



Self-Care Practices To Resolve TMJ Jaw Pain

Most people pay little attention to one of the most important parts of our anatomy—the jaw. In fact, the jaw is one of the most complex joints in the human body. It works hard so that we can chew, smile, talk, and laugh. However, jaw problems and TMJ (temporomandibular joint) pain can cause dysfunction and make these daily essential activities difficult.

More than 10 million in the U.S. suffer from [jaw pain](#), [TMJ headaches](#), TMJ ear pain and experience other symptoms related to TMJ disorders. Often the jaw pain stems from muscle tightness in the jaw, neck, back, and behind the ears and can be triggered by stress, weak muscles, and poor posture. There can be other underlying conditions like inflammation from arthritis, or disc misalignment of the temporomandibular joints. An injury or blow to the jaw can also cause these jaw problems.

Other symptoms of TMJ disorders include teeth grinding, jaw clenching, limited jaw mobility, jaw popping and clicking, ringing in the ears, and changes to the contact of upper and lower teeth. Those with TMJ disorders experience varied symptoms and different levels of pain and discomfort. It's not a one size fits all problem.



Dentists often recommend a TMJ mouth guard, bite guard, sleep mouth guard, or night guard. While these devices protect the teeth, they do not help the underlying cause or condition. The wrong type of mouthguard can promote night-time teeth grinding and clenching, also known as bruxism. Bruxism can lead to TMJ disorders and vice versa.

TMJ experts recommend self-care practices for TMJ jaw pain. These practices include topical pain relief medications such as TJz Balm™, a first of its kind organic and 100 percent botanical medication with cosmetic properties to soothe and relax the jaw. This type of product contains active ingredients that may provide temporary TMJ pain relief. TJz Balm™ has a massaging applicator tip that can be used to massage the muscles around the temporomandibular joints. The aroma of organic English lavender and other botanicals may help to promote relaxation. Unlike other topical pain relief medications, TJz Balm™ does not contain harsh or synthetic chemicals. The natural and organic ingredients are nourishing to the skin. Other [self-care practices](#) include meditation, [gentle jaw exercises](#), muscle movement exercises, [postural awareness](#), massage, and proper positioning of the tongue. A regimen of self-care practices for jaw problems may resolve TMJ pain.

When TMJ disorders become chronic, more aggressive treatments are sometimes recommended. It's important to seek out the advice of a TMJ specialist. These specialists

include chiropractors, [massage therapists](#), physical therapists, holistic practitioners, and orofacial pain specialists. Keep in mind that invasive treatments have not been scientifically proven to be safe and effective. Surgical treatments may in fact worsen the condition. Research is needed in this area, especially as more cases of TMJ disorders arise.

A recent study concluded that common antidepressant drugs including Prozac, Paxil, and Zoloft can cause teeth grinding, clenching, and TMJ headaches. Genes may also play a role in who develops chronic TMJ disorders.

More research is needed to understand TMJ disorders so that healthcare practitioners and TMJ specialists can better understand the safety and effectiveness of treatments for these types of jaw problems. Multi-disciplinary collaborations are important to develop a comprehensive and holistic approach for the care of those suffering with TMJ jaw pain. For more information about self-care practices for TMJ, check out the [TMJ blog](#).