

# Jaw Stretching Exercises: Pry Bar Stretch and OraStretch®

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## Why should I stretch my jaw?

Your provider may have instructed you to start doing jaw stretching exercises because your jaw muscles are tight. You may have a limited **maximal interincisal opening (MIO)** (which just means that you cannot open your mouth very wide). Doing these stretches should help to strengthen, lengthen, and loosen your jaw muscles, allowing you to open your mouth wider and increase your MIO.

## How do I stretch my jaw?

There are 2 exercises you can do to stretch your jaw: the pry bar stretch and the OraStretch®. If your provider recommends the OraStretch®, we will discuss the cost with you and provide that for you in clinic. Your provider will tell you which one of these stretches they want you to do.

### Pry bar stretch

1. Pry (pull) your upper and lower teeth apart using your index finger on the lower teeth and your thumb on the upper teeth.
2. Scissor (or spread) the teeth apart to stretch your jaw until you feel some jaw tightness.
3. Hold this position for 5 seconds and then release.

## OraStretch®

1. Put the OraStretch® device in your mouth and squeeze the clamps. This will cause the device to spread apart, stretching your jaw.
2. Continue squeezing the clamps until you feel some jaw tightness.
3. Hold this position for 5 seconds and then release.



## How long and how often should I stretch my jaw?

In general, try to do your jaw exercises 2 times per day for 10 minutes each, or as much as you can tolerate. Try to do about 20 repetitions of the pry bar stretch or the OraStretch® (whichever stretch your provider prescribed) during each 10-minute session.

- Depending on your situation, your provider may give you different instructions for the amount and length of time for each exercise. Make sure to follow their instructions.

## What can I do to reduce pain while doing jaw stretches?

- Sometimes doing these exercises can cause pain or discomfort. To help reduce the pain, try taking a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) like ibuprofen (Motrin®) about 45-60 minutes before doing your exercises.
  - Do not take NSAID medications (including ibuprofen, aspirin, or naproxen) if your provider told you that you shouldn't take NSAIDs.
- You can also try using heat pads on your jaw muscles before doing your stretches to help warm and loosen them. Using the heat after the stretching exercises may also help to relax your muscles.

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