



Jaw Joint Exercises

What can I do if I have jaw joint problems?

Try to avoid biting with your front teeth- for example do not bite into an apple or your nails

Try to stick to eating soft food only and do all your chewing on the painful side using the back teeth only. If both sides cause problems, then chew on both sides

Try to avoid opening your mouth wide. For example keep your teeth together when you yawn

The following exercises done for three or four minutes every day may help:

- Sit in a comfortable chair in front of a mirror with the back teeth resting together and relax. The tip of your tongue will be resting just behind your front teeth. Now slowly curl your tongue backwards so that you feel it running over the hard palate and then against the soft palate. Continue to push the tongue back as hard as you can, keeping it in contact with the soft palate and then slowly open your mouth. Check in the mirror that you are opening your mouth vertically and not deviating to one side. Most people find that the tip of their tongue is pulled away from the palate as the mouth is opened. Do not allow this to happen. Hold this position for five seconds, then relax for five seconds and repeat the exercise.
- If your jaw joint clicks at any time during the exercise this will mean that you are not doing it properly and so start again from the beginning.
- The purpose of this exercise is to pull the jaw backwards as hard as possible and relax the muscles which pull the jaw forward. This takes strain off the ligaments in the joints and allows them to heal.
- Initially you may find that there is no improvement and the pain may seem to get worse. Do not be discouraged. After the first week do the exercise for many short periods each day and slow but gradual improvement will follow.