

TMJ DYSFUNCTION

A PAIN IN THE JAW

Pain in and around your jaw is not uncommon. The source is usually the joint in your jaw called the temporomandibular joint. The name of that joint is a mouthful, to say the least, so most professionals usually refer to the joint simply as the TMJ. About 20% of us will have painful jaw symptoms (TMJ dysfunction) at some point in our lives.

The temporomandibular joint (TMJ) never seems to rest. The joint and the surrounding muscles get a real workout when we eat, talk, and breathe. And even if we are walking or just sitting, the muscles of our jaw remain engaged to stop our jaw from dropping open. It's no wonder that so many people have problems with this joint.

TMJ dysfunction can affect anyone at any age. It may involve pain or aching around one or both ears, in the TMJ itself, or elsewhere in the head. Tenderness can often be felt in the muscles used to eat. Clicking or popping noises may be heard when moving your lower jaw. Some people may experience limited range of motion in the joint or feel the joint catch or get stuck when moving. These symptoms can range from being tiresome or annoying to being downright debilitating.

ANATOMY 101

It's important to remember that you have two temporomandibular joints that work in unison, one on each side of the jaw. Try opening one side of your mouth without opening the opposite side! This is quite an impossible task because the two joints cannot be moved independently.

To locate the joint, stick your index fingers in your ear and pretend to chew. You'll feel the back of the joint moving under your fingertips.

The TMJ is not a simple hinge joint like your elbow. It's a rather complicated mechanism. In order to open your mouth the jaw must both swing open and slide forward. There is a little fibrous disc inside the joint that allows this to happen. Little muscles located within your mouth attach onto the disc and pull it forward. You can develop trigger points or imbalances in these muscles that prevent the muscles from doing their job effectively. As a result, the disc doesn't slide properly and the jaw catches, locks, clicks or pops.

These aren't the only muscles that make your jaw move. Put your hands on the side of your face and chew. You'll feel your masseter muscle working. Now place your hands flat over your temples and continue to chew. The muscle you feel contracting is called the temporalis.

“ About one in five people will experience painful jaw symptoms”

MASSAGE CAN HELP

Temporomandibular joint dysfunction is usually reversible, but without treatment the condition can become chronic. If you experience any of the TMJ symptoms noted above it is imperative that you speak to your massage therapist and have your jaw properly assessed. At **Therapeutic Massage** your massage therapist may suggest that you speak with your dentist, as a holistic approach is commonly advised. You may also be referred a physiotherapist, chiropractor or an orthodontist specialist.

Massage can help alleviate stress, which is one of the most common perpetuating factors of TMJ dysfunction. With stress, the tension of the skeletal muscles increases. This may cause you to clench or grind your teeth and place undue stress on the muscles around the jaw.

Your massage therapist will likely check to see if trigger point (muscle knots) in the head and neck muscles may be the source of the problem. Trigger points can cause pain and prevent the joint from moving properly. Some therapists may even check for trigger points in the small muscles inside your mouth that control movement in the TMJ.

Poor posture due to tightness or weakness of neck, shoulders or chest muscles can dramatically change the alignment of the TMJ and affect the way the muscles around the jaw work. Your therapist will likely take a broader view of your body and the interaction between various areas Your massage therapist can take a look at your posture and can give you simple exercise to help improve your alignment as a means to improve the function of your TMJ.

There are some self-care techniques that are quite useful. For example, when inflammation is present you can simply apply ice or a cool cloth to your jaw. During the later or chronic stages you can apply heat to your jaw to help decrease some of the pain caused by muscle spasm or trigger



Image Ankhmahor (also known as “The Tomb of the Physician”)

Ancient Egypt - Tomb of Ankhmahor

On the northern side of Teti's pyramid at Saqqara in the block of tombs belonging to the officials of the king's Dynasty VI reign. The most famous pictures from Ankhmahor's tomb are in the doorway to the pillared hall, it is also known as “The Tomb of the Physician”. It depicts two men having work done on their hands and feet, thought to be massaging.

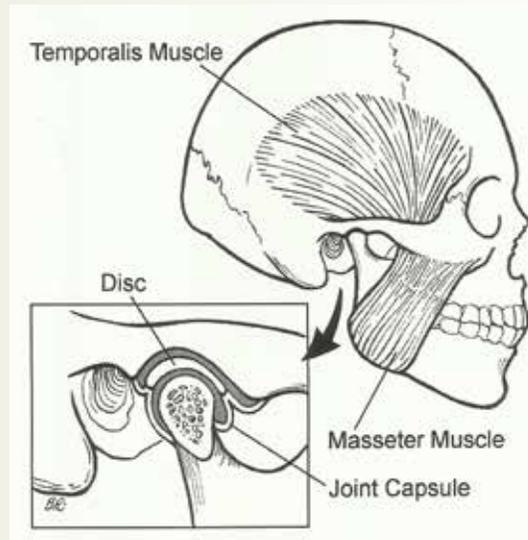
The inscription reads “Do not let it be painful” and the practitioner answers cryptically “I do it so that you will praise it, King”.

“ In treating TMJ dysfunction, a holistic approach is commonly advised.”

points. Make sure not to apply the ice or heat for longer than ten minutes to prevent any burning of your skin. Ask your massage therapist for advice.

Common treatment objectives include strengthening of the jaw muscles and increasing the range of motion of the jaw. Because the muscles that elevate the jaw are exercised regularly through chewing, home-exercises usually focus on the stretching jaw muscles.

Depending on the cause, progression and treatment of TMJ dysfunction syndrome, the prognosis will vary. Your massage therapist along with other health professionals can help to ensure that you continue to feel great and walk about with a comfortable smile.



Q&A

Why does my jaw hurt

TMJ problems are rarely the result of a single traumatic injury like a direct blow or whiplash. Problems in the TMJ usually develop over time and can be caused by number of factors. Some of these factors include:

- » Improper closing if the top and bottom teeth (malocclusion)
- » Psychological or emotional factors, such as stress
- » Jaw clenching
- » Grinding your teeth (bruxism)
- » Work related habits, for example, excessive phone use
- » Postural imbalances, such as rounded shoulders or a “forward-head” position
- » Joint disease like rheumatoid arthritis
- » Myofascial trigger points
- » Prolonged dental work

**For an appointment or more
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Baldvin has been working as a massage therapist for over 15 years. During such time, he has had the amazing opportunity to take such extensive courses such as myofascial release, sports massage, deep muscle tissue therapy and stretching, cranial sacral massage, and TMJ treatments. He continues to actively learn new techniques through such continuing education programs.



SPORTS

Sports Massage Therapy is used by athletes, both professional and amateur, as part of their regular physical routine. Our registered massage therapists understand the importance of sports rehabilitation and can assist you in the path to recovery, through exercise and rehabilitation exercises.

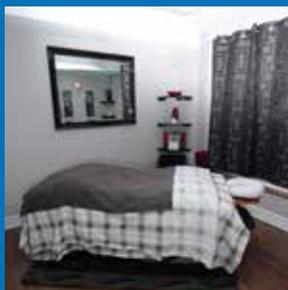
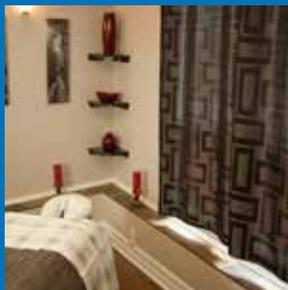
Therapeutic Massage therapists assists athletes of all ages in preventing injury and enhancing recovery with regular massage visits. They have handled stress and strain and accidental injuries to help correct muscular imbalances, overuse injuries, and any postural issues occurring.

OPTIMIZE HEALTH

Massage therapy treatment has a therapeutic effect on the body and optimizes health and well-being by acting on the muscular, nervous and circulatory systems. Physical function can be developed, maintained and improved; and physical dysfunction and pain and the effects of stress can be relieved or prevented through the use of massage therapy.

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

There are tremendous benefits to be achieved through regular massage therapy treatments from a registered massage therapist. Whether your need is to have a moment of relaxation, reduce muscle tension or attain relief from chronic pain, a **Therapeutic Massage** can enhance your overall sense of emotional and physical well-being as well as your quality of life.



Come and visit us in our newly renovated massage rooms.

We try to make your visit a time of complete relaxation, with your choice of music to soft lighting.



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MASSAGE FOR ALL AGES

Massage therapy benefits people of all ages. While it benefits the injured, the ill and the stressed, the strength of massage therapy in preventing illness and conditions before they develop cannot be overlooked.

BENEFITS

Therapeutic massage is an important part of your health maintenance plan, by:

- » Reducing or eliminating pain
- » Improving joint mobility
- » Improving circulation
- » Improving immune system functioning
- » Increasing lymphatic drainage
- » Reducing depression and anxiety
- » Reducing tension within muscles
- » Increasing body awareness

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