Caught Clenching? Give Your Jaw a Break

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LifeMotion Physical Therapy

Orthopedic | Pelvic Health | Balance

Caught Clenching? Give Your Jaw a Break

Are Your Teeth Touching Right Now?

Take a moment to notice. Are you pressing your teeth together? Does your jaw feel tight?

At rest, your upper and lower teeth generally should be slightly apart. If you caught yourself clenching, gently let your jaw relax. It's an easy habit to miss while concentrating, driving, or getting through a busy day.

If that tension comes with jaw pain, painful clicking, or difficulty chewing or opening your mouth, physical therapy may help.

These symptoms may be related to **temporomandibular disorders (TMD)**, conditions affecting the jaw joints, surrounding muscles, or both. You may have heard this called "TMJ," but that actually stands for temporomandibular joint, which is the joint connecting your lower jaw to your skull. You have one on each side, just in front of your ears.

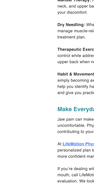
Could Your Symptoms Be Related to TMD?

TMD can feel different from person to person. You might notice:

- **Pain with everyday activities**, such as chewing, yawning, or talking
- **A sore or tired jaw**, especially when you wake up or toward the end of the day
- **Painful clicking or popping** when opening or closing your mouth
- **Difficulty opening comfortably**, or a jaw that catches or locks
- **Aching around your jaw, face, or temples**

Some people also experience neck discomfort or ear pain or fullness. These symptoms can have other causes, so an evaluation can help determine whether your jaw may be involved.

What if your jaw clicks but doesn't hurt? Clicking without pain or limited movement is common and usually doesn't need treatment.



Why We Look Beyond Your Jaw

The jaw, neck, and upper back are closely connected. Mobility, muscle tension, and movement in these areas may play a role in jaw discomfort.

At LifeMotion Physical Therapy, our TMD evaluation includes more than simply looking at how your jaw opens and closes. We also screen your neck and upper back to determine whether they may be contributing to your symptoms.

We also look at everyday habits you may not even notice. Teeth clenching, posture, sleep position, stress-related tension, and repetitive movements during the day can all contribute to irritation in your jaw joint. By examining these habits and finding practical ways to modify them can be an important part of treatment.

How Can Physical Therapy Help?

Your treatment is based on what we find during your evaluation and may include:

Manual Therapy: Hands-on treatment to help improve mobility of the jaw, neck, and upper back and ease muscle tension that may be contributing to your discomfort.

Dry Needling: When appropriate, dry needling may be included to help manage muscle-related pain in the jaw, head, or neck as part of your overall treatment plan.

Therapeutic Exercise: Specific exercises to improve jaw mobility and control while addressing strength, mobility, and movement of the neck and upper back when needed.

Habit & Movement Training: Sometimes an important part of treatment is simply becoming aware of what your jaw is doing throughout the day. We'll help you identify habits and positions that may be keeping the area irritated and give you practical strategies to modify them.

Make Everyday Life More Comfortable

Jaw pain can make eating, talking, yawning, and other everyday activities uncomfortable. Physical therapy can help identify and address factors contributing to your symptoms.

At LifeMotion Physical Therapy, we'll work with you to build a personalized plan to ease discomfort, improve movement, and help you feel more confident managing your symptoms.

If you're dealing with jaw pain, painful clicking, or difficulty opening your mouth, call LifeMotion Physical Therapy at 918-574-2575 to schedule an evaluation. We look forward to helping you feel more comfortable!

Welcome Angie to the LifeMotion Team!

We're excited to welcome **Angie Tess, Scheduling Coordinator**, to our administrative team! You'll see her friendly face in Suite 301 and hear her helping you schedule appointments over the phone or online. Get to know her below, and say hello at your next visit!

Angie joins LifeMotion after more than 35 years serving the Tulsa community through public education. Throughout her career, she supported students, families, and school leaders with compassion, organization, and a commitment to helping others.

She brings that same care to LifeMotion, helping clients navigate scheduling and feel welcome from their first phone call to every visit that follows.

Celebrating Nikhil: Next Stop, University of Michigan!

Huge shoutout to Nikhil! You faced challenges head-on and showed up for physical therapy ready to work hard. Now you're a state champion in tennis and heading into your freshman year of college! Our team has truly enjoyed working with you and cheering you on. Best of luck in Ann Arbor!

Want to learn more about his journey? Read Nikhil's story and his road to becoming a champion.

Google Reviews

I had a devastating leg injury, early prediction was that I would be out of golf for over six months. I have been working with Trevor McKay and Ryan Smith and their team for the past 5 weeks. I have been seeing the team for my golf swing and my leg rehabilitation. Yesterday I played golf at Cedar Ridge Orthopedic Surgeon released me to play golf, and I will gradually begin to play under the advice of Ryan and Trevor. I have no doubt that the Life Motion Team has accelerated my recovery. I work with Ryan a lot, and she is great. I recommend this practice wholeheartedly!! - Glenn D.

★★★★★

We have a special needs daughter with balance issues who has had PT many times without much improvement, but she has certainly improved with the PT at LifeMotions. Heather is amazing, knowing just how to motivate her! - Nancy W.

★★★★★

LifeMotion Brings Balance Challenges to the Community

Our team had a fantastic time at the UPExpos and Wellness Expo last month! Visitors stopped by to put their balance to the test, ask questions about dizziness, and learn how physical therapy may help.

Interested in a balance or dizziness screening? Visit our website or call us at **918-574-2575** to learn more!

Stand Tall with Us for Balance Awareness Week!

We're taking inspiration from our feathered friends to put balance in the spotlight! LifeMotion celebrated Balance Awareness Week with a little flamingo fun and a focus on feeling steady and confident in everyday life. Click over to our Instagram to see what we shared, and talk with our team if you have concerns about your balance.

Your Home Exercises, Right on Your Phone!

Keep your personalized exercise program close at hand with the **LifeMotion Physical Therapy app**. Watch video demonstrations of your prescribed exercises, schedule appointments, track your progress, earn achievements, and securely message your provider from your phone or tablet.

Getting started is easy:

1. Once your provider assigns your program, look for an email from **no-reply@vimeo.com** with instructions to create your account.
2. Download the **LifeMotion Physical Therapy** app from the Apple App Store or Google Play.
3. Sign in using your new account!

Need a hand? Ask your LifeMotion provider to help you get started.

DOWNLOAD THE LIFEMOTION APP

A Message From Ryan

As we kick off September, I am thrilled to share some exciting developments at LifeMotion! We are continuously looking for new ways to better serve our community, which is why we are proud to expand our service line with the addition of specialized care for Temporomandibular Disorders (TMD). If you or a loved one are dealing with jaw tightness, clicking, or pain, our team is here to help you find relief and get back to living comfortably.

Community support and safety remain at the heart of everything we do. We recently completed over 500 preseason concussion screens for the West Side Soccer Alliance (WSSA), helping keep young athletes safe on the pitch this fall. It was also wonderful connecting with so many of you at the UPExpos and Wellness Expo, where our team offered balance screens to answer questions about dizziness, and shared how physical therapy can help you stay steady and confident.

Our LifeMotion family continues to grow! Please join me in officially welcoming Sophie Stout, DPT, and Reagan Hall, PTA, who are now in the clinic. Sophie has joined our Orthopedic and Pelvic health team, while Reagan is expanding our Balance Team, and they are both already making a great impact caring for our patients.

Finally, nothing brings our team more joy than seeing our patients achieve their goals. Please join me in congratulations to Nikhil on becoming a state tennis champion and heading off to the University of Michigan! It was an absolute honor to be part of his healing journey, and we're cheering him on in Ann Arbor (even if they bleed my Sooners).

Thank you for your continued trust and support of our clinic and team. As always, whether you, a loved one, or a friend is facing sports, orthopedic, pelvic, balance, or jaw/TMD challenges, LifeMotion is only a call or click away.

Call us at **918-574-2575** or visit **yourlifemotion.com** - we look forward to seeing you soon!

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