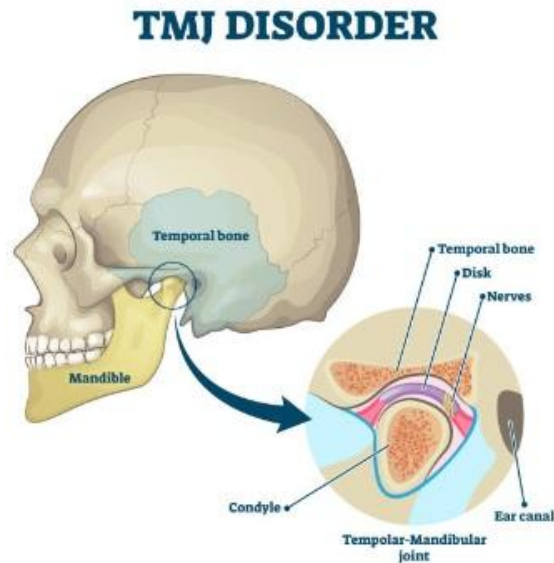


Self-Help Guide for TMJ Pain Relief

What is TMJ?

TMJ is the Temporomandibular Joint that connects the jaw to the skull. There is a TMJ in front of each ear. These highly used joints facilitate the movements needed for speaking, eating and facial expression.

TMJ dysfunction is experienced by a lot of people and can cause pain, abnormal jaw movements and joint noises.



What are the Main Symptoms of TMJ?

If you have TMJ dysfunction, you could have:

- discomfort or pain in the jaw, especially when eating, talking or yawning
- an aching pain in front of your ear, which may spread out further to your face
- 'locking' of the jaw, which makes it difficult to open or close your mouth
- a clicking or grating noise when chewing
- an uneven or uncomfortable bite
- headache particularly in the temple, eye or lower jaw region or earache
- neck or shoulder pain which may originate from the TMJ or be another symptom of tension
- blocked or ringing ears
- lightheadedness, dizziness or brain fog

What Causes TMJ Dysfunction?

TMJ dysfunction can be caused by any of:

- dental problems or even as a result of an extended period of sitting in the dental chair with your mouth forced open

- joint wear and tear (often osteoarthritis)
- injuries to the jaw, head or neck
- stress leading to jaw clenching and grinding your teeth
- poor posture – especially sleeping position
- fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis or even gout

But sometimes there is no known reason for TMJ pain.

What is the TACU Method?

We provide comprehensive treatment for TMJ pain and symptoms using the TACU Method we have developed.

We developed the TACU Method, which incorporates specific acupuncture, medicinal herbs and self-help coaching to provide immediate and long-lasting relief for TMJ pain and symptoms.



TMJ Acupuncture

The TACU method treats very specific points on the face to stimulate or relax specific facial nerves, muscles and joints. It also improves neck movement and function as the neck is often implicated in TMJ problems. And don't worry – the needles we use are very thin and very smooth and while you'll barely feel them, they do a very good job at treating the finer structures of the face.

TMJ Herbs

We use high-strength medicinal herbs to relax you and reduce pain and inflammation. Tension from stress is a very common cause of TMJ problems and our herbs can do wonders for this.

TMJ Self-Help

We teach you some very specific exercises, stretching and breathing techniques to not only help you get faster relief from symptoms, but to help ensure that you get long-lasting relief – even well after you've completed your treatment with us. This is all included with your treatment.

Other Important Strategies

- **Breathing** - always breathe through your nose for better oxygenation and to calm yourself.
- **Good jaw posture** - Lips gently together, teeth slightly apart and tongue gently on the roof of your mouth.
- **Chewing** - only chew food that your TMJ can comfortably handle. There should be no pain or fatigue. Think of it like a 'sprained jaw' - you just have to go easy on it until it recovers. If need be, choose softer foods and smaller pieces of food for easier chewing.
- **Yawning** - keep your lips together when you yawn to reduce how much you open your mouth.
- **Be aware** - of tension in your jaw. If you sense tension then actively try to release that tension through proper breathing (see video), relaxing the jaw or self massage.
- **Good head posture** - stand and sit tall to take pressure off your neck. In particular watch your posture when you are sitting at your desk using a computer, when using your phone (hold it up to your face height) and watching TV.
- **Sleeping posture** - sleep on your side if possible and use a contoured pillow. Put a pillow between your legs to prevent turning over. We recommend the Flexi Pillow Harmony:
<https://www.flexipillow.com.au/collections/harmony-alleviate/products/harmony-pillow>
- **Identify stressors** - stress is a major cause of muscle tension. Do what you can to identify stressors in your life and try to reduce the impact of these stressors. We can also refer you to experienced counsellors who can help you.
- **Deal with acute pain** - if you get acute pain you can use any of the following to help you:
 - Reduce inflammation by taking anti-inflammatories (if safe) and/or using ice packs.
 - Reduce severe pain by taking pain killers (if safe).
 - Reduce muscle spasms by taking your herbs and magnesium.
 - Limit how wide you open your mouth by eating soft foods of smaller bite sizes.
 - Use your breathing to relax the area.
 - If you are unsure about using any medications please consult your GP.

If you have any issues or questions during treatment, please feel free to contact us on 03 99881928.

We are here to help you and will do everything we can to get you back to being able to eat, talk, yawn, laugh and live normally again!