

## Jaw Muscle- Stretching Exercise

Patients with jaw muscle stiffness or pain often find a significant improvement with jaw stretching exercises. Symptoms may improve with simple jaw-stretching exercise 6 times per day between 30 to 60 seconds each time at the opening and duration you determine best for you.

Warm your muscles before stretching by opening and closing slowly about 10 times. You may also apply moist heat for about 5 minutes to warm the muscles.

To determine what opening and duration are best for you the first time stretch, bend your index finger and place the knuckle between your upper and lower front teeth (figure 1). Hold this position for 30 seconds.

If your symptoms are not aggravated, increase the time to 45 seconds, then 60 seconds. If this does not aggravate your symptoms increase your opening width to 2 fingertips (figure 2) and cut back your time to 30 seconds.

Continue increasing your time and opening in this manner, but do not go beyond three fingertips. Find the largest opening and duration that does not cause even the slightest symptoms and use this each time as you stretch. If you experience any discomfort or aggravation, decrease your opening or time.

## Hot-Cold-Hot Therapy

The purpose of the Hot-Cold-Hot Therapy is to open, close and open the blood vessels, allowing a rush of blood to flush out toxins in the muscles.

### Directions:

- ◆ Microwave a moist hand towel for 1-2 minutes on high or until the towel is very hot.
- ◆ Touch the towel with your hand to make sure it is not too hot to apply to the face.
- ◆ Apply the hand towel to neck, jaw and face for 3 minutes (using timer is very helpful).
- ◆ Next, apply cold to the same area for 3 minutes. Using a bag of frozen peas or corn is best.
- ◆ Reheat the towel in microwave on high for 30 seconds intervals until is hot again and apply to the neck, face and jaw areas for 3 minutes.

**You can repeat the above steps as often as you desire.**

**[MORE]**

## Periodontal Self-screening

**“Preventing Gum Disease is more than just saving your teeth. It improves your quality of life”.**

- ◆ Periodontal disease is painless.
- ◆ It affects 75% of the American population.
- ◆ The disease can be prevented and controlled.
- ◆ Recent research established the links between Gum Disease and systemic diseases like:
  - Diabetes
  - Heart disease
  - Heart attacks
  - Low birth weight
  - Osteoporosis
  - Recurrent Upper respiratory infections

### Please look for any of the following signs:

1.	Gum bleeding when brushing and / or flossing	Yes	No
2.	Gums are red, swollen or tender	Yes	No
3.	Gums are pulling away from your teeth	Yes	No
4.	Pus between gums and teeth	Yes	No
5.	Teeth are loose or separating	Yes	No
6.	Change in the way the teeth fit when biting	Yes	No
7.	Partial denture doesn't fit	Yes	No
8.	Persistent bad breath	Yes	No

If one or more of these warning signs apply to you, bring it to the attention of the dentist during your examination.

### Self-examination for other abnormalities

The inside of your mouth is lined with a special type of skin, called mucosa. Normally it is smooth and coral pink in color. Any change in color or appearance could be a warning sign of a problem, including oral cancer.

One good part of your prevention process involves monthly self-examination. Look for any of the following signs on your lips, cheeks, palate, gum tissue around the teeth, tongue, face, and/or neck:

- ◆ Reddish patches (erythroplasia) or whitish patches (leukoplakia) in the mouth
- ◆ A sore that fails to heal and bleeds easily
- ◆ A lump or thickening on the skin lining the inside of the mouth
- ◆ Chronic sore throat or hoarseness
- ◆ Difficulty in chewing or swallowing

**Remember, pain does not need to be present for a problem to occur. In fact, pain is not often associated with oral cancer. If pain does exist without a reason, however, please inform your dentist as it may indicate a condition does exist.**