

Sleep and Postural Care

What is Postural Care?

Protection of body shape by supporting the body in a straight and comfortable posture, both in the day and at night.

Does the individual I care for need Postural Care?

- Write 'yes' or 'no' in the space below:
- Does the body stay in a limited number of positions?
- Do the knees seem to go to one side? Or inwards? Or outwards?
- Does the head seem to turn mainly to one side?
- Does the body tend to flex forwards? Extend backwards? Or both? Or to the right? Or to the left?
- Is the body shape already asymmetric?

The benefits of Postural Care

- Protection of body shape.
- Improved function.
- Reduced long-term need for surgery or extended benefit from surgery.
- Reduced need for expensive, complex equipment to cater for future problems with body shape.
- Health gain for the individual, improved quality of life, improved sleeping patterns and reduced pain.
- Resultant health and emotional gain for all the family.

What is Postural Moulding?

The use of posture to allow the force of gravity, as it presses down, to mould the body to the shape you want.

Night time is the best time to provide Postural Moulding because:

- Muscle spasms are reduced in sleep.
- The body is lying down flat so that gravity can be used to straighten the body.
- There are long periods of time during which no other demands are made of the individual.

Lying straight helps you:

- Sit straight
- Stand straight
- Grow straight



Destructive Postures



Lying with legs to one side makes it hard to sit straight.



Lying with knees out to the side makes it a problem to bend in the morning.



Lying all night with a bent back makes it difficult to sit straight in the day.



Lying with knees together makes it hard to sit and stand.



Lying curled up at night makes it hard to sit up during the day.

"Introduction to Postural Care Family Workshops":
John and Liz Goldsmith, 2001
Images from The Helping Hand Company, 2005