



# Body Awareness Physical Therapy

## The Body Beat

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### Do I Have TMJ?

**T**he temporomandibular joints (TMJ) are two of the most commonly used joints in the body. These joints are used every time we speak, chew, sip, and even kiss. Research has shown that fifty percent of the adult population will suffer from one or more signs of TMJ dysfunction at some time in their life. In addition, it has been found that women are affected three times as often as men. How does a person know if TMJ is a source of their pain? To understand TMJ dysfunction it is important to understand some of the anatomy. The jawbone (mandible) attaches to the skull (temporal bone) close to the ear. A small disc separates the two bones with the function of allowing freedom of movement, providing shock absorbing abilities, and lubrication of the joint. With TMJ dysfunction, often the disc is displaced either forward or backward resulting in a

“clicking” during opening or closing of the jaw.

A person suffering from the effects of TMJ may present with one or more of the following symptoms: pain in the chewing muscles (masseter and temporalis); headaches; dizziness; vertigo; earaches; ringing in the ears (tinnitus); toothaches, joint noise (clicking), and in very severe cases, a locking jaw which is usually the result of a slipped TMJ disc.

There are many contributing factors that can cause TMJ, this article will mention just a few. Forward head posture, poor chewing habits (chewing on one side), and grinding teeth are some of the primary causes. Other less obvious factors include non-functional repetitive movements such as biting nails, chewing gum, pursing and chewing lips or hair. These place a certain amount of stress and cause microtrauma to the joint, which, if left untreated, can lead

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to TMJ dysfunction. If you are questioning whether or not you have symptoms consistent with TMJ we recommend you see your physician or dentist. If diagnosed with TMJ, physical therapists are trained to assess the probable cause and treat the patient based on their individual needs.

Physical therapy has very good results with the management of TMJ. Some treatments include: postural repositioning, jaw exercises, modalities such as ultrasound, or wearing a night splint.

There is no need to live in pain. At Body Awareness Physical Therapy our staff is trained specifically to address the needs of those suffering from physical dysfunctions including TMJ. \*See anatomy on Page 2 in the Q'n'A Section.

# Q'N'A

Your questions answered by the Licensed Physical Therapists of Body Awareness Physical Therapy.

**Q:** How do I know if I have lockjaw?

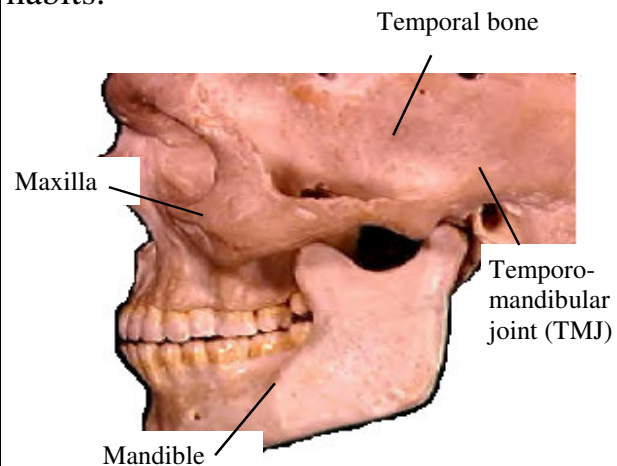
**A:** If you have lockjaw, your jaw would not be able to open or close all the way and limited by pain. Sometimes, lockjaw feels like your jaw does not want to move at all.

**Q:** What is the normal width for a mouth to open?

**A:** For men, the average mouth opening is 45-50 mm and for women 40-45 mm. As a general rule of thumb, when the mouth is open all the way with the head in neutral, four fingers should fit through the opening.

**Q:** Is TMJ permanent?

**A:** TMJ is not a permanent condition as long as the cause is not structural, meaning caused by bone or disc. Most often it is a mechanical problem and can be addressed by changing posture or habits.



## BODY AWARENESS GRADUATE OF THE MONTH

### Graduate of the Month: Bill Blanton

Bill came to Body Awareness Physical Therapy after undergoing left shoulder surgery.

His initial pain in his shoulder started slowly but eventually kept him from playing golf, exercising and being able to lift his arm up over his head.

After four years of dealing with the pain, he finally had the surgery, a few months of physical therapy and a good home



exercise program and now Bill is back to the golf courses and feeling great.

*"A big thanks to Chrissie and her group for professional, knowledgeable care during physical therapy following shoulder surgery. The therapy was critical for my earlier than expected return to the golf course and normal activity."* - **Bill Blanton**

# Community Corner

Check out our new Pilates & Yoga Mat Classes and Massage Therapy Schedule in our San Clemente Location.

Tuesdays  
7:00 am Pilates for Golf & Tennis  
8:15 am Pilates Mat  
9:30 am Pre-Natal Mat  
10:45 am Pilates for Golf & Tennis  
12:00 pm Pilates Mat

Thursdays  
Pilates for Golf & Tennis  
Pilates Mat  
Pre-Natal Mat  
Pilates for Golf & Tennis  
Pilates Mat

Saturdays  
8:00 am Yoga Mat  
9:15 am Pilates Mat  
10:30 am Pilates Mat

*Five participants per class.  
Each class is one hour long.  
\$20 per class or ask about our  
special package prices.*

Private and Duet Pilates appointments available Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm and Saturdays 8:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Deep Tissue, Relaxation and Pregnancy Massages available Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00 pm to 7:00 pm.

Call (949) 366-3362 to schedule an appointment or class.

Have a question for our **Q’N’A** column or a suggestion on what you would like to see in the Body Awareness *Body Beat*?

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# Healthy Hints

1. Posture plays a significant roll in TMJ dysfunction. 85% of people suffering from TMJ present with a forward head posture. A good way to correct forward head posture is to imagine a string is attached to the back of your head and you are being pulled toward the ceiling. Your chin should be level, not tucked in or jutted out.
2. A good exercise to do for the TMJ dysfunction is to maintain the head and neck in neutral position. The tip of the tongue is placed lightly against the roof of the mouth without making contact with the back of the teeth or either jaw. Open and close jaw in a "pain free" range of motion.
3. If TMJ is a condition you have been suffering from, or if your not sure if your symptoms are consistent with TMJ dysfunction, please allow us to evaluate and get you on the road to recovery. Those suffering form TMJ may experience one or more of the following conditions: ringing in the ears, popping of the jaw with mouth opening or closing, dizziness, headaches, decreased range of motion, locking jaw, toothache, and pain and stiffness in the muscles of the jaw, and neck. TMJ is a treatable condition and we at Body Awareness are trained to address the dysfunctions leading to TMJ problems.



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