



# TMJ, A New Way to Find Relief

Ellen Terry Kessler with Anne Galbraith and Anna Marie Bowers

“About a year ago a visiting pain in my jaw decided to take up permanent residency. I went to my doctor since I felt this pain should vacation somewhere else. The pain without a name was now given the name of TMJ (Temporomandibular Joint disorder). My doctor could not get rid of my new friend but now that I knew its name I could swear at it. The next step in my odyssey was to see my dentist who confirmed that TMJ had come to live with me. He told me to relax. Sure! My grandfather was German. I remember him saying, ‘pull yourself up by your bootstraps’ and ‘grit your teeth’ whenever there was something that you felt was hard to do. As days went by I felt that my new relationship with TMJ needed to be terminated. I went to an acupuncturist who recommended seeing a *Trager*® Practitioner. Not knowing what that was I made an appointment. Through the *Trager* Approach method of gentle movement of my jaw, my mind was fed with how my jaw could feel. After a few *Trager* sessions my visitor, TMJ, was gone, never to return.” - Bob Kaul

Jaw-moving muscles can be felt in front of the earlobes, in the cheeks, the temples and at the back of the roof of the mouth. Clenching your top and bottom teeth together causes tremendous tension on the muscles and tissues around your jaw. TMJ, sometimes referred to as TMD, (temporomandibular dysfunction) can be aggravated by lack of sleep and an inability to relax.

Developed by Dr. Milton Trager, the *Trager* Approach is a pleasurable and gentle approach to mind/body connection. Long before most Western doctors realized the crucial role the mind plays in our physical well-being, Dr. Trager developed a system that teaches people how to engage their mind to change their bodies. And like Bob, thousands of people have discovered

that the benefits achieved through *Trager* sessions are deep and long-lasting.

“*Trager* teaches me dramatic new ways of comforting myself instead of relying on others to ‘fix me.’ *Trager* grows each time I use it—instead of diminishing in effectiveness over time.”  
- Dianna Ellis, *Trager* client

A typical *Trager* session consists of two parts. The first is table work where the client lies on a padded table and experiences his or her body being moved in a pain-free, unrestricted way, often for the first time in years. The calmness and open awareness these soft, rocking movements create break up physical and emotional holding patterns.

The second element of *Trager* work is instruction in a system of self-help movements, called Mentastics® or mental gymnastics that clients can use in their everyday lives to continue to discover how to do all sorts of activities without pain. “It did not take long for me realize that I was gaining a much better understanding of my body” said *Trager* client, Janet Kohler.

As clients experience what it’s like to move effortlessly and freely on their own and with the help of a *Trager* practitioner, their tensions disappear and they find they can turn stressful and restrictive habits into comfortable movement patterns. And for many, *Trager* opens up infinite possibilities.

The problems that brought Bob to his first *Trager* session are now past, but he still wouldn’t miss his regular visits or his daily use of the MENTASTICS self-help movements. “There are always going to be times of feeling off,” he says. “And *Trager* gives me a place to go—mentally and physically—when I need to get back in balance.”

To locate a practitioner, go to the *Trager*® website [www.trager-us.org](http://www.trager-us.org) or call the United States *Trager*® Association at 440-834-0308.