North Cheshire and Mersey
NHS Foundation Trust

Jaw exercises

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Department

Information for patients and carers

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Why have you been given these exercises?

These exercises are designed to:

- prevent any clicking in your jaw joints (temporomandibular joints)
- reduce pressure on your joints
- reduce any pain in your jaw and face

They work by:

- strengthen the muscles which pull your jaw backwards
- relax the muscles which pull your joints forwards and from side to side as the jaw opens

If these exercises are done correctly and regularly for 2 weeks, your jaw should open and close more smoothly. Your symptoms should also improve.

How often to do the exercises

- At the start, you should do the exercises twice a day.
- Each session should last 5 minutes.
- Choose a time that you are by yourself and relaxed.

It is best to do these exercises in front of a mirror.

How to do the exercises

1. Close your mouth so your back teeth are touching
2. Rest the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth, just behind your front teeth.
3. Run the tip of your tongue backwards as far back as it will go. Keeping your teeth together.
4. Keep your tongue in contact with the roof of your mouth.
5. Slowly open your mouth until you start to feel your tongue being pulled away from the roof of your mouth.
6. Stop at this point. Do not try to open your mouth further.
7. Hold it in this position for 5 seconds.
8. Slowly close your mouth and relax for 5 seconds.
9. Repeat this exercise for the next 5 minutes.

As you open your mouth, you should feel tightening in the back of your jaw and under your chin.

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

If you hear clicks or noises from the joints, stop and read the instructions again. Try to do the exercise again carefully.

For the first week, do not do more than the recommended number of exercises.

Your jaw may feel more painful at first. This is normal and should improve as your muscles get used to exercise.