

# The Leaf Gauge Exercise for TAP users

All patients using mandibular advancement orthotics for the management of sleep disordered breathing will feel changes to their bite each morning. The front teeth will hit with more force than the back teeth. This is caused by the prolonged shortening of the muscles that provide us the ability to push our jaws forward. In the morning that muscle must be stretched out to allow the back teeth to come together properly. Failure to do so could result in a permanent change to your bite. It is very important therefore to be compliant with this exercise early in the day, every day.

**Figure 1**



Upon rising, place a comfortable thickness of leafs between your front teeth and slide your jaw forward. **(Figure 1)**

**Figure 2**



Slide your jaw backwards, the opposite direction as far as it will go and apply moderate biting pressure until you feel a slight tension up near your ear. This is the proper stretching of the muscle. Continue 15-20 second repetitions, testing your bite recovery. **(Figure 2)**

**Figure 3**



Repeat the procedure with the leaf gauge between the eye teeth biting with jaws aligned, attempting to bring the back teeth together. Again they cannot touch, but a slight rotation of the mandible will help stretch the entire muscle. **(Figure 3,4)** Leaning your chin onto your palm at a table with head facing down, slack-jawed, can also be effective at restoring the bite. Repeat this process later in the day if needed.

**If you are unable to recover your bite rapidly and completely each day, contact your dentist. A slower advancement rate may be recommended after normalization of your bite. If you notice any changes in your joint, bite or muscle comfort, contact your dentist.**

**Figure 4**



The use of 1X2 cm strips of mouth guard material may provide a useful alternative to the leaf gauge depicted here.