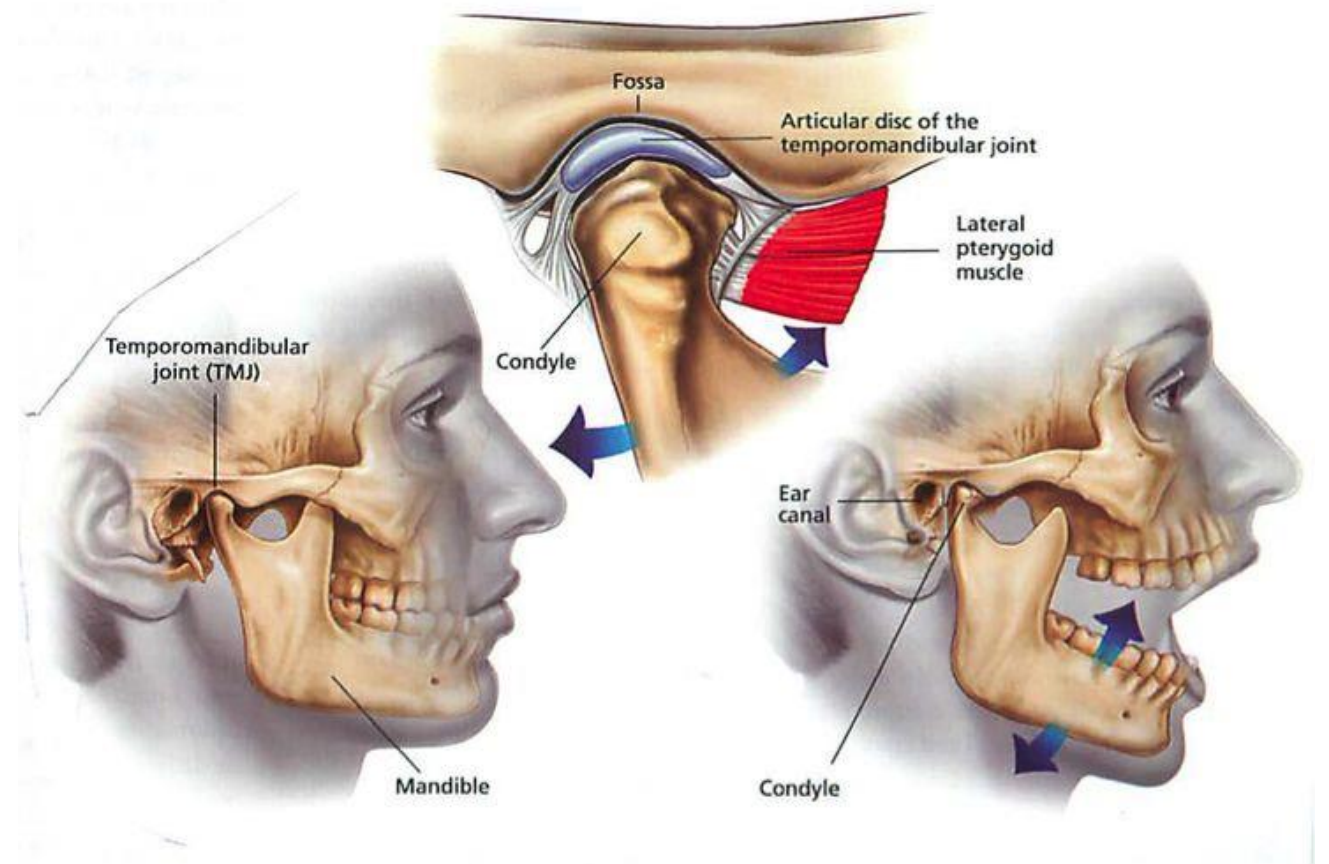


Temporomandibular Dysfunction (TMD)

The temporomandibular joint is a hinge type joint. It has a disc separating the condyle of the lower mandible with its socket (the mandibular fossa) in the temporal bone.



TMD - What Can Go Wrong?



Common underlying factors causing TMD are:

- **Muscle tension**
- **Teeth grinding (bruxism)**
- **Missing teeth**

Over time, if these factors are not addressed, they can lead to:

- **Damage to the disc within the joint**
- **Arthritis**

How can you help yourself?

Relax Your Jaw

The first thing to do is learn how to relax your jaw. Try to become aware of tension through the day. When you become aware, breath in, breath out, let your shoulders drop, and allow your jaw to rest so your teeth are just apart, with your tongue resting just behind your front teeth.

Visit Your Dentist

Your dentist can exclude alternative causes for your pain, such as an abscess that may need treating. They may offer dental work if teeth are missing.

Your dentist can make a splint to help if your teeth are grinding (bruxing) in the night.

De-Stress

Take a look at your own stress triggers and consider if there are ways you can manage some of your stress better.

Keep Active

Regular aerobic exercise will help to de-stress. Even if it is just a fast walk around the block in your lunch time, or parking 10 minutes away from the office...

Eating

Avoid tough foods that take a lot of chewing, such as well cooked steak or bread crusts.

Chop food into smaller pieces.
Dice an apple rather than biting into it.
Avoid chewing gum.

How can physio help?



If you have followed the advice and you are still having difficulty then here's how I can help:

- ❖ Manual therapy to **release tension** in temporomandibular joint (TMJ) and neck muscles.
- ❖ Manual therapy to **mobilise** the TMJ if it is stiff.
- ❖ **Teach massage techniques** you can use yourself.
- ❖ **Exercises to loosen** a stiff TMJ.
- ❖ Exercises to **remodel or relocate the disc**.
- ❖ Exercises to **retrain** the TMJ muscles.

Don't worry!

Whilst TMJ dysfunction can cause significant distress - particularly if it affects you eating or socialising - it is very rare for there to be any serious pathology. Most cases of TMD respond very well to treatment.