

THE TEMPOROMANDIBULAR JOINT

Type of joint: This is a complex joint that allows for opening, closing, protrusion, retrusion, and lateral deviation of the jaw. The TMJ is composed of the mandibular condyle and articulating surface of the glenoid fossa of the temporal bone. Between the mandibular condyle and glenoid fossa is an articulating disc or meniscus. During the opening of jaw, a hinge type of motion is followed by a gliding motion of the condyle and the condyle moves down and out of the glenoid fossa on the disc. The disc then moves forward on the tubercle of the zygomatic process to complete the motion.

Capsular pattern: Restrictions in the ability to open the mouth.

Depression of the Mandible (Opening of the Mouth)

Planes/axis of movement: Motion occurs in the sagittal plane around a coronal axis.

Range of motion:

- Approximately 2 inches or 3.5 to 4.0 cm; also equal to the width of three fingers between the teeth

Preferred starting position: The subject should be in sitting with the cervical spine in neutral.

End position: See Figure 5-1.

Measurement of motion: The movement is measured with a tape measure or ruler. The distance between the upper central incisor teeth and lower central incisor teeth is recorded.

Stabilization: The head and neck should be stabilized to prevent motion of the cervical spine during testing.

Substitutions: The subject may try to flex the cervical spine or retract the head to increase the range of motion or avoid pain during testing.

Alternate method/position for testing: None.