

How to Get The Most Out of Your Splint (Daytime Wear)

- Keep your jaw in the relaxed position as much as possible. When you're not talking, eating or swallowing, try to return the jaw to the relaxed jaw position. If you are unsure of what the relaxed jaw position is, ask the dentist!! Constantly monitor what your jaw is doing. Develop a routine of frequently checking for face and jaw tension.
- The splint is an excellent reminder to keep the teeth apart and the jaw in the relaxed jaw position. When your lower teeth touch the plastic of the splint, let it be an instantaneous reminder that your jaw muscles are beginning to become tense and you need to relax the jaw, face and neck muscles. Sometimes it is helpful to think of contact of the lower teeth with the splint as sending a small electric shock through the jaw, forcing it into the open and relaxed position. Become hyper-aware of any type of jaw movement that allows the lower teeth to contact the splint, or for that matter, any other tongue, lip or jaw movements that move the jaw away from the relaxed jaw position. (Examples: Thrusting the jaw forward, fingernail or pencil biting, chewing on the checks or lips, supporting your head by leaning on the chin.)
- When you detect jaw muscles becoming tense or lower teeth contacting the splint, sit back in your chair, support your head against a wall or whatever is available, and RELAX...Supporting the head makes relaxing the neck muscles easier which, in turn, makes relaxing other muscles easier. Drop the jaw into the relaxed jaw position – inhale and exhale deeply a few times – and RELAX. This requires only 20 to 30 seconds. The more you practice this, the more relaxation you can achieve each time, and the better you are able to recognize when the muscles are starting to become tense.
- Remember...muscles are most relaxed when the teeth are apart enough to put a pencil between them.
- When are together, jaw-closing muscles are working and there is pressure being developed in the joint, both of which tend to perpetuate pain, discomfort and ongoing joint damage. When the teeth are apart, the muscles can relax and the load on the joint is minimized and joints can heal.

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