

Recommendations for Jaw Pain or Stiffness

Jaw Pain or Stiffness, TMD

- ✓ Apply moist heat or cold packs to the face. Moist heat can be applied for 15-30 minutes, cold packs can be applied for 10-15 minutes. Use either at least twice a day
- ✓ Avoid overuse of the jaw. No gum chewing, chewing hard crusts of bread or bagels, or tough to chew foods.
- ✓ Minimize clenching or grinding of the teeth. Keep a space between your upper and lower teeth at all times except eating or swallowing. Say the letter “N”, this allows the jaw to naturally position itself with the appropriate amount of space between the teeth.

Limited Jaw Opening, Trismus

- ✓ **Active stretch:** Taking about 6 seconds, gently stretch your jaw open as wide as possible **without** pain. Then slowly relax the jaw until the teeth are just separated (In the “N” position - Place the tip of your tongue up against the roof of your mouth behind your front teeth. This puts your tongue in the position as if you were saying the letter “N.” The teeth are slightly apart, and the lips are barely touching.) Maintain this relaxed position for 6 seconds.

Repeat the exercise 6 times to complete 1 session.

Complete 6 sessions spread throughout the day.

- ✓ **Passive stretch:** Stack tongue blades together and place a rubber band around them. Open as wide as possible and insert the stack into your mouth on one side, resting against the upper and lower teeth. Slowly insert an additional tongue blade into the middle of the stack, and continue to insert additional tongue blades until a strong stretching sensation is felt in the jaw. **HOLD** for 30 seconds. Repeat on the other side of the mouth. Do this 3 times, 3 times a day. Keep track of how many tongue blades are in the stack and aim to increase the number over time as tolerated.

