

## Perfect Posture Mechanics: Part II - Into the Operatory



**Course Author(s):** Stephanie Botts, RDH, BSDH, CEAS  
**CE Credits: 1.5 Hour(s)**  
**Intended Audience:** Dentists, Dental Hygienists, Dental Assistants, Dental Students, Dental Hygiene Students, Dental Assistant Students  
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**Cost:** Free  
**Method:** Self-instructional  
**AGD Subject Code(s):** 770

**Online Course:** [www.dentalcare.com/en-us/ce-courses/ce672](http://www.dentalcare.com/en-us/ce-courses/ce672)

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- P&G is providing these resource materials to dental professionals. We do not own this content nor are we responsible for any material herein.
- Participants must always be aware of the hazards of using limited knowledge in integrating new techniques or procedures into their practice. Only sound evidence-based dentistry should be used in patient therapy.

#### Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement

- Ms. Botts is the owner of Polished Posture, an ergonomic consulting company. She has no relevant financial relationships to disclose.

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## Overview

The purpose of this course is to review proper ergonomic techniques used in the operatory. The course will review neutral and unsafe postures, operator and patient positioning, and equipment choices to practice pain-free.

The dental profession is at high risk for musculoskeletal disorders (MSD), with up to 96% of practitioners reporting pain due to clinical work habits.<sup>4</sup> This is due to repetitive movements, bending, twisting, reaching, incorrect operator and patient positioning and performing repetitive movements in a static posture. Ergonomics is the science

of fitting the working environment to the practitioner, instead of forcing one's body to acclimate to the environment. Practicing proper ergonomics can increase productivity, decrease pain and lengthen one's career. Allowing the individual to practice pain-free, ergonomics can increase the quality of one's life and work satisfaction.

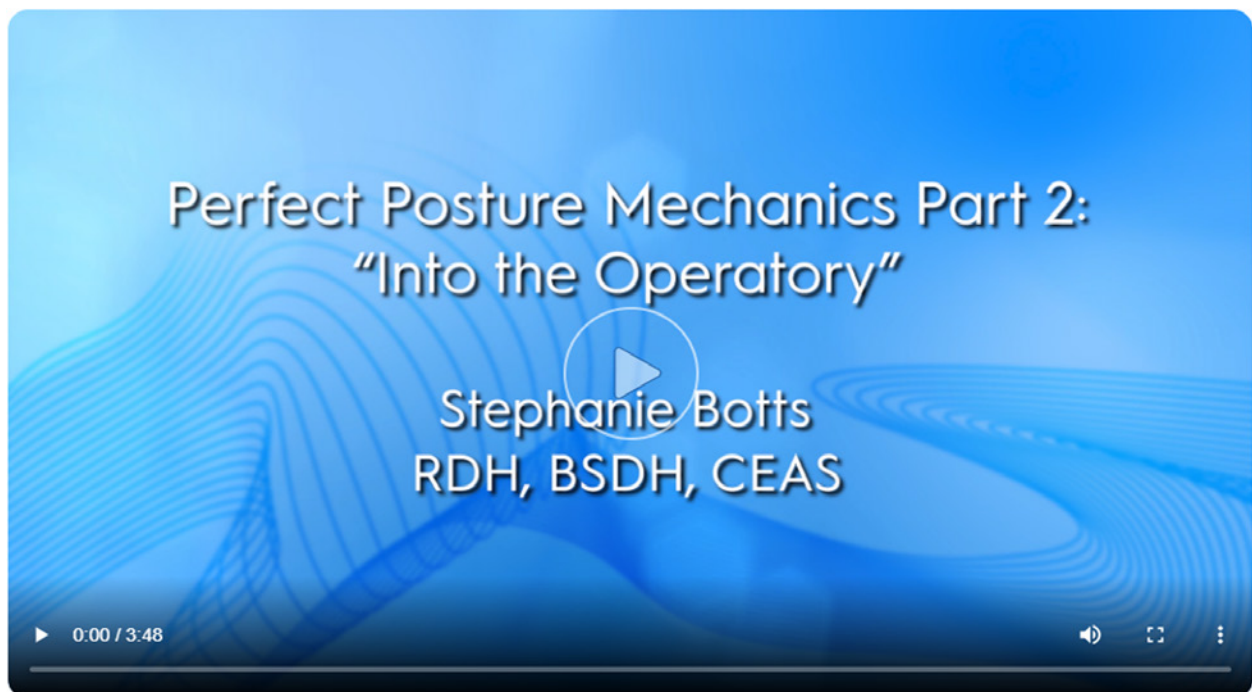
This is the second course in the 2-part Perfect Posture Mechanics series. Perfect Posture Mechanics: Part 1 - Dentistry and Your Body addresses risk factors for MDS's and movements that cause injury. It also demonstrates microbreaks and the importance of daily stretching to reduce pain and fatigue.

## Learning Objectives

**Upon completion of this course, the dental professional should be able to:**

- Incorporate improved ergonomics into daily practice.
- Assess ergonomic equipment to maintain proper positioning.
- Review patient and operator positioning to improve ergonomics and reduce pain.

## Introduction



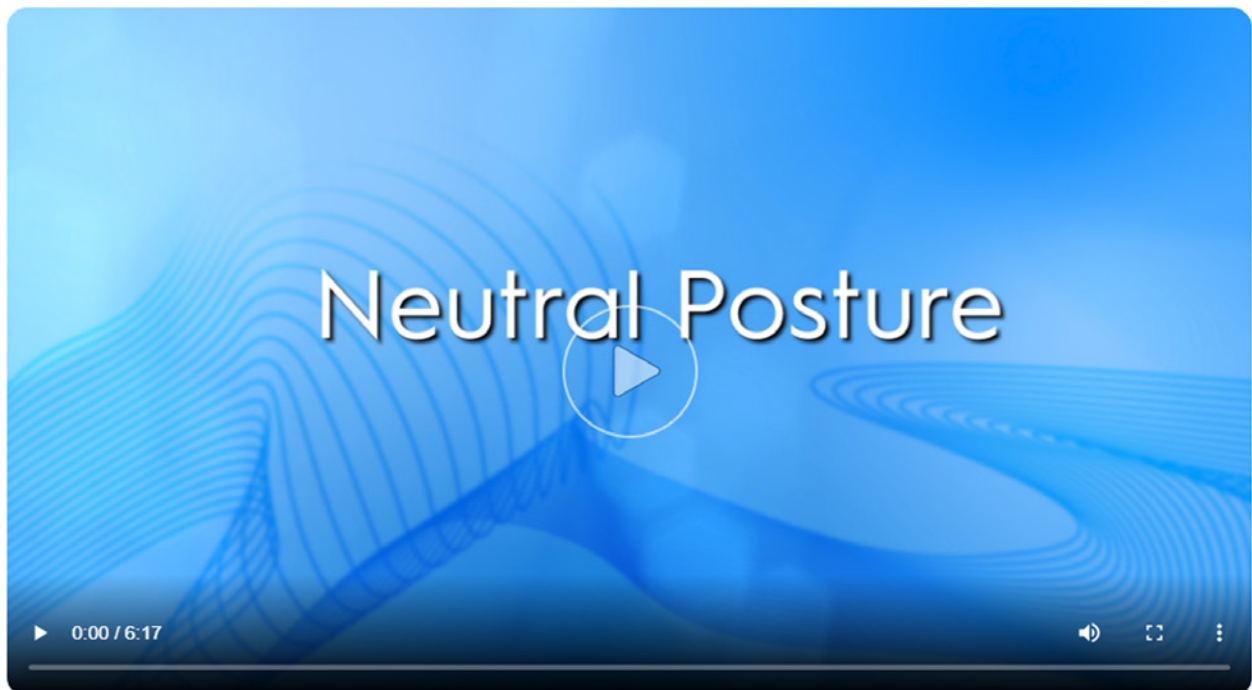
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## Equipment



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## Neutral Posture



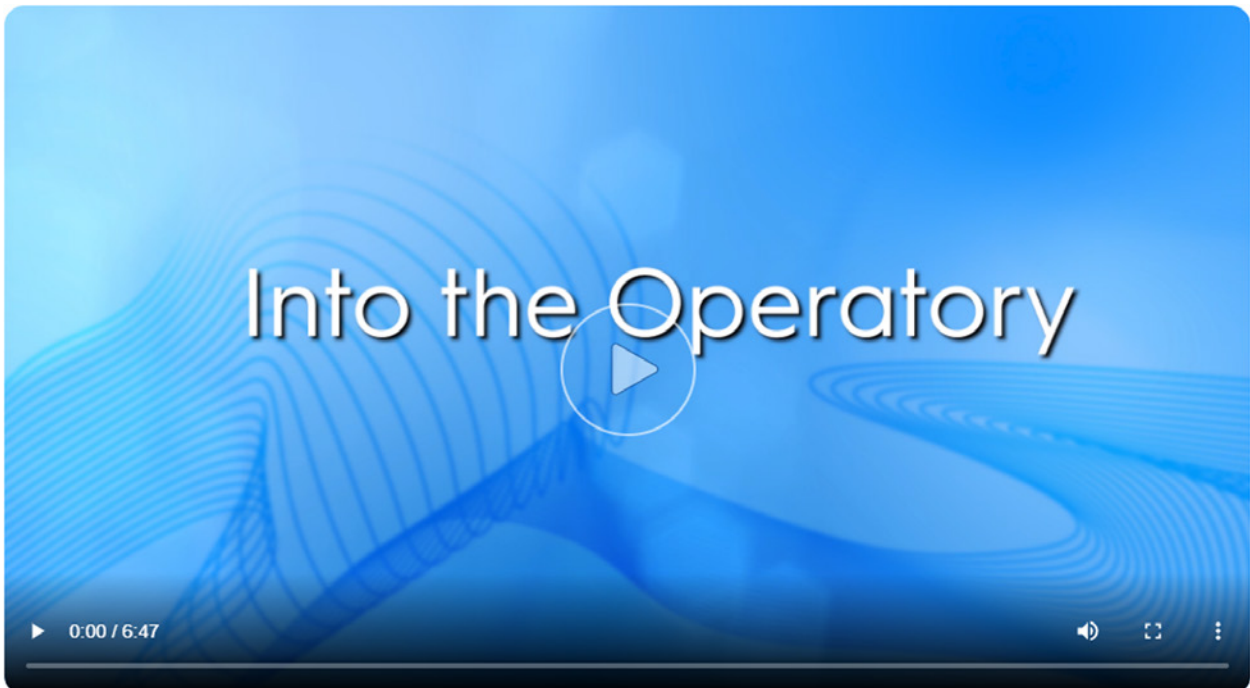
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## Unsafe Postures



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## Into the Operator



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## Operator Positioning



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## Patient Positioning



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## Conclusion



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## Course Test Preview

To receive Continuing Education credit for this course, you must complete the online test. Please go to: [www.dentalcare.com/en-us/ce-courses/ce672/test](http://www.dentalcare.com/en-us/ce-courses/ce672/test)

- 1. Which best describes neutral posture?**
  - A. Posture that supports the natural curvature of the spine.
  - B. Characterized by the ear being in front of the shoulder.
  - C. Only important when seeing patients.
  - D. Not possible in dentistry.
  
- 2. Which best describes the view of neutral posture from the side?**
  - A. There should be a straight line from the ear, shoulder, hip and foot.
  - B. The head is in front of the shoulder.
  - C. The head is behind the shoulder.
  - D. It is different for everyone.
  
- 3. Which statement is true regarding patient positioning when treating the maxillary arch?**
  - A. The patient chair back should be perpendicular to the horizontal plane.
  - B. The occlusal plane should be 10-20 degrees behind the vertical plane.
  - C. The headrest should be angled up.
  - D. The operator should always stand.
  
- 4. Which statement (s) are true when practicing in neutral posture?**
  - A. Ear in front of the shoulder.
  - B. Arms close to sides.
  - C. Elbows bent at 90 degrees.
  - D. Both B and C
  
- 5. When should operator positioning be established?**
  - A. After adjusting the patient.
  - B. At no particular time.
  - C. At the very start of the appointment.
  
- 6. What should the operator aim for when practicing in a seated position?**
  - A. All body weight resting on the stool.
  - B. Hips above the knees.
  - C. Thighs parallel to the floor.
  - D. No tilt in the seat pan.
  
- 7. The ideal clock position for clinicians is?**
  - A. 7 o'clock
  - B. 5 o'clock
  - C. 11 o'clock to 1 o'clock
  - D. There is no ideal position

- 8. Which statement(s) describe what the clinician should do when seated at 9 o'clock or 3 o'clock positions?**
- A. Ensure they are facing the patient directly from the side.
  - B. Sit sideways and lean in toward the patient.
  - C. Try to limit these clock positions.
  - D. Both A and C
- 9. Which are goals of patient positioning?**
- A. Ensure the patient does not move for the entire appointment.
  - B. Adjust the position depending on the arch being treated.
  - C. Ensure the patient position supports the clinician in neutral posture.
  - D. Both B and C
- 10. Which statement is true regarding patient positioning when treating the mandibular arch?**
- A. The patient chair back should be 20-30 degrees elevated from the horizontal plane.
  - B. The occlusal plane should be behind the vertical plane.
  - C. The headrest should be angled steeply down.
  - D. The operator should always sit.
- 11. All of the following are true when holding onto the suction while working EXCEPT one, which is the exception?**
- A. It always promotes healthy ergonomics.
  - B. One cannot use indirect vision, therefore compromising ergonomics.
  - C. Promotes excessive pinch/grip force.
  - D. Promotes awkward postures.
- 12. Saddle stools are universal.**
- A. True
  - B. False



## References

1. Ergonomics. OSHA.
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4. Ng A, Hayes M, Polster A. Musculoskeletal disorders and working posture among dental and oral health students. Healthcare (Basel). 2016;4(1):13.
5. Ergonomics and musculoskeletal disorders. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Reviewed Feb 28, 2018. Accessed July 3, 2021.

## Additional Resources

- No Additional Resources Available

## About the Author



### **Stephanie Botts, RDH, BSDH, CEAS**

Ms. Stephanie Botts has been a clinical dental hygienist for over 14 years. She is a Certified Ergonomics Assessment Specialist providing both in-office and virtual ergonomics consulting and coaching to dental professionals. She also provides CE to dental and dental hygiene associations on the topic of ergonomics. Her experience as a clinical dental hygienist and ergonomics expert has allowed her to recognize the unique challenges of practicing pain-free in the dental setting. Stephanie believes that by learning effective strategies to optimize proper ergonomics both inside and outside the operator, dental professionals can practice pain-free and ensure career longevity.

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