

Jaw & Body Care



SELF-MASSAGE GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION



This guide is a companion to the jaw & body care self-massage set.

A whole body approach

The guide is based on a whole body approach to jaw care.

When the nervous system doesn't feel safe, the body often responds with holding, bracing, and guarding.

The jaw is frequently part of that response — not the problem itself.

A listening touch

The aim is not to fix the jaw, force change, or work harder.

Instead, the guide introduces curious, listening touch —

a way of using massage balls that helps the body feel safer, more settled, and less guarded.

When that happens, the heightened response can begin to soften.

It is not necessary to do everything in the guide.

Sometimes it is better not to work directly on the jaw.

You don't always need to achieve a particular outcome.

Sometimes, a small amount of contact — in the right place, with the right intent — is enough.

THE APPROACH: JAW & BODY CARE

The most important question isn't
“Am I doing this right?”
It's:
“How is my body responding?”

Jaw & body care recognises that jaw tension rarely exists in isolation. Often, the jaw is responding to what the rest of the body — and the nervous system — are experiencing.

Using massage balls in this way is not about applying a technique.
It's about the quality and intent of contact.

As you explore:

- let the contact be curious rather than forceful
- allow time to notice sensation, breath, and response
- stay interested rather than goal-focused
- judge by feel or response rather than a set time

You're not working on your body.
You're working with it.

If the experience starts to feel effortful, overwhelming, or uncomfortable, that's useful information — and a cue to ease off, move away, or stop.

SIGNS THIS IS HELPING

You're not looking for a dramatic release.

Common signs that the contact is supportive include:

- a sense of ease or settling
- your breath becoming slower or less held
- the tissue feeling less guarded or less dense
- the jaw feeling more spacious or less clenched
- a general sense of “this is okay”

These changes can be subtle.

They may happen while you're resting — or even after you stop.

None of them need to happen for the work to be valid.

SIGNS TO EASE OFF OR STOP

It may be helpful to reduce pressure, change area, or stop if you notice:

- your breath becoming held or shallow
- increased jaw clenching or guarding
- a sense of effort, urgency, or frustration
- pain, sharpness, or a strong urge to “push through”
- feeling agitated, unsettled, or disconnected

These aren't failures.

They're signals that the system may need less input, not more.

Often, doing less allows more settling to occur.

CHOOSING WHERE TO START

The safest place to begin is where the body feels most receptive — not where symptoms shout the loudest.



There is no “best” place to begin.



In jaw & body care, the safest place to start is often where the body feels most receptive — and that may not be the jaw.



Some days, the jaw is the right place. Other days, it isn't.

You might choose:



- the jaw or temples
- the neck or base of the skull
- the hips
- the feet

All of these areas can influence how the jaw feels, without you needing to touch the jaw directly.



THE MASSETER (JAW MUSCLES)



You may choose to explore the jaw directly — If you do:

- hold a cork massage ball in each hand
- place them against the cheeks, just below the cheekbones
- allow the balls to rest there without pressing

Rather than trying to release anything:

- notice pressure and contact
- allow your breath to move naturally
- let the contact be steady and attentive

You might slowly explore downwards towards the jawbone, or you might remain still. If an area feels sensitive, you can pause — listening is more important than massaging.

THE TEMPORALIS (TEMPLES)



The temples can be a useful place to explore light touch, particularly if the jaw itself feels guarded.

- hold a massage ball in each hand
- place them on the temples, above the cheekbones
- let the contact be light and unhurried

You may notice:

- small shifts in pressure
- changes in your breath
- a sense of settling elsewhere in the body

Stillness, small movements, or brief contact are all appropriate. There is nothing you need to make happen here.

THE OCCIPUT & UPPER NECK



For many people, working away from the jaw allows the jaw to soften more easily.

To explore the upper neck and occiput of the skull:

- lie on your back with your knees bent
- rest your head on a yoga block (or thick book)
- place both balls (in their pouch) between the base of the skull, where the head meets the neck and the yoga block
- let the weight of your head provide the pressure.

You might:

- remain still or make small nodding or rotating movements
- explore further down the neck and up onto the skull (occiput)
- notice how your breath, neck, and jaw respond

THE HIPS (GLUTEAL AREA)



The hips play a powerful role in overall holding and bracing.

Sometimes, when tension eases here, the jaw responds without being touched.

To explore:

- lie on your back with knees bent, or on your side
- place the ball under the soft tissue of the hip or buttock
- allow your body weight to rest into the ball

Move slowly, or remain still.

Explore tender spots.

You're looking for a "that feels good" type of pressure.

Notice whether anything changes elsewhere — including in the jaw.

THE FEET (PLANTAR FASCIA)



The feet can be a surprisingly helpful entry point, especially if the jaw feels too sensitive to approach directly. Incredibly, the feet are part of a deeper fascial network that relates all the way up to the tongue and jaw.

For some people, working with the feet can travel upward through the body and be experienced in the jaw.

- place one massage ball on the floor
- rest the sole of your foot on the ball
- allow partial, supported weight

You might roll slowly, pause, or simply stand and notice.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

The most helpful changes often happen
when you stop trying to make them
happen.

Think jaw & body care, rather than jaw fixing.

You don't need to work on every area.

You don't need to feel a release for the work to
be helpful.

The body often responds after you stop.

If something doesn't feel right, pause or stop.

If you have an injury or medical condition, seek
appropriate professional guidance.

Most importantly:

***Let your experience lead — not the
instructions.***