

Self-Stretch

Lay on your back with your head near the end of the bed. Rotate your head as far as you comfortably can in one direction. If you experience any dizziness or see spots in your eyes sit-up and resume a more comfortable position immediately! If this occurs it is highly recommended that you call your physician to investigate further. If you do not have this rare experience you may continue.

Allow the edge of the bed to act as a fulcrum and slide your body so that you can really feel the stretch in the front of your neck. Look up and away from the direction your head is rotated (figure B) and take a slow deep breath in. Hold your breath upon full inhalation and for 3 seconds and then exhale fully while looking down in the direction your head is rotated. Repeat this stretch 3 to 5 times on each side until a full stretch is achieved. Then turn your head in the other direction and repeat this stretch on the other side until both sides are equal.

Stretching & Strengthening Combined

While lying on your back bring your ear toward your shoulder for a count of 3 deep breaths (figure C). Repeat this stretch 3 to 5 times on each side until a full stretch is achieved. Remember to always stretch both sides to equality.



A



B



C

Sleep Position

- A. Correct position for lying on your back: the corners of the pillow are over the shoulders.
 - B. Wrong position for lying on your back: the shoulders are on top of the pillow.
 - C. Correct position for lying on your side: the pillow is positioned between the head and the shoulder.
 - D. Wrong position for lying on your side: the pillow is under both the shoulder and the head.
- A buckwheat, flaxseed or down pillow may be best for positioning the head comfortably.*



A



C



B



D

Corrective Actions

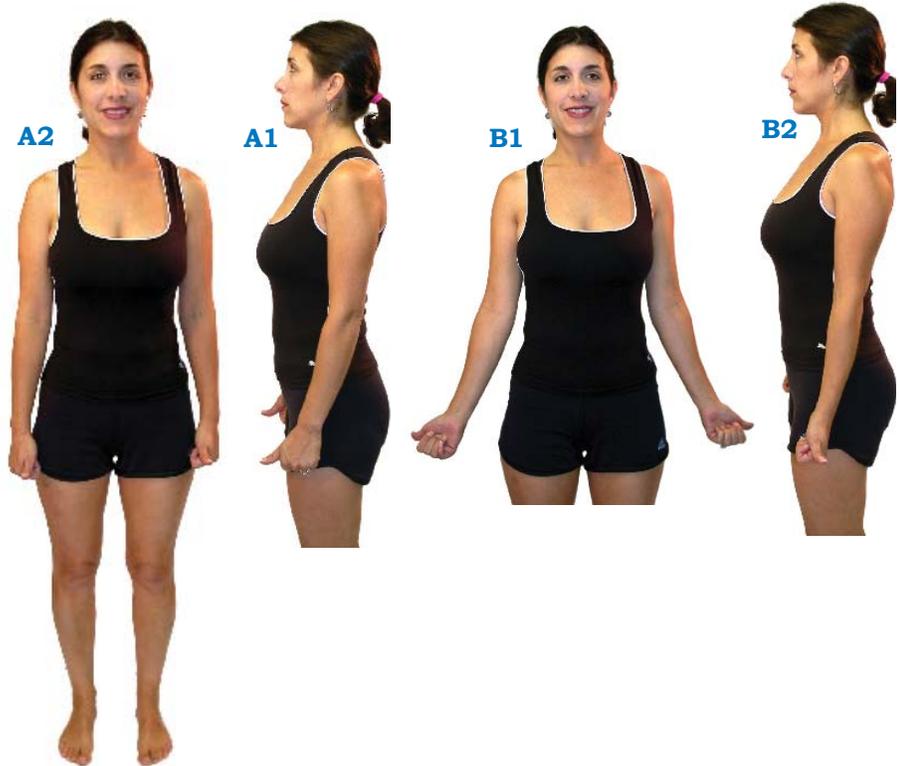
- **Avoid Postural Strain**
 - o Excessive forward-head posture needs to be corrected (see facing page).
 - o Elimination of a forward headrest or a lumbar pillow
 - o Wear glasses/contacts to correct nearsightedness
 - o Do not sit with the body turned one way and the head turned another for extended periods
 - o Telephone headset to avoid 'cocking' the head
 - o Eliminate overhead work (painting)
 - o Avoid head-rolling exercises, since these can overstretch the SCM.
 - o Avoid exercises with a lot of head turning (ex. Swimming the crawl)
- **Elimination of Chronic Infection/Allergy**
 - o Be willing to do what you have to do to get well or...suffer the consequences.
- **Avoid Constriction**
 - o Your finger should be able to fit comfortably between the collar of your shirt and your neck

In General

To be effective, all postural exercises need to be done every 1-2 hours or at least 6-8 times a day, whichever comes first. It would be a waste of time and effort to do 8 postural exercises in the morning and then walk or sit around all day with a poor posture! It helps to remember that each time you step through a doorway to think of yourself as a high-wire performer making a grand entrance into center stage.

This corrects rounded shoulders and tight pectoralis muscles:

- Stand with your feet about 4 inches apart, arms at your sides and with your thumbs pointing forwards (figures A1 & A2)
- Tighten your butt muscles
- Rotate your arms and shoulders out and back while inhaling (make sure to feel your shoulder blades squeeze together in your back) (figures B1 & B2); your thumbs rotate outwards
- Maintain this position while pulling your shoulder down and exhaling
- Hold this position while breathing normally and correcting the head posture (described below)



Shoulder Posture Correction

This corrects the anterior/forward head positioning and should be performed in conjunction with the shoulder posture exercises:

- Taking off from the figure B position (closeup = figure C) above bring your head back to align your ears (this must be accomplished without moving your nose up or down and without opening your mouth (figure D)).
- Hold this position for at least 6 seconds breathing normally.
- Upon completion relax, but remain in good posture. **Do not collapse into your habitual posture!!!**
- If this is uncomfortable shift your body weight from your heels onto the balls of your feet.

Tongue Position

Proper tongue position relaxes the muscles of the TMJ!

- Position the upper & lower teeth slightly apart
- The tongue needs to be on the roof of the mouth where it ends up when they say the letter “N” with the tip of it lightly touching the gum line where they meet the teeth.



Head Posture Correction