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# Jaw Pain

Written By: Alec St Pierre PT

laurentianphysiotherapy@gmail.com; 705-671-3865; Summit Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation

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The TMJ (Temporomandibular Joint) is a very important joint in the face, required for talking and eating. Pain and tension of the TMJ joint can lead to disabling headaches, neck pain, and difficulties with eating and speaking. TMJ symptoms are often misdiagnosed which can lead to persistent symptoms and frustration with prolonged recovery. Having your TMJ assessed by a trained healthcare professional to screen for dysfunction is important if you experience jaw pain, or have recently had a whiplash or concussion injury.

## Tips From A Physiotherapist

- Consult your dentist to discuss if you have signs of clenching or grinding that may affect your TMJ, and/or if a nighttime mouth guard is appropriate.
- Sit up tall when eating to avoid excessive strain on the muscles of your jaw/neck.
- Avoid chewing gum, biting nails or eating hard foods until your TMJ pain improves.
- Avoid taking big bites out of your food until your TMJ pain improves.
- Avoid clenching and be aware of stressful situations that may provoke clenching.

## Home Exercises

- *TMJ Opening Coordination:* Sit upright looking at yourself in a mirror. Keep tongue on the roof of your mouth as you open your mouth, focusing on keeping the movement straight without any lateral deviation. Repeat 10 times, multiple sets per day.
- *Chin Tuck:* Sit upright, pull head straight back, tucking chin towards your throat (keeping your mouth closed). Return to the starting position. Repeat this 10 times, multiple sets per day.

For more information, visit [www.summitpt.ca](http://www.summitpt.ca)

