

A relaxation regime for Jaw and Facial Pain

People who suffer from face pain often clench or grind their teeth at night or in times of stress. This overuse of the face muscles makes pain worse. It is important to learn to “switch off” or “relax” the muscles regularly during the day.

RELAXATION EXERCISE:

This can be achieved using a sticky “**red dot**” placed somewhere as a visual reminder to relax. For best relaxation you must do the following in the order shown:

Posture	(to correct your posture see next page)
Tongue up	(rest your tongue gently on the roof of your mouth)
Teeth apart	(separate your back teeth slightly)
Relax	(“let go” of your face muscles)

The face muscles are now completely relaxed and you need to hold this for as long as possible.

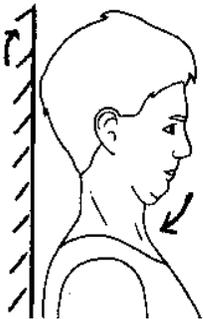
Your Physiotherapist may place a sticky **red dot** on the face of your watch or on your mobile phone as a reminder to do the relaxation during a busy day. After 2-3 weeks of practice you will find that you have developed this good habit and no longer need the reminder red dot.

TO CORRECT YOUR POSTURE

There is a close link between pain in the neck, head and jaw. Poor posture, particularly **Head Forward Posture**, can increase the activity in the muscles of the face and neck. It can also affect how the jaw moves and the rest position of the jaw.

Good posture therefore puts the jaw back into a correct position, relaxes the face, head and neck muscles and allows the jaw to move normally.

To be able to move into good posture from head forward posture we often need to do a stretching exercise that gently releases the tight structures that hold us in head forward posture. This exercise can be described as a “head slide up the wall”. Rest your head on the wall and gently tuck your chin in and allow your head to slide up the wall. This should be repeated daily for **10 times and held for 10 seconds twice a day as shown:**



Once you can do this “head sliding exercise” it is possible to correct your posture easily allowing you to do the facial relaxation more effectively.

Normal posture is putting yourself into a position that makes you as tall as possible and then **relaxing just a little**. Remember normal posture relaxes the face, head and neck muscles and this will help to control your pain.