

# Don't Suffer with Jaw Pain

by Joe Durant, L.M.T.

About 35 million people in the U.S. suffer from temporomandibular joint disorder (TMD) issues at some time in their lives, according to The TMJ Association's website ([www.tmj.org](http://www.tmj.org)). Our jaws are in frequent use—when we talk, eat and drink—so it can be difficult to manage the pain and discomfort associated with TMD. And the traditional medical approach of drugs and surgery often does not effect lasting change.

As a massage therapist, you aren't immune from the effects of TMD—and you can't afford to miss sessions due to pain and dysfunction. You are probably also open to innovative ways of healing.

A newly approved therapy by the Food and Drug Administration that combines the principles of acupuncture and neurology with microcurrent stimulation is successfully helping people control their TMD-related pain levels.

MPS Therapy applies concentrated, direct-current micro-stimulation to trigger points and acupuncture points, releasing the muscle tissue that is impinging on nerves and causing joint articulations. This action permits increased reinnervation of affected neural pathways, allowing pain levels to be substantially decreased, often very quickly.

Here are the five steps of MPS TMD Therapy:

## 1. Relax the autonomic nervous system

The key to successful treatment of many chronic pain syndromes is the deregulation, or calming, of the autonomic nervous system (ANS), and the release of physical and mental blockages that can keep the ANS in high drive.

ANS upregulation may be caused by nerve root entrapment, or radiculopathy; misalignments of the spine or mandible; emotional stresses such as anxiety or apprehension; or physical scars.

Several potent parasympathetic points, located on the inner wrists, are used during MPS TMD Therapy to calm the client, reduce muscular tension and permit deep-tissue work without client guarding.

## 2. Address scar tissue

This technique involves the treatment of visible scars with microcurrent therapy in order to repolarize local tissue and release the fascia and muscles that are influenced by the scar. Research suggests scar-release therapy can provide some of the most significant outcomes with pain patients.

## 3. Relieve nerve root entrapment

A major contributor to the chronic pain process, radiculopathy is due to shortened paraspinal muscles,



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**MASSAGE**

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which distort and misalign the skeletal system. Applying MPS Therapy paraspinally to *shu* points can immediately relax muscle tissue and relieve pressure on irritated nerve roots.

#### 4. Achieve structural realignment

Tight or shortened facial muscles, especially a shortened masseter muscle, can misalign the entire skeletal system, rotating the mandible and strongly influencing the atlas/axis and, in turn, the entire spine.

Two acupuncture points located on the face have significant influence over the release of a shortened masseter muscle. Bilaterally releasing these facial muscles can provide an immense release to the erector spinae muscles.

#### 5. Stimulate acupuncture points for emotional conditions

Emotional conditions, such as anxiety and apprehension, will make giving an effective massage session challenging. Your mental state can strongly influence tissue and joints, and any negative emotional state will make your day more difficult.

MPS Therapy can play a significant role in your health. Seek out a trained MPS therapist who will isolate root causes of pain, while at the same time facilitating the quick treatment of radiculopathy, scars and emotions in a clinical setting.

Joe Durant, L.M.T., has been a neuromuscular massage therapist and pain specialist since 1995. He has spoken at the American Academy of Pain Management (2005), and is a contributing author for its clinical practice guidelines. He is also a senior MPS Therapy instructor and practices in Brunswick, Georgia.



*MPS Therapy promotes the use of several key points, including **Stomach 6 and 7**, and **Small Intestine 18**, in the treatment of temporomandibular joint disorders.*

