

**Physical Therapy Department**

# **Exercise Program for Pain and Dysfunction in the Head, Neck and Temporomandibular Joint**



## **OBJECTIVES:**

The objectives of this home self mobilization exercise program are that the patient should:

- 1) Learn a new postural position
- 2) Fight the "soft tissue memory" of the old position
- 3) Restore original muscle length
- 4) Restore normal body balance

## **GUIDELINES:**

- 1) Repetitions: 6 repetitions per set
- 2) Frequency: 6 times per day
- 3) Do not increase pain. Modify any exercise by decreasing intensity and/or number of repetitions if pain increases
- 4) Exercises can be done in any position
- 5) Exercise times should be staggered throughout the day

## 1. TONGUE REST POSITION

- a. Teeth slightly apart, jaw relaxed, tongue on the roof of the mouth in resting position.
- b. Make a “clucking” sound while maintaining the teeth slightly apart.

## 2. CONTROLLED OPENING

- a. Tongue in resting position
- b. Place index fingers over temporomandibular joints (See figure)
- c. Open the mouth as far as possible without allowing the tongue to leave the roof of the mouth
- d. Monitor your jaw opening in mirror to ensure that there is no deviation to either side
- e. Yawning, biting and chewing in this manner is very helpful (refer to step c)



## 3. ISOMETRIC STABILIZATION

- a. Place tongue in the rest position and maintain teeth slightly apart during the duration of the exercise
- b. Without allowing the jaw to move, apply resistance with one hand: first sideways to the left, second, sideways to the right, and third upward (See Fig)
- c. Hold the resistance in each direction for 5 seconds



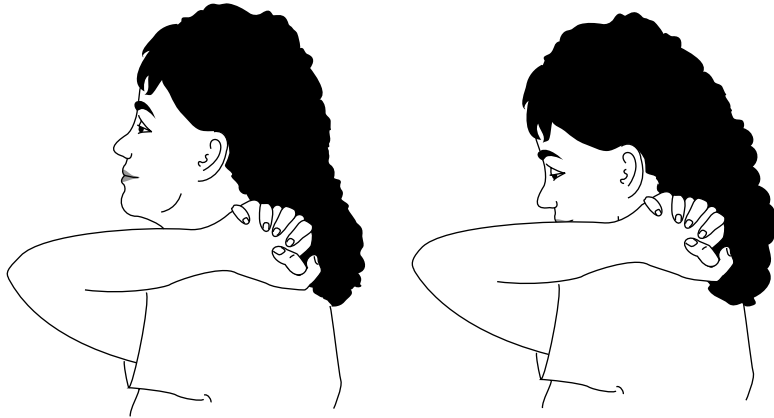
## 4. ISOTONIC STABILIZATION

- a. With the tongue on the roof of the mouth, place your chin on your fist and apply resistance as the jaw is slowly opened (See Fig.)
- b. Open the mouth as far as possible without allowing the tongue to leave the roof of the mouth
- c. While looking in the mirror, make sure that the lower jaw does not come forward or deviate to either side



## 5. HEAD FLEXION AND NECK EXTENSION

- a. Interlock fingers of both hands behind your neck
- b. While maintaining the neck upright, nod head forward and tuck your chin in (See Fig)



## 6. POSTURE EXERCISE

- a. Place head in upright position with chin tucked (See Fig)
- b. While maintaining position described in Step a, pull the shoulder blades together and downward (See Fig)
- c. Hold for a count of 5



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## \*7. OPENING

- a. Place thumb against upper front teeth and index finger against lower front teeth
- b. With a scissor-like motion, gently separate upper and lower teeth (See Fig)

\*Optional Exercise: Do only if you are having difficulty in opening



## DISENGAGEMENT

1. **Relax:** Stop what you are doing and release the tension in your face, neck, shoulders and back.
2. **Jaw:** Teeth slightly apart, lips together and tongue rests on the roof of your mouth. (Remember, the only time your teeth should normally touch is during swallowing and chewing.)
3. **Posture:** Head and shoulders should be pulled back and the chin should be tucked in.
4. **Breathing:** Place one hand on the upper chest and the other hand on the stomach. As you inhale, the hand on the stomach should move more than the hand on the chest. (Diaphragmatic breathing)

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