Information

Maxillo Facial - Head and Neck Services

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Introduction

The purpose of this exercise is to prevent any clicking of the temporomandibular joints (jaw joints) and to strengthen the muscles which will pull your jaw backwards. It will relax the muscles which pull your joints forwards and from side to side as the jaw opens. This should, take some strain off the joints and reduce any pain that you have been suffering.

Initially set aside 2 x 5 minute periods every day at a time that you are by yourself and relaxed. Perhaps you can shut yourself away in the bathroom or bedroom.

Sit upright in a chair and carry out these manoeuvres:

- Close your mouth on your back teeth, resting the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth just behind your upper front teeth.
- Run the tip of your tongue backwards onto the soft palate, as far back as it will go, keeping your teeth just together.
- Force your tongue backwards to keep it in contact with the soft plate and slowly open your mouth until you begin to feel your tongue just being pulled away from your soft palate. Do not try to open your mouth further, just keep it in this position for 5 seconds and then let your mouth close. Relax for about 5 seconds and then repeat this exercise in a firm, but relaxed manner over the next 5 minutes.

As you open your mouth you should feel tension in the back of your jaw and under your chin. For the first few times that you do the exercise you should check in the mirror that you

are opening your jaw straight. To check this simply you could place a line, with an eyebrow pencil, vertically down from the middle of your top lip to the middle of your bottom lip. These lines should stay in line with each other while you are performing the exercises.

If you are doing the exercises correctly there should be no clicks or noises from the joints. If there is you are not doing the exercise correctly. Please read the instructions again.

For the first week do not do the exercise more than the recommended amount. Initially it may make the pains worse, this is because some of the muscles are not used to the exercise, and this should soon wear off.

After the first week, do the exercises as often as you can, this should help to strengthen your jaw muscle.

If this exercise is done correctly and regularly, over a 2 week period you will retrain your muscles so that your jaw opens and closes without any clicks or jerks, any pain that you are suffering should soon subside.



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