

## **TMJ**

*by Glenn Rexroad*

The temporomandibular joint is unique. It is a complex system of bones, muscles, teeth, nerves and blood vessels. Technically, it is a paired joint connecting the mandible (jaw) to the symmetrically paired temporals (skull bones). The mandible and temporal bones fit together and slide on an articular disc which form a pair of hinge-like joints. Both joints must work in synchrony with each other. Therefore if one joint becomes dysfunctional it influences and stresses the other. There should be no clicking or popping as you open and close your mouth. Popping, grinding, or clicking of the temporomandibular joint indicates that it is not functioning properly.

### **Studies**

An estimated 14 million people in the United States suffer from TMJ. TMJ dysfunction can happen to any one and at any age, however 60 to 80 percent of these people are women between ages 30 to 50.

### **Symptoms**

TMJ dysfunction can cause symptoms such as headaches, pain in or above the ears, tooth ache, ringing in the ears, dizziness, clicking or popping sounds when opening or closing your mouth, stiff or painful neck, back pain, and pain across the shoulders.

## **American Dental Association - TMJ problems lead to bad bites not the reverse**

### **What are some of the causes TMJ Dysfunction?**

There can be many different reasons for TMJ. Causes include: trauma to the jaw or joint itself, any head trauma no matter how small, whiplash, clenching or grinding your teeth (bruxism), poor posture (forward head position) all lead to imbalances in muscle tonus and muscle spasm as does cradling the phone between your shoulder and your ear.

Many people believe that the leading cause of TMJ is malocclusion (bad bite), and the treatment is often geared toward an attempt to correct the bite with the use of bite splints.

### **However, the American Dental Association states that scientific literature showed that TMJ problems lead to bad bites not the reverse.**

And that the accumulated scientific evidence favors a more conservative therapy. \* **According to Dr. John E. Upledger many dentists prefer CS Therapy for TMJ over the use of bite splints.\*2**

\*Page 5&6 (TMJ the jaw connection Page 6)

\*2 "Craniosacral Therapy II Beyond the Dura, by John E. Upledger, D.O., F.A.A.O."

**Disclaimer** - A primary medical professional should be consulted for diagnosis and medical advice, as head and neck pain can be an indication of a serious condition.

## **Often balancing the cranial bones with Craniosacral Therapy can correct the problem.**

### **What is Craniosacral Therapy?**

The principles of CST are based on the research of John E. Upledger, D.O., F.A.A.O which is detailed in his book "Craniosacral Therapy" CST is a specific, systematic, scientifically based, noninvasive treatment of the craniosacral system for soft tissue pain, injuries and dysfunction. CST is a gentle method of soft tissue manipulation.

Practitioners of CranioSacral Therapy use a light touch, between five to ten grams (about the weight of a

nickel), to evaluate and release restrictions in order to bring synchrony and balance the cranial bones. As the mandible (jaw) and paired temporal bones are aligned symmetrically both joints function in balance and with each other.

Most people report feeling nothing more than subtle sensations during a typical session.

CST is effective therapy for a wide range of medical problems associated with pain and dysfunction, including:

- Temporomandibular Joint Syndrome (TMJ)
- Migraine Headaches
- Chronic Neck and Back Pain
- Motor-Coordination Impairments
- Colic
- Autism
- Central Nervous System Disorders
- Orthopedic Problems
- Traumatic Brain and Spinal Cord Injuries
- Scoliosis
- Infantile Disorders
- Learning Disabilities
- Chronic Fatigue
- Emotional Difficulties
- Stress and Tension-Related Problems
- Fibromyalgia and other Connective-Tissue Disorders
- Post-Surgical Dysfunction
- Neurovascular or Immune Disorders
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

I have trained with Jay Sandwiess D.O, and Paul St John, L.M.T.

### **What is Neuromuscular therapy?**

Neuromuscular Therapy (NMT) is a comprehensive program of soft tissue manipulation that balances the body's central nervous system with the musculoskeletal system. NMT is a specific, systematic, scientifically based, noninvasive treatment of soft tissue pain and injuries. The principles of NMT are based on the research of Drs. Janet Travell and David Simons, which is detailed in their books, "Myofascial Pain and Dysfunction: The Trigger Point Manual". Their research identified the fundamental causes of pain: that trigger points exist predictably in the muscles of all individuals and that Neuromuscular Therapy is an effective treatment of soft tissue pain.

### **NMT addresses the five principles that cause pain:**

- 1. Ischemia** - lack of sufficient blood, pain is 80% ischemic in nature  
NMT restores blood flow to soft tissues
- 2. Trigger Points** - areas of high neurological activity that project pain to other areas  
NMT eliminates trigger points that cause referred pain
- 3. Nerve compression and/or entrapment caused by muscles**  
NMT elevates nerve compression and nerve entrapment balancing the CNS (brain, spinal cord and nerves)  
with the anatomical structure of the musculoskeletal system.
- 4. Postural distortion** - slouching, high or rounded shoulder, Lordosis, Scoliosis, etc.  
NMT applied specifically restores postural alignment
- 5. Biomechanical dysfunction** - improper movement and lose of range of motion (ROM)  
NMT restores proper biomechanics and flexibility (ROM) to the musculoskeletal system.

### **Neuromuscular Dentistry**

There's a new way to prevent and correct dental problems. The method called neuromuscular dentistry gets to the root of the problem by treating the muscles and joints of the jaw.

Dentists are now using it (NMT) to prolong the life of tooth restorations and decrease the amount of pain during and after dental procedures.

Dr. Sean Kenniff

**Combining NMT & CST provides the best possible treatments for the best possible outcome.**

## **The Rexroad Therapy Program is goal Oriented**

How we accomplish goals varies and depends on each individual person and their individual situation. Analysis of each individual person helps us develop a plan to accomplish the therapy goals. Ideally, a craniosacral therapist and a dentist should work in collaboration with TMJ problems.

the mobilization, decompression and balancing of the temporal bones, the mandible (jaw), and the temporomandibular joints themselves.

Combining **Neuromuscular Therapy and Craniosacral Therapy** in order to bring the TMJ into balance with the craniosacral and musculoskeletal systems.

While working within the pain tolerance of each individual, RT breaks the stress-tension-pain syndrome by eliminating one or more segments of the cycle, which permits the body to heal itself. In this way Rexroad therapy is an important outcome based therapy that also works well in conjunction with other medical specialties in the treatment of pain and injuries. Rexroad Therapy is an effective and economically feasible method of treatment.

## **CranioSacral Therapy is a gentle**

### **I. Assessment -**

#### **1. Posture - The posture should be in Anatomical (structural) Homeostasis.**

The cranial bones are examined for proper position and jaw movement. Often balancing the cranial bones can correct the problem.

#### **2. Biomechanics - Locomotion should be in Biomechanical Homeostasis.**

The muscles of mastication are examined to determine the balance in tonus between the muscles that move the jaw and the joint activity through its range of motion. Often balancing the joint's muscle tonus can correct the problem.

**II. Treatment -** An individual treatment plan is developed utilizing Craniosacral and Neuromuscular Therapies.

**A.** In order to insure the fastest possible recovery, without re-injury, certain steps should be followed in the proper order. If rehabilitation is attempted without following this order reinjury and setbacks usually occur. The steps for proper rehabilitation of soft tissue injuries are called the Stages of Rehabilitation:

1. Eliminate spasms and hyper contraction in the tissues (Therapy)
2. Restore proper biomechanics (movement)
3. Restore flexibility to the tissues (stretching)
4. Rebuild the strength of the injured tissues (exercise)
5. Build endurance (conditioning exercises)

**B.** Second, the frequency and regularity of the treatments is important, and is determined by the continued analysis of how each individual responds. In the beginning, most people respond well to

one hour treatments once a week. As they progress, over time, the treatments are spread out. The goal for all clients is to become pain free, both at rest and with movement, without requiring weekly treatments.

**III. Maintenance** - It is important to continually replenish our health. In order to maintain health once the therapeutic goals are accomplished, regular NMT check ups and relaxation massage once every four to six weeks can assist the client to be able to maintain health and well-being. Relaxation massage has helped many people manage depression, anxiety, and emotional disorders and renewed spirits for those who are stressed, grieving, or simply uninspired.

The American Academy of Pain Management recognizes Neuromuscular as an effective treatment for soft tissue injury (such as a muscle strain).