



OCCUSAL REHABILITATION CENTRE

BITE, TMJ, HEAD AND NECK PROBLEM MANAGEMENT

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LIPS TOGETHER AND TEETH APART

One of the most important steps in breaking the habit of clenching and grinding your teeth is to become conscious of when it occurs and, of course, to stop doing it.

An excellent way to avoid clenching is to learn to keep your lips together and your teeth apart. This simple step will not only make it impossible to clench your teeth, but more importantly, it will allow your tense jaw and facial muscles to relax. It also permits more normal positioning of the components of your jaw joints.

The more conscious you become of this basic relaxation procedure, the faster you will be on your way to mastering a beneficial method of overcoming a harmful habit. Gradually you will find that you awaken without your teeth clamped together. You must persevere as such ingrained habits do not vanish overnight.

Make a conscious effort to separate your teeth at the same time that your lips are closed and you are breathing through your nose. Repeat to yourself several times a day: "LIPS TOGETHER, TEETH APART." This will relax your facial muscles and improve your appearance and expression.

Make notes or stickers for yourself and post them where you clench and grind your teeth. Here are some suggestions that have worked for other patients:

Do you clench or grind when:

- Driving? Place a sticker on the dashboard of your car. Be sure not to cover anything important and to keep your eyes on the road!
- Working out? Put a sticker on your work out mirror or other at home work-out equipment. If you work out at a gym, try putting one on your reusable water bottle or the strap of your heart rate monitor.
- Using the computer? Make a colourful sticky note and place it on your monitor or keyboard! Make it something eye catching and creative so you don't forget.
- You're tired? Place reminders on your bathroom mirror for while you're getting ready for your day or for bed and also around your kitchen (on the fridge or range hood perhaps?) for while you're cooking dinner after a long day.

Think of your notes as a string around your finger. It's a simple reminder and with lots of practice soon you won't need it at all! Good luck!