

In order to correct the posture of your neck while sitting you must first learn *how to retract the head*. Therefore you must become fully practised in Exercise 1 — head retraction (see chapter 4). This exercise should be performed fifteen to twenty times per session and the session should be repeated three times per day, preferably morning, noon and evening. The rhythmic procedure teaches you the correct position of your head in relation to the rest of your body. Each backward movement of the head must be performed to the maximum possible degree. When the head is pulled back as far as possible, you have assumed the so-called retracted head posture (Fig. 3:8). Now you have reached the extreme of the corrected head and neck posture.

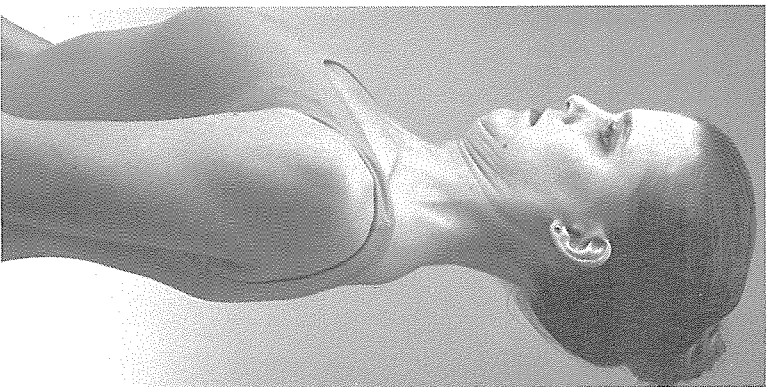


Fig. 3:8
Retract.

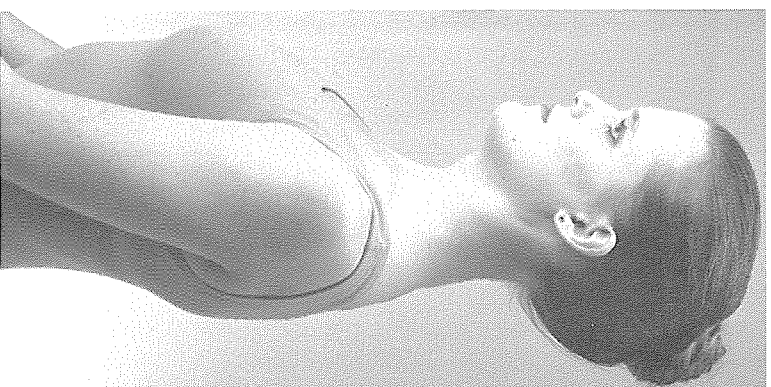


Fig. 3:9
Perfect correct posture.

Once you know how to retract the head, you must learn *how to find and maintain the correct head and neck posture*. The extreme of the retracted head position is a position of strain and it is not possible to sit in this way for a long time. To sit comfortably and correctly you must hold your head just short of the extreme retracted posture. To find this position you must first retract the head as far as possible (Fig. 3:8), then release the last ten percent of this movement (Fig. 3:9). Now you have reached the correct head and neck posture which can be maintained for any length of time. It may take up to eight days of practise to master this.

The aim of this part of the programme is to first restore the correct posture and then maintain it. As a rule the pain will decrease as your head posture improves and you will have no pain once you maintain the correct posture. The pain will readily recur in the first few weeks whenever you allow your head to protrude. But eventually you will remain completely painfree even when you accidentally forget your posture. However, you should never again allow yourself to sit slouched with a protruded head for a long time. As soon as you have been completely painfree for a couple of days, you can resume your normal activities. If from now on you follow the instructions given in this book, you may also be able to prevent further neck trouble.

When first commencing the above procedures to correct your low back and neck posture in sitting, you will experience some new pains. These may be different from your original pain and may be felt in another place. New pains are the result of performing new exercises and maintaining new positions. They should be expected and will wear off in a few days, provided postural correction is continued on a regular basis. Once you have become used to sitting correctly, you will enjoy it. You soon will notice the reduction or absence of pain and the increased comfort. From then on you will automatically choose chairs that allow you to sit correctly.

Rule: *When sitting for prolonged periods you must sit correctly with the low back supported by a lumbar roll and the head retracted.*