

# OCCLUSAL EQUILIBRATION

Occlusal equilibration is a term used in dentistry to discuss the adjustments of the bite relationship. The mandible or lower jaw is a u-shaped bone which has two joints called the temporomandibular joints (TMJ) that are located just in front of the ear. When the jaw system is functioning properly, the lower jaw is able to freely hinge at the joints and close together with the lower teeth contacting the upper teeth very evenly all the way around the arch. This creates a “solid bite.” When there is a discrepancy in the bite relationship to fully seated joints, then problems can develop. This shifting of the jaw creates stress at the joint level. We will often see manifestations of this shifting, whereby muscle tenderness develops in the jaw system, clenching and grinding of the teeth often occurs, joint discomfort may be present along with signs of instability in the bite relationship which includes wear of the teeth, looseness of the teeth, etc.

The goal in this therapy is to allow the joints to fully seat, the muscles to relax and the teeth to fully meet together at the proper position and function properly in movement. Establishing this stability in the system can prevent many problems that are serious in nature. These include:

- Muscle-tension headaches
- Severe wear of your natural teeth
- Temporomandibular joint dysfunction
- Loose teeth
- Chipping teeth
- Gum recession and other associated problems
- Grinding or clenching of your teeth

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