



Tips to reduce jaw and facial pain

Facial pain and headaches are more common than you think. There can be multiple sources of pain including your temporomandibular joints (or TMJs) at your jaw, the surrounding muscles at your cheeks and temples, and the trigeminal and facial nerves that provide facial movement and sensation. This is a quick guide to help you reduce the pain you might be experiencing and to help prevent it worsening or coming back.

Check in with your jaw regularly

Some facial habits can put excess demand on the jaw joints and surrounding muscles, causing pain. Regularly checking in with your jaw, posture and facial expressions is a good way to prevent and relieve pain.

- Avoid clenching your jaw, grinding your teeth, lip chewing
- Keep your tongue on the top of your mouth, teeth apart
- Keep a good posture avoid poking your chin forward
- Avoid leaning your chin on your hand

Avoid chewy foods and chewing gum

Foods that require a lot of chewing or wide mouth opening to eat should be avoided to reduce demand on the jaw joints and facial muscles. Eat softer foods and cut food into smaller pieces.

Avoid gum at all costs!

Self care

Stress can lead to jaw clenching, teeth grinding and shallow breathing, all of which is bad for your jaw joints and facial muscles. Pain can also be harder to resolve when the body is overstressed and nervous system over sensitised. Practice deep breathing, gentle exercise such as yoga and Pilates and aim to get sufficient sleep to reduce stress and aid recovery

Massage, Ice and Heat

To reduce facial pain and tight sore, muscles perform 2-3 minutes of light massage twice a day to your temples and cheeks. Spend longer on any tight, tender areas. If your face feels tired and achy but is not inflamed apply heat to your jaw or temples for 5-15 minutes. If there is swelling or redness at the jaw joint apply ice for 5-15 minutes.