



## What's That Bone in My Throat?

Emily Klik

The hyoid is a small bone in your throat tucked underneath and behind your chin. Many people are not aware of it, and for a little structure, it has a very important role. Pronounced high-oid, it is shaped like a horseshoe with many muscle attachments.

While all bones in our body are important and unique, the hyoid stands out by being a 'free floating' bone, it has no "joint", unlike all other bones in the body. With no bony connections, it is only attached by muscles, tendons and ligaments to your spine, the base of your jaw, larynx and thyroid.

Some of these muscles occur in groups, where each group has a collective function. There are infra-hyoids, supra-hyoids, and retro-hyoids. These provide support to the larynx and thyroid, the base of your tongue, and provide support and stability to your jaw. The hyoid also provides an attachment point for muscles that help stabilize the throat and neck.

If one of these muscles or muscle groups develops strain, tension, or weakness, the other groups will compensate, leading to throat tension and discomfort.

When the hyoid is misaligned, some uncomfortable problems can arise. These may include problems with chewing and talking, difficulty swallowing, voice or speech problems like a change in vocal tone, neck pain, headaches and TMJ dysfunction. This may even contribute to thyroid problems. The sensation of a lump in the throat while swallowing and also a choking sensation in the throat can be a result of hyoid misalignment

Craniosacral techniques to address each of the functional muscle groups can restore balance and avoid the need for compensation by other muscle groups.

Patients who see me for TMJ tension from clenching and grinding often have moderate or severe tension in the retro-hyoids and supra-hyoids. By gently releasing these muscles, TMJ tension is reduced, resolving the discomfort. Often, in just a few sessions, the effects of clenching and grinding is reduced or completely eliminated, resulting in comfort and ease in the jaw. Many patients comment that their jaw feels “so good” after each craniosacral session, and more relaxed then they can remember in a long time.

If you're experiencing neck tension, or tightness in your throat, I invite you to try a few Craniosacral session at The Ommani Center. You will be surprised as to how good you can feel when your body releases stress and tension after even a few sessions.

**©March2022, Emily Klik, LMT, CST is a CranioSacral Therapist at Ommani. She sees clients who are free of symptoms on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Call our office at 262.695.5311 to schedule an appointment.**