

# MARCHWOOD DENTAL

*Dr. William Henry, Dr. Bahram Mostaghaci & Associates*

## **Rocobado Exercises**

These are exercises to retrain the musculature and ligaments of your temporomandibular (TMJ) joint. Do not continue doing them if pain increases. It is normal to be somewhat tender initially. Try to avoid clicking the jaw joint(s) if at all possible. These exercises can easily be done on your way to work, in your car while stopped at a light, while making supper or watching television. If you were referred for physiotherapy, continue to do these exercises unless otherwise instructed. Once you start feeling better, do not stop the exercises. That is the best time to keep the muscles in shape by continuing to do the exercises to avoid further injuries with normal everyday activities. Do every exercise six times before going to the next one. You can warm up and relax the muscles by using a moist, hot cloth: ie-moisten towel in microwave oven.

### **Exercise 1- Resistive opening:**

Place hand or clenched fist under chin  
and open jaw in a straight line  
against mild resistance – Do not push bottom jaw out & forward.

### **Exercise 2 – Resistive closing with mouth open:**

Grasp chin and pull downwards gently  
and close mouth against this resistance in a straight line.  
Avoid clicking the joint.

**Exercise 3** – Place hand on right side of jaw and gently push  
against jaw to the left side. Resist this movement with jaw.  
Do not move the lower jaw.  
Hold for a count of 6. Repeat for the left side.

**Exercise 4** – Open mouth with the tongue placed up high at the  
back of the roof of the mouth. Open in a straight line.

Use a mirror if you have to.  
It also helps to use toothpicks between the top and bottom  
front teeth. Try to line up the toothpicks as mouth opens and closes.

**DO EACH EXERCISE SIX TIMES EACH, SIX TIMES PER DAY.**

Continue to monitor your clenching and/or grinding habit. Think about your posture all the time. Straighten out your back and shoulders. Avoid slouching. Keep feet flat on the ground while sitting. Avoid crossing your legs. Keep physically fit.

Remember: The resting position of the jaw: Teeth slightly apart, tongue resting on the roof of your mouth.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TMJ/TMD PATIENTS**

If you have been diagnosed with TMJ or temporomandibular dysfunction (TMD), certain things have to be done in order for this to help resolve and prevent recurrence of your problems:

Avoid straining the jaw:

1. Avoid wide opening or yawning. Avoid clicking of the jaw or causing the jaw to get locked.
2. Use softer, mushy, pureed foods and non-chew foods such as pudding, yogurt, soups or omelets. No hard crunchy and chew foods like raw carrots, granola bars, steak, etc...
3. No clenching or grinding of the teeth during the day. Make yourself aware of where your jaw is at all times. The teeth should not touch except when chewing.
4. Avoid chewing gum, nail and cuticle biting, crushing ice cubes, playing wind musical instruments or moving the jaw in weird and different positions.
5. Avoid long dental appointments with your jaw open wide or dentistry altogether until the jaw gets better. You may have to postpone dental cleanings for a while.
6. Apply ice or a moist towel warmed up in the microwave to soothe and relax the muscles.
7. Watch your posture: ie – slouching over, sitting in uncomfortable chairs, neck extensions. Avoid forward head posture activities (crafts, sewing and computer work). Take frequent breaks when working at computers, office desk, ironing etc....

Rocobabo exercises are to be done in 6 sets of 6. **THIS IS MOST IMPORTANT.** Start gradually especially if you are sore. Do 2 or 3 exercises two to three times a day for a week and then add one or two more one or two times a day until up to 6 sets of 6 exercises at the end of 3-4 weeks. If it hurts, you are doing too much so slack off and when better start up more gently.

### **Bite splint therapy:**

1. Bottom jaw bite splints are usually more comfortable to wear than top jaw bite splints especially during the day and for talking.
2. Bite splints should be worn continuously during the day and night except to eat or brush.
3. After 3 to 5 months, you will start learning when you can and can't wear it and eventually you will probably only wear it at night or as required. If you wake up with headaches in the morning, then you are probably clenching during your sleep so you will definitely need a bite splint for night time use.

### **Adjunctive Therapy:**

1. Continue physiotherapy as recommended for the back, shoulder and neck. In some cases acupuncture or biofeedback therapy are helpful.
2. If you are being seen by a chiropractor, continue gentle chiropractic adjustments for the cervical spine. You may want to investigate craniosacral therapy as well.
3. If you are seeing a massage therapist, continue massage therapy where they work on trigger points and relieve you of muscular knots. You can do some of the massage yourself at home.

If severe or increasing clicking or locking occurs, consider an arthroscopy referral to Toronto to have jaw joint scope surgery done to get the cartilage in the jaw joint fixed up.

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