

## 5 Jaw Release Techniques & 2 Stretches

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The following 5 things are to help relax your jaw. If you're pregnant, please make sure you use light pressure with all self massage.

1. Find the spot on the lower jaw by clenching your teeth together. The area that bulges (about the size of a large marble) is where you're going to press. Using the middle finger on each hand, or thumbs, press the "bulge" (don't clench teeth anymore) with the palm side of your finger, not the fingertip. Only use about 10% of your strength, you don't want to bruise the area. Hold, with steady pressure, while you count to 60 or even up to 100, OR until you feel your whole jaw relax.

You can do this one daily.

2. A. You should only do this one 1-2 times per week or less. ALWAYS at least skip a day before doing this one again. Place your hands on the side of your face, with palms near your cheekbones and fingertips up towards the top of your head. Now, clench your teeth together. You should feel a bulge, on each side, that runs from your eye area towards your ear area, about 2-4 inches long. That's the 'bulge' you're going to work. This muscle is the Temporalis. Bring the index finger and middle finger on each hand together. Place the two fingers under the lower edge of the bulge, near the eye. You're going to press in towards your head and up under the edge of the bulge. Your fingers will not move. What moves is your jaw. Open your mouth, slowly, all the way and close it (can close quickly). You should feel that muscle/bulge drag under your fingers. If it really hurts, you're pushing too hard, ease up on the pressure. Now, repeat this process 4 or 5 more times, each time moving back towards your ear. Then, with your index and middle fingers still together, move them up to the top edge of the 'bulge', still near your ear, pressing in towards your head, and slowly open your jaw all the way. Your fingers will not move, but you should feel that muscle/bulge drag under your fingers. Repeat this process 4 or 5 more times, each time moving forward towards your eyes. Working the top edge of this muscle/bulge (Temporalis) usually hurts more than the lower edge. Feel free to ease up on the pressure here. This one is called Myofascial Release and this method of Myofascial Release 'strips' the muscle of its fascial adhesions and is pretty invasive. Keep this one to a minimum.

B. An alternative to the Myofascial Release is to just rub the muscles mentioned above, the Temporalis muscles, in a circular motion, with light to medium pressure.

3. A. Scrub your head. Lol. Take your fingertips and scrub your scalp as if you're washing your hair and use pretty good pressure and scrub quickly. This relaxes all the muscles of your scalp. You can do this as many times a day as you want! After scrubbing the scalp, I put my fingertips above my ears and push up on my scalp/skull, which gives relief to the ear canal (hearing and balance). This massages those muscles near the ear. Also, feel free to put one of your fingers or your thumb just inside the ear canal and move it in the 4 directions: pull up, pull forward, pull down and push back.

B. Pull your hair. Sometimes I pull mine gently and sometimes I tug pretty hard. The reason this feels good is that the jaw muscles are very strong (the ones you worked in #1 and #2) and they can compress your cranial plates (bones: temporal bone, sphenoid, parietal and the frontal bone) and shift them, minutely, forward and down towards your face. This is what can cause headaches, some sinus issues and can even effect hormones as the Ethmoid & possibly the Sphenoid are shifted and could be pressing on the pituitary gland (controller of hormones), which is behind your eyes. Your hair is attached to the muscles on your head and those muscles are attached to your skull. So, pulling the hair can encourage the skull bones to decompress, minutely, allowing a tiny bit more room between brain and skull, relieving the pressure. You can do this as many times a day as you want!

4. This one will help to shift the Temporal bone back into place, also shifting the Jugular Foramen back into place (feel free to look that up on Wikipedia). Over clenching of the jaw can cause the Masseter (cheek muscle that you worked in #1) and the Temporalis (muscle up between eye and ear that you worked in #2) to shift the Temporal bone down in the front and up in the back, to where it sort of teeter totters over your ear canal. The shift of the Temporal bone can slightly unseat the seam between it and the Occipital bone (back of head), especially affecting the Jugular Foramen (a channel/"tunnel", created when Temporal bone touches Occiput, and that 3 Cranial nerves and the Jugular

vein come through). So, either lay down & relax your head & neck or, sitting up, look up at the ceiling so you can relax your head back. Place your fingers at the back of your head, fingertips touching, 2 fingers on your skull and 2 fingers on your neck. Drag your fingers, slowly, towards your ears (just follow the base of your skull). Do this 3-4 times. If you can keep your head & neck in a relaxed position, this can help to shift that Temporal bone back into place, freeing up the possibly 'pinched' Cranial nerves and Jugular vein.

5. Open your jaw as wide as you can and hold for a slow count of 10, then close. Open your mouth just a little bit and you're going to move the lower jaw in 4 directions. With each movement, try to extend your jaw as far as you can. First, jut it straight out. Second, pull it back towards the back of your throat. Third, move your jaw as far to the left as you can. Fourth, move your jaw as far to the right as you can. Then, one more where you open as wide as you can and close. You can do this as many times a day as you want since you're not pushing on any muscles! Best thing about this is you can do while driving or if your hair and make-up is done and you don't want to mess them up.

The following 2 stretches can be done while laying in bed, I do them when I wake up in the morning.

(low back/glute/ham/calf)

1. Sit up in bed. You're going to let the outside leg hang off the bed for stability. The inside leg is just stretched out in front of you, relaxed. Hang your head over your knee. You're still relaxed. The only action you do here is to push your heel into the bed with only 10% of your strength, while you're hanging your head over your knee, and count slowly to 10. The point here is to put the muscles on the back of your leg, hip and low back into a stretch. Then, by pushing your heel into the bed, you're trying to contract/engage those same muscles. They get overwhelmed and let go. After you've counted to 10, sit up and count to 5. Repeat this whole process 2 more times. Doing this 3 times locks in the message to relax. Doing this stretch first relaxes the hip enough so the next exercise is easier.

(Hip)

2. Next, Lay back down. Take the inside leg and bring your knee up to your chest and then cross it over your body and let the foot hang out over the side of the bed. This is stretching your glutes. Let's say your inside leg is your left leg. So, your left leg is crossed over your body and hanging off the bed. Take your right hand and hold onto your left knee throughout the whole exercise. The action is to try to bring your left leg (with knee still bent and right hand still holding on to it), back where it belongs, on the left side of your body, using only 10% of your strength. Do this for a count of 10. The muscles that bring your leg back where it belongs are your glutes. So, you're holding the glutes in a stretch and trying to contract them at the same time. They get overwhelmed and let go. You relax that leg for a count of 5 and repeat the whole process 2 more times, doing this exercise a total of 3 times, just like the one above.

Now, do the other leg.

Trigger point/compression of Glute muscles:

This one is best to do on the floor, but you can do on the bed if you slide a book, covered with a towel, under your glute (buttock) and place the tennis ball on the book, then roll over onto the tennis ball. If you can easily get onto the floor, lie on your back, knees bent, feet flat on the floor. The area where you want the tennis ball to go is where all 3 glute muscles overlap: above the top of your thigh bone, below your hip bone and 2 inches away from your spine (feel free to look this up on Wikipedia: Gluteus minimus, Gluteus medius and Gluteus maximus. Lift either glute/hip up and slide a tennis ball under the glute muscle (buttock), then lay back down on the tennis ball. This is called Trigger Point and you'll need to keep that ball under you, in the same spot, for at least a minute, maybe longer. You can get up to 3 releases with this method and it will feel like the ball has deflated, but that's your glute relaxing. You can move the ball, after 1 minute of laying on top of it, to 1 or 2 more spots near the one you just worked. Never work an area more than 20 minutes or you can create inflammation and a possible bruised feeling.