

# POSTURE AWARENESS HOME CARE HANDOUT #2

## RESTFUL JAW POSTURE

- N-position rest: To find a comfortable jaw posture, first rest the tip of your tongue against the roof of your mouth, behind, but not touching, the front teeth. This is where the tongue touches when saying “N”. Always keep teeth slightly apart except when talking or chewing. The lips should also be apart slightly and relaxed. Breathe through your nose. The diagram at the left shows the tongue is up and the teeth and lips are apart.
- Do not lean your chin or your face on your hands.



## HEAD AND NECK POSTURE

Good posture is one of the essential aspects in reducing abnormal strain on muscles and joints. A forward head posture may occur from cervical spine deformation as you age or from muscle weakness and loss of tone in the muscles.

- Keep your head up with your ears aligned with your shoulders.
- Imagine that you have a thread pulling you up from the top of your head.
- Keep your shoulders back as this keeps your head centered and upright on even and relaxed shoulders.
- Chin tucks: To improve posture and decrease stress on your head, neck and shoulders, try this exercise:
  - Place two fingers on the top lip and press the head back and up until a slight stretch is felt in the back of the neck.
  - Keep your head level during this movement.
  - Allow the head to return to neutral.
  - Repeat 2 or 3 times each day.



## SLEEP POSTURE

- Sleep on your side or on your back using the appropriate size of pillow.
- Do NOT sleep on your stomach.
- Do NOT sleep with your head tilted to one side (as this twists and strains the spine).

## WORK POSTURE

Consult a desk ergonomics expert when setting up your desk, selecting a chair and positioning your computer keyboard and mouse.

Poor workstation design can cause eyestrain, headache, strain, and inflammation of muscles, joints and tendons in the wrists, hands, neck, back, arms, and legs.

Key elements of an ergonomic workstation include:

- A well-designed chair that provides good mid and lower back support and has a backrest and seat that are independently adjustable. A reclining seat back and seat pan, which can be adjusted to varying angles, will allow you to control the degree of posture on your thighs and back.
- An adjustable bi-level terminal table that allows the keyboard and screen height to be independently adjusted. To reduce neck strain, screen height should be adjusted so that the top of the screen is at approximately eye level. Keyboard height should be adjusted so that the forearms and wrist can be roughly parallel to the floor.
- A padded and detachable wrist rest to assist in maintaining your wrists and hands in a straight, or “neutral”, position while keying.
- A copy holder adjustable in angle and height, and place near the screen, to reduce awkward movements of the head and minimize the need for the eyes to adjust to different distances.
- A thin detachable keyboard that can be moved close to or away from the screen. The top surface of the “home row” of keys should be no higher than 2.5 inches above the work surface to avoid hand and wrist difficulties.
- Adequate knee clearance under the desk to allow free movement; thin tabletops are best.
- A footrest to relieve seat pressure on the thighs of shorter operators.
- Rest breaks to allow the opportunity for movement. Sitting still in any position for long periods of times is stressful on the body.

The following picture illustrates the main aspects of a workstation design.

