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# NEW PATIENT HOME CARE PACKET

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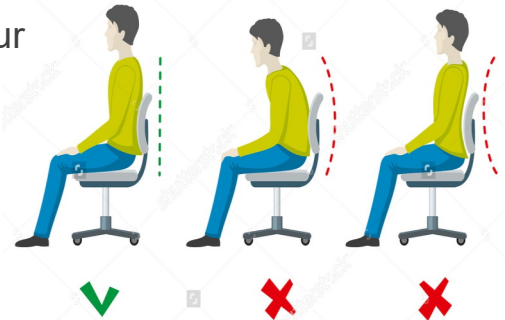
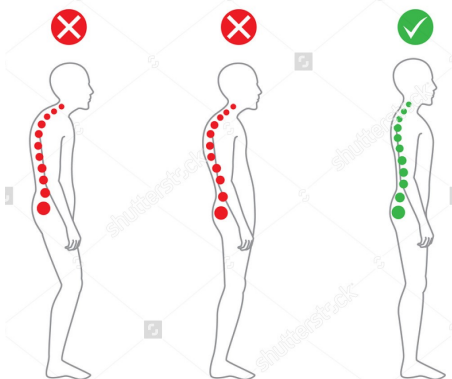
# CORRECT POSTURE

Correct posture is a very important component to your TMJ treatment and overall health. Poor posture can throw your head and spine off balance in relation to gravity. This can place unnecessary wear and tear on muscles and joints. Bad posture can result in jaw, neck, shoulder, and head pain. It is very important for each individual to listen to their body and correct poor posture habits.

## Standing and Sitting

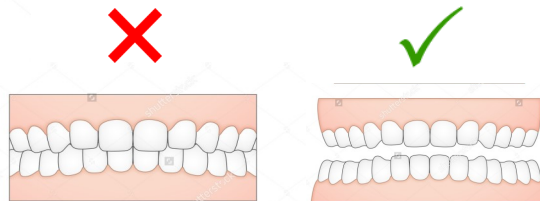
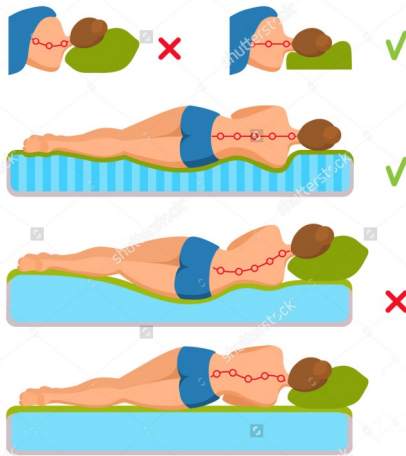
While standing or sitting keep your head tall and shoulders relaxed

A proper chair will support your arms and shoulders. This helps prevent strains of the neck due to forward thrust.



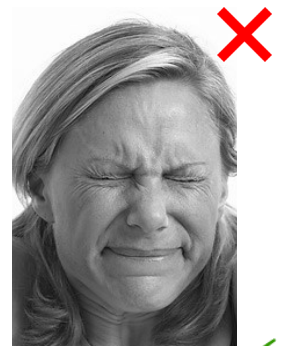
## Correct Sleeping Posture

Do not sleep on your stomach. Try a side position and adjust your pillow to maintain your head and neck in a neutral position. If you sleep on your back make sure your pillow supports your neck and put a bolster under the knees



## Correct Jaw Posture

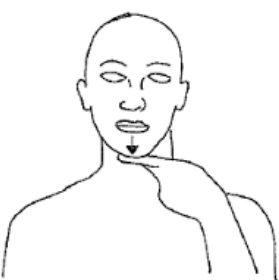
Jaw should be relaxed, tongue on the roof of your mouth, and the teeth not touching. If you find yourself clenching gently set your tongue between your teeth. Remember to keep your head and neck tall with relaxed shoulders. Take the energy out of your jaw and keep your facial muscles relaxed.



# STRETCHES

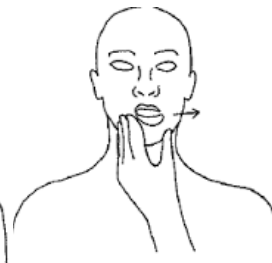
Stretches are beneficial for our health and overall body functioning. It helps flexibility, range of motion, improve balance, and coordination. Proper stretching can prevent injury and help the healing process. Also, it helps relax our muscles and decrease stress.

## Jaw stretches



Relax your tongue as you drop your jaw open and then closed ten times.

Relax your jaw and gently stretch your jaw by moving your lower teeth to the right and then the left 10 times.



## Neck Stretches

Gently grab the side of your head with your right arm. While relaxing your shoulders pull your head to the side looking towards your underarm. Pull till you feel a good stretch and hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat on the opposite side using your left arm. (Please note that your shoulders should not be raised during the stretch)

Levator Scapulae



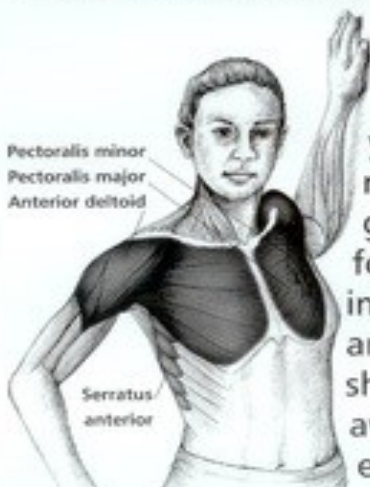
Upper Trapezius



Gently grab the side of your head with your right arm. While relaxing your shoulders pull your head to the side looking forward. Pull till you feel a good stretch in the muscle. Hold stretch

for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat on the opposite side using your left arm. (Please note that your shoulders should not be raised during the stretch)

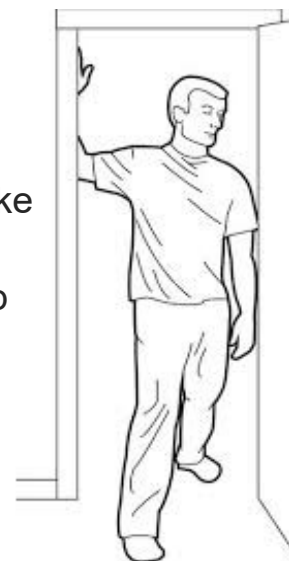
## Bent Arm Chest Stretch



Stand with your arm extended and your forearm at right angles to the ground. Rest your forearm against an immovable object and then turn your shoulders and body away from your extended arm.

## Tip

Use a doorway for a good pectoral stretch. Again make sure you hold your stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Keep your neck and jaw relaxed during the stretch.



## Water Therapy/Hot and Cold Application

Heat and cold application is extremely important for healing and pain relief. The following techniques can soothe painful muscles, increase blood flow, and decrease swelling. It is important for overall relaxation and stress relief. Please review the following applications for effective symptom relief.

### Heat Therapy

Heat application should be applied for the following:

- Decrease pain
- Decrease muscle spasms
- Decrease stiffness
- Previous to stretching
- Relieve tension
- Decrease stress
- Decrease joint pain
- Increase tissue healing
- Increase relaxation response

Apply Heat using: Aromatherapy heat pack, moist hot towel, electric heating pad, or hot shower/bath.

Use heat on desired area, leave heat on for 5 to 20min.



### Cold Therapy

Cold application should be applied for the following:

- Decrease swelling
- Increase range of motion when swelling is present
- Headaches
- Increase circulation
- Decrease muscle spasms
- After a deep tissue massage/trigger point therapy
- Sprains

Apply cold using: ice packs, gel packs, slush packs, ice massage, cool bath

Use cold pack for 10 to 15mins, or until tissue starts to feel numb. Note (Do not apply more than the above time unless advised by a doctor)



**Tip:** Try applying heat for 3 to 5min then switch to cold for 10min. Alternate this technique 3 times for increase healing.

## Instructions & Home Care for Oral Appliance



To remove: With your fingertips or fingernail, pull on the edges of the appliance.

To Place in Your Mouth: Place the appliance over your teeth in the correct alignment and push into place with your thumbs or forefingers.

To Clean: remove the appliance when you brush your teeth and brush it with toothpaste. For removal of odor and stains, soak the appliance in any of the following solutions on at least a weekly basis. The appliance will absorb the color of any mouthwash if it is not diluted 50/50.

- Mix small amounts of mouthwash with the same amount of water, soak for 20 to 30min.
- Mix 2 tablespoons of baking soda and 1/2 cup tap water, soak for 20 to 30min
- Mix cool tap water and denture cleaning solution, soak for 15min

### Special Notes

When you are not wearing your appliance, rinse it and store it in the case provided to you. Be sure to wear your appliance as directed. It is especially important that you wear it when you are stressed or concentration on something like driving, paperwork, exercising, sleeping, or any physical activity. These times are when you are most likely to grind or clench your teeth.

Try to condition yourself to keep your teeth slightly apart, even when wearing the appliance. RULE: lips together, teeth apart! Rest your tongue on the roof of your mouth where it naturally goes when you say the letter "N". Separating the teeth will help your muscles to relax and reduce the stress on the jaw joints. Exceptions are when you are chewing or swallowing.

You may find that you have more saliva in your mouth. This is your mouth getting used to having something in it all the time. In time this will decrease. You will probably have sore teeth, a sore tongue, and some muscle pain or soreness after first getting your appliance. This is only the muscles and teeth becoming accustomed to the appliance. These symptoms should subside in a few days. If in a week the symptoms do not change, please call.

The best way to learn to speak with your appliance is to start right away by enunciating more dramatically and reading aloud or singing to practice. It may take a few days to become accustomed to speaking with it. Remember, practice makes perfect, and you sound worse to yourself than you do to others. Be careful with your appliance. Keep away from animals and small children. They love to play with the appliance. Try not to drop the appliance as it might break. Never wrap the appliance in a paper towel or tissue and lay it down, someone might throw it away. Don't put it in your pocket, it might break or you may lose it. Avoid flipping the appliance with your tongue, this can cause damage to the appliance and make the muscles in your face sore.

Please let us know of any dental care you may be having done, it can change the fit of your appliance, which may require an adjustment or a replacement. Keeping your mouth open for a long period of time can strain the muscles we are working on. If dental work is necessary, tell your dentist that you are being treated for TMJ dysfunction. Ask your dentist or hygienist to give you a rest every 15 to 20 minutes, at which time you should try to wear your appliance. Also, do not open very wide or allow your jaw to be forced open with a mouth prop, or rubber dam, especially for long periods of time. We also suggest you use moist heat and an anti-inflammatory before and after your dental visits. This will help with any discomfort in the muscles and jaw joint that might occur because of dental work.

**If you have any problems or additional questions after you leave our office, please feel free to call us. We want this to be as pleasant of an experience as possible for you, and we are anxious to assist you in adjusting to this therapy.**