



Home Therapy for Releasing Mouth Muscles (Internal Pterygoid Release)



Fig. 1 This area, along with the tip should be used to apply pressure.



Fig. 2 This is where your thumb should be placed before applying pressure and massaging the area.

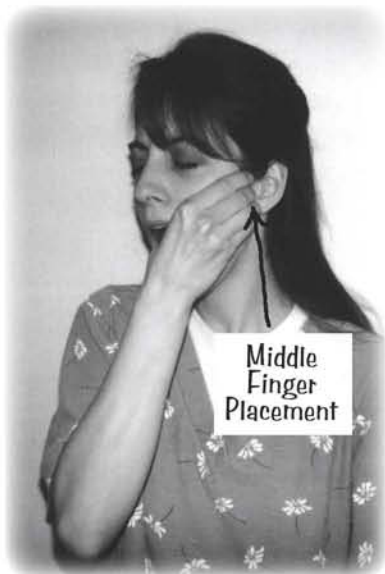


Fig. 3 Here we see our patient using their right hand on the left side of the face. Note the placement of the middle finger.



Fig. 4 Here we see our patient using their left hand on the right side of the face.

This exercise is to be used by the patient in order to facilitate the orthopedic / orthodontic / TMJ changes we are attempting to make. The exercise will assist in releasing the muscles in the jaw, which in turn reduces the body's resistance to the therapeutic force of your appliances and braces. The release of these muscles will allow the work to progress faster and more thoroughly (which can reduce treatment time and cost).

Important Note: The more often you do this exercise the less it will be uncomfortable, this includes a reduction in the "gag" reflex!!! In fact, when doing it 2-3 times per day you can see a change within a few days.

Begin by using the opposite hand of the side of the mouth you will be working on (Rt. hand, left side of mouth / Lft hand, right side of mouth **Fig. 3 &4**). Place pad of your right thumb in the back of the left side of the mouth, with your fingers positioned loosely around the outside of the left side of your face. Your thumb pad (**Fig. 1 & 2**) needs to be beyond where your last tooth is located. The idea is to have your thumb centered between your upper and lower jaw, and behind the teeth. *If you feel a gag reflex, you are in the right spot.*

Your middle finger should be directly in front of your ear (**Fig. 3**). You'll know your finger is in the correct position when you can feel the movement of your jawbone while you open and close your mouth. When you open or close you should feel the top of your lower jaw move downward (when opening) or upward (when closing). Massage both the outside and inside simultaneously as if you are trying to push the thumb and middle finger together. Squeeze as hard as your tolerance will allow, massaging the area with a circular motion, at first this can be a little painful. Try and hold this position and massage the area for ten to fifteen seconds per side, being sure to breathe deeply (but slowly) through the mouth and into the belly.

(see other side of page).

This exercise should be done 2 -3 times per day (more often if needed for: release of tension, elimination / reduction of TMJ pain, at the onset of a headache, when experiencing discomfort with appliance usage, or for relieving neck pain). Some convenient times to do this exercise daily would be: while lying in bed in the morning or at night, during your shower, anytime before / after brushing your teeth, or any other time you can manage it.

Belly Breathing:

Many people without knowing it breathe into their chest instead of their belly. You can figure out if you are one of these people through a very simple experiment:

- 1.) Put one hand on your belly, and one hand on your chest.
- 2.) Breathe deeply, while watching your hands.
- 3.) Answer the question, "Which hand moved more?" That is where you are breathing into.

Chest breathing contributes to tension in the head, neck and shoulders, and encourages a weak diaphragm. On the other hand, belly breathing helps increase the flow of many fluids (blood & brain fluid) it also assists in your digestion due to the movement it produces in the body.

One very simple exercise to promote belly breathing take a tennis ball or softball, place it between the breast bone, and your belly button and lay down on the bed on your stomach, and breath deeply into the ball, forcing your stomach muscles out. For better results during the exercise exhale as deeply as possible.

An Important Exercise that Releases the muscles of the diaphragm:

- 1.) While Standing; bend the knees slightly, placing fingertips lightly under your ribs near the sternum.
- 2.) Bend at the waist and inhale deeply into stomach.
- 3.) As you exhale relax your belly (abdominal area) and let your fingers reach / massage deeply under your ribcage (This may be quite uncomfortable- which means it is very important to do). Exhale as deeply as you can, then hold your breath out for as long as possible, massaging the entire time.
- 4.) When inhaling, stop massaging and let your abdominal area expand freely. Repeat the entire process 3 times. Do this as often as you can.

(Has been known to allieviate some of the symptoms of heartburn, constricted chest, & difficulty breathing)