

3 STEPS TO TMJ(D) RELIEF!

Temporomandibular Joint Disorder (TMJD), depending on its severity, can be debilitating!

Common signs and symptoms of TMJD include headaches, jaw pain, ear pain, neck pain, stuffy ears, vertigo, clicking or popping in the jaw joints, jaw locking, and more.

It can be incredibly difficult to find a healthcare provider who is proficient and skilled in treating TMJD, so home remedies can truly come in handy!

Here are **3 Steps to TMJ(D) relief** that you can do from the comfort of your own home!

If you found these tips helpful

Reach out today & take your first step toward a pain free life!

Call us at 503-255-8293

Email patientcare@tmjdentaldoc.com

A grayscale photograph of a person in a hoodie making a 'do not' hand gesture with their hands. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

STEP 1: THE DO NOTS!

With **TMJD**, it's actually more about **NOT** doing than it is about doing. There are multiple things you can **NOT** do that will benefit your jaw joints and the muscles that surround and support the jaw.

- **Don't sit for long periods of time with your chin resting in your hand with your elbow propped up on something.** This habit can be very damaging to the Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ) when you consider that it puts pressure upon your jaw, usually one side more than the other in an upwards and backwards direction. This is absolutely the worst type of pressure to apply to your jaw due to the unique design of the joint's anatomy.
- **Don't sleep on your side with your hand clenched into a fist against your chin or the side of your face.** The TMJ is not designed to withstand sideways pressure for very long.
- **Don't eat bagels, French bread crusts, popcorn, or cold pizza crust frequently.** The tough, glutenous nature of that kind of dough when baked requires a lot of effort to power through that last little bit of crusty material and produces tremendous forces upon the joint's articular discs and also requires significant muscle power.

- **Don't chew gum!**
- **Don't bite your fingernails!**
- **Don't allow your tongue to rest between your teeth.** This is mostly an unconscious habit and most people are unaware of correct tongue posture. I have rarely seen a TMJ/TMD patient that didn't have noticeable scallops along the sides and front of their tongues. These scallops are indentations in the tongue from the pressure of the teeth!
- **Don't consume large quantities of caffeine.** Some individuals can tolerate more caffeine than others. However large enough quantities will produce dehydration of muscles and ligaments.
- **Don't have frequent exposures to simple carbohydrates (sugars).** Aside from being a major contributor to what is now described as metabolic disease, those empty calories frequently consumed will produce a condition known as reactive glycemia and can be a major contributor to headaches and depression.
- **Don't sweat the small stuff** and easily allow things to get you angry or frustrated, as you will be more prone to clenching and bruxing your teeth.





STEP 2: THE DO'S!

There are more Do Not's when it comes to TMJD, but there are definitely some impactful **Do's** as well!

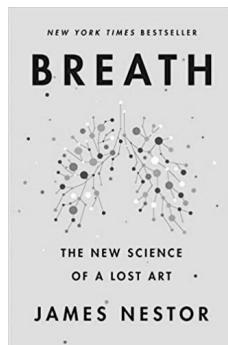
- **Get up and move! Get your circulation going.** Breathe deeply and let your mind focus on the body awareness this will promote. In essence, let your body talk to you and be sure to listen! This can go a long way in decreasing or eliminating daytime clenching and bruxing.
- Reduce/eliminate refined carbohydrates from your diet and replace them with foods that require some extra amount of chewing and exercising your jaw muscles as our ancestors did. If your condition is acute then of course you will have to come back to this! **Increase the amounts of fruits and vegetables in your diet because when we are in pain and in an acute stage of muscle dysfunction, our bodies are in an inflammatory state of mild acidosis.** To reduce inflammation and move our body chemistry back towards a more balanced alkaline state, consuming alkaline producing foods is a **MUST!** Keep in mind that if you're in a lot of pain and your TMJD is acute, smoothies are a wonderful way to incorporate fruits and vegetables without overloading your jaw joints and chewing muscles.

STEP 3: BREATHE!

This may sound like a no-brainer, but many of us take quick, shallow breaths without using our diaphragm muscle to its full capacity. This can have a tremendous impact on the levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide in our bodies which can then spiral and cause a plethora of health issues including worsening TMJD.

- For more information on this, please read the book “Breath” by James Nestor. I highly recommended it! The link is below:

<https://amzn.to/3CUr6k2>



If you found these tips helpful
Reach out today & take your first step toward a pain free life!

Call us at 503-255-8293

Email patientcare@tmjdentaldoc.com