



Manhattan PT
MRPT PHYSICAL THERAPY

Winter Wellness Tips

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Is My Headache Caused by My Jaw?

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Believe it or not a lot of headaches are caused by problems in the jaw (TMJ).

Dysfunctions of the TMJ are more common than you think and are often misdiagnosed by doctors and therapists who are not specialized in the treatment of orofacial pain and headaches.

Major contributors to TMJ dysfunctions are jaw clenching and grinding during the day and at night. This causes over-activation of the chewing muscles and can lead to chronic pain in the head and neck. Some more specific symptoms are:

- ear pain
- back pain
- jaw pain
- headaches
- tooth pain
- limited opening or closing of the mouth
- cracking or popping noises when opening and closing the jaw
- pain when chewing food



What should I do if you have jaw pain?



We recommend physical therapy with a therapist who is trained and specializes in the treatment of jaw pain. The therapists at Manhattan PT have taken extensive course work and have years of experience in treating jaw / TMJ dysfunctions.

Along with manual therapy and exercise, your therapist at Manhattan PT will analyze your

posture and try to figure out what everyday activities may be contributing to your dysfunction. Once these problems have been identified, you will be able focus on changing these behaviors to help achieve a longer lasting recovery.

Successful treatment of TMJ dysfunctions often require a multi-disciplined approach, meaning you may need to see more than one health care professional to get rid of your pain. There are dentists who specialize in TMJ treatment and should have extra training in the treatment of orofacial pain. We are members of the American Academy of Orofacial Pain, and we only refer to other members. A night appliance may be used to protect your jaw from clenching and grinding and to prevent wearing down your tooth surfaces. At some point during your treatment program it may be necessary to add trigger point injections and / or medication. If you do have more then one health care professional treating your TMJ pain, it is important for them to communicate and form a cohesive plan in your recovery program.



TMJ Tip from Manhattan PT:

Take a moment to check your jaw. How does it feel?
Are the muscles on the side of your face sore?

Here is a way to relax your jaw muscles:

Sit comfortably in a chair with your back supported. Say the name "Emma" and let your teeth stay apart at the end of the name. Maintain this position while resting the tip of your tongue behind the upper front row of teeth. Try this relaxation technique whenever you have a chance or when you feel your jaw muscles tightening up.

If you have any questions about TMJ Pain and how we can help you, please feel free to email us at MRPTny@aol.com.