

# Clinician Position in Relation to the Treatment Area

## Module Overview

The manner in which the seated clinician is positioned in relation to a treatment area is known as the clock position. This module introduces the traditional clock positions for periodontal instrumentation.

## Module Outline

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Practical Focus. Assessing Patient and Clinician Position  
 Student Self Evaluation Module 2: Positioning and Clock Positions



Online resources for this module:

- Clock Positions for Anterior Teeth (right- and left-handed versions)
  - Clock Positions for Posterior Teeth (right- and left-handed versions)
- Available online.

## Key Terms

Clock positions

Anterior surfaces toward  
the clinician

Anterior surfaces away from  
the clinician

Posterior aspects facing  
toward the clinician

Posterior aspects facing away  
from the clinician

## Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate and maintain neutral seated posture for each of the mandibular and maxillary treatment areas.
- Demonstrate correct patient position relative to the clinician.
- Demonstrate, from memory, the clock position(s) for each of the mandibular and maxillary treatment areas.
- Demonstrate standing clinician position for the mandibular treatment areas.
- Recognize incorrect position and describe or demonstrate how to correct the problem.



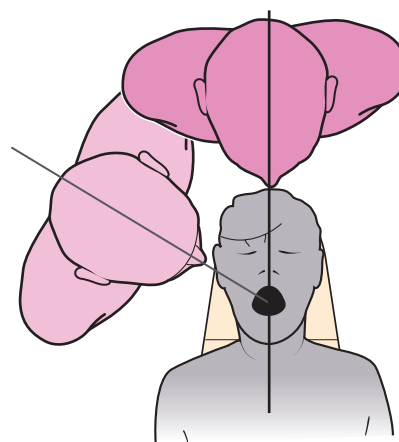
### RIGHT- AND LEFT-HANDED SECTIONS IN THIS MODULE

- Beginning with Section 2, the sections in this module are customized for right-handed and left-handed clinicians.
- Having two different versions of the content in the Module sometimes can be annoying or confusing. For example, a left-handed clinician finds it time consuming to bypass all the right-handed pages to locate the left-handed version. Sometimes readers turn to the wrong version and become confused.
- For ease of use—and avoidance of confusion—if you are right-handed, it is recommended that you either (1) tear the left-handed pages from the book or (2) staple these pages together. If you are left-handed, use the same approach with the right-handed pages.

## Section 1

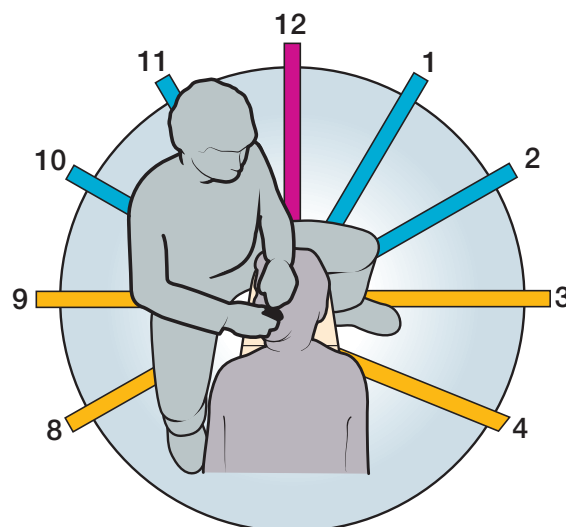
# Clock Positions for Instrumentation

1. **Range of Clinician Positions.** During periodontal instrumentation the seated clinician moves around the patient to maintain neutral body posture.
  - A. **Goal of Positioning.** *Correct positioning of the seated clinician in relation to the treatment area (1) facilitates neutral posture of the clinician’s head, arms, wrists, and hands and (2) provides optimal vision of the tooth surfaces.*
  - B. **Clock Positions**
    1. Instrumentation of the various treatment areas may be accomplished from a range of clinician positions in relation to the patient’s head (Fig. 2-1).
    2. Using an analog clock face as a guide—with the patient’s head being at 12 o’clock and the feet being at 6 o’clock—is a common method of identifying the clinician’s position in relation to the patient (Fig. 2-2).
    3. The positions that the clinician assumes in relation to the patient’s head are known as “**clock positions**”.
2. **Range of Patient Head Positions.** *In addition to assuming an optimal clock position, it is important to ask the patient to assume a head position that facilitates neutral arm, wrist, and hand position for the clinician (Fig. 2-3).*



**Figure 2-1. Movement Around the Patient.**

- The seated clinician can assume a range of positions around the patient during periodontal instrumentation.
- This illustration shows two examples of possible seated positions in relation to the patient.

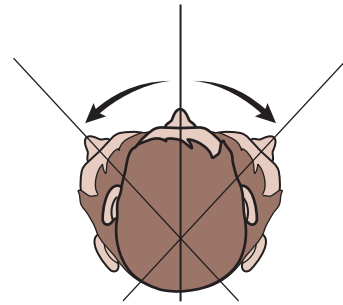


**Figure 2-2. Clinician Clock Positions.**

- Clinician clock positions are identified using the face of an analog clock as the guide (Box 2-1).
- The patient’s head is at the 12 o’clock position and the feet are at the 6 o’clock position.
- Right-handed clinicians sit from 8 to 1 o’clock; left-handed from 11 to 4 o’clock.

**Figure 2-3. Patient Head Positions.**

- The patient's head should be positioned to facilitate neutral arm, wrist, and hand posture for the clinician. The patient's head may be straight or turned toward or away from the clinician.
- The clinician should request that the patient position the head to facilitate visibility and access to the treatment area. The patient is in the dental chair only for 45 to 60 minutes, while the clinician works at chairside throughout an 8-hour day.

**Box 2-1****Directions for Sections 2 and 3 of this Module**

1. The next two sections of this Module contain instructions for practicing the traditional clock positions for each treatment area of the mouth.
2. For this module, you should concentrate on mastering your positioning for each treatment area.
  - **Work without dental instruments and just concentrate on learning positioning.**
  - **Before picking up a periodontal instrument you should master the large motor skills of positioning yourself, your patient, and the dental equipment to facilitate neutral position.**
3. As you practice each clock position, position your arms and hands as described in this module.
  - You will use both of your hands for periodontal instrumentation, the periodontal instrument is held in your dominant hand and the mirror is held in your nondominant hand.
  - For this module, practice placing the fingertips of your hands as shown in the illustration for each clock position.
    - **Place your dominant hand on the teeth in the treatment area.**
    - **Rest your nondominant hand on the patient's cheek or chin.**
4. You will not be able to obtain a clear view of all tooth surfaces as you practice positioning in this module. In Modules 4 to 7, you will learn to use a dental mouth mirror to view these "hidden" tooth surfaces.
5. **Do not wear magnification loupes when practicing and perfecting your positioning skills in this module. You need an unrestricted visual field for self-evaluation.**

**The remainder of this module is divided into right- and left-handed sections.**

## Section 2

## Positioning for the RIGHT-Handed Clinician



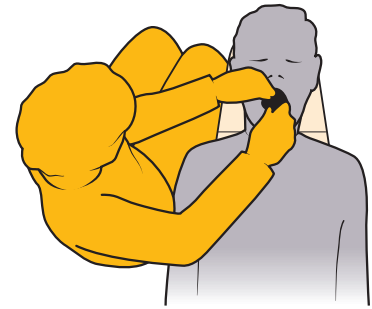
## SKILL BUILDING

## Clock Positions for the RIGHT-Handed Clinician

**Directions:** Practice each clock position by following the criteria outlined below.

## 8 o'clock Positions (To the Front of the Patient)

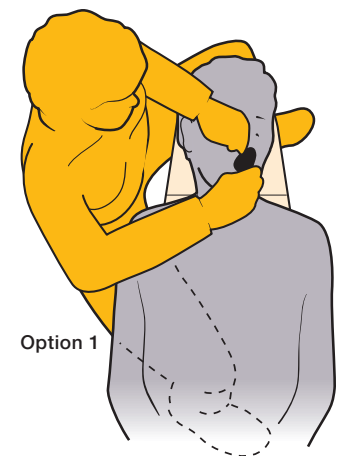
- **Torso Position.** Sit facing the patient with your hip in line with the patient's upper arm.
- **Leg Position.** Your thighs should rest against the side of the patient chair.
- **Arm Positions.** To reach the patient's mouth, hold your arms slightly away from your sides. Hold your lower right arm over the patient's chest. **NOTE:** Do not rest your arm on the patient's head or chest.
- **Line of Vision.** Your line of vision is straight ahead, into the patient's mouth.



**Ergonomic Considerations:** Use of the 8 o'clock position should be limited since it is difficult to maintain neutral arm and torso posture in this clock position. The goal is to minimize postural abnormalities whenever possible.

## 9 o'clock Position (To the Side of the Patient)

- **Torso Position.** Sit facing the side of the patient's head. The midline of your torso is even with the patient's mouth.
- **Leg Position.** Your legs may be in either of two acceptable positions: (1) straddling the patient chair or (2) underneath the *headrest* of the patient chair—not under the chair back. Neutral position is best achieved by straddling the chair; however, you should use the alternative position if you find straddling uncomfortable.
- **Arm Positions.** To reach the patient's mouth, hold the lower half of your right arm in approximate alignment with the patient's shoulder. Hold your left hand and wrist over the region of the patient's right eye.
- **Line of Vision.** Your line of vision is straight down into the mouth.



Option 1



Option 2

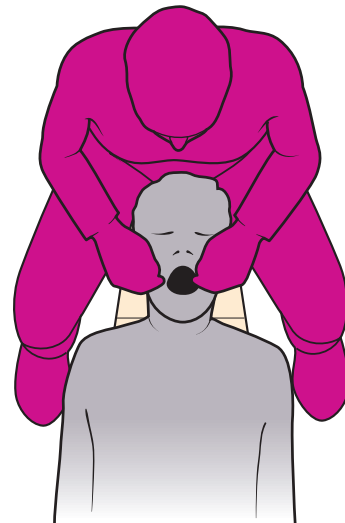
10 to 11 o'clock Position (Near Corner of Headrest)

- **Torso Position.** Sit at the top right corner of the headrest; the midline of your torso is even with the temple region of the patient's head.
- **Leg Position.** Your legs should straddle the corner of the headrest.
- **Arm Positions.** To reach the patient's mouth, hold your right hand directly across the corner of the patient's mouth. Hold your left hand and wrist above the patient's nose and forehead.
- **Line of Vision.** Your line of vision is straight down into the mouth.



12 o'clock Position (Behind the Patient)

- **Torso Position.** Sit behind the patient's head.
- **Leg Position.** Your legs should straddle the headrest.
- **Arm Positions.** To reach the patient's mouth, hold your wrists and hands above the region of the patient's ears and cheeks.
- **Line of Vision.** Your line of vision is straight down into the patient's mouth.



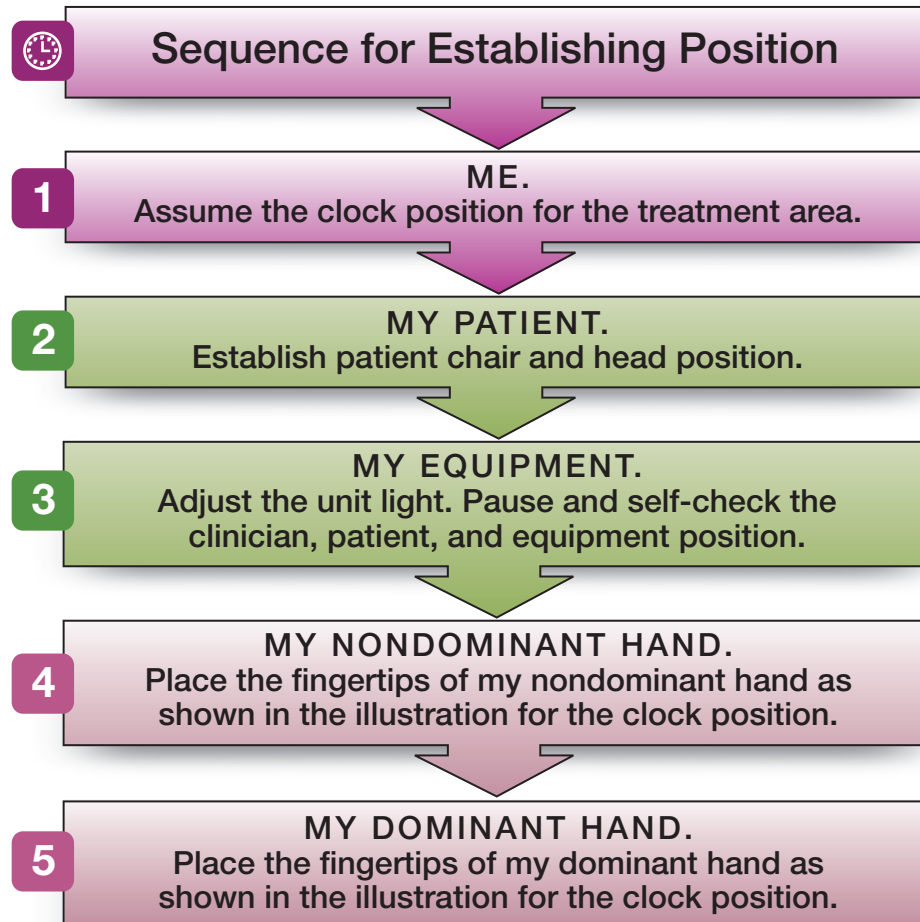
1 to 2 o'clock Position (Near Corner of Headrest)

- **Torso Position.** Sit at the top left corner of the headrest; the midline of your torso is even with the temple region of the patient's head.
- **Leg Position.** Your legs should straddle the corner of the headrest.
- **Arm Positions.** To reach the patient's mouth, hold your left hand directly across the corner of the patient's mouth. Hold your right hand and wrist above the patient's nose and forehead.
- **Line of Vision.** Your line of vision is straight down into the mouth.



**FLOW CHART: SEQUENCE FOR PRACTICING PATIENT/CLINICIAN POSITION**

For successful periodontal instrumentation, it is important to proceed in a step-by-step manner. A useful saying to help you remember the step-by-step approach is “*Me, My Patient, My Light, My Non-dominant hand, My Dominant hand*” (Fig. 2-4).



**Figure 2-4.** Sequence for Establishing Position.

## USE OF TEXTBOOK DURING SKILL PRACTICE

The Skill Building sections of each module are designed to lead the reader step-by-step through each skill practice. It is important to position the textbook for ease of viewing throughout each skill practice (Figs. 2-5 and 2-6).



**Figure 2-5. Position the Book for Ease of Viewing.** Position the book so that it is easy to view during skill practice. Follow along step-by-step with the steps shown in the book.



**Figure 2-6. Book Position When Working Behind the Patient.** Position the book so that it is easy to view when seated behind the patient.



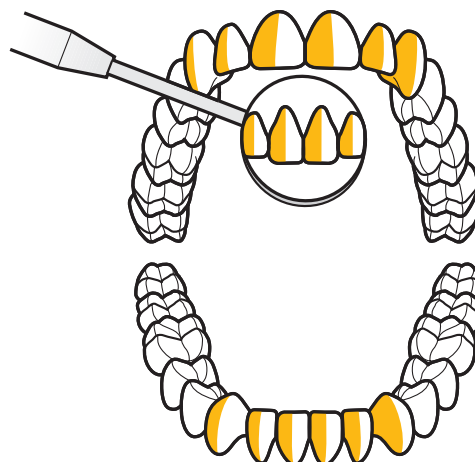


## QUICK START GUIDE TO THE ANTERIOR SEXTANTS

**Directions:** There is no need to waste time memorizing the clock position for each treatment area. The clock positions are easy to remember if you learn to recognize the positioning pattern for the anterior teeth (Figs. 2-7 and 2-8). *For periodontal instrumentation of the anterior teeth, each tooth is divided in half at the midline.*

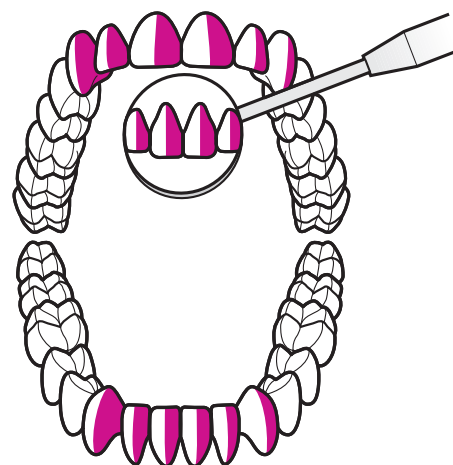
**Figure 2-7. Anterior Surfaces Toward the Right-Handed Clinician.**

- The anterior tooth surfaces shaded in yellow on this drawing are called the **anterior surfaces toward the clinician**.
- The **clock position** for the anterior surfaces toward the clinician ranges from **8 to 9 o'clock**.



**Figure 2-8. Anterior Surfaces Away from the Right-Handed Clinician.**

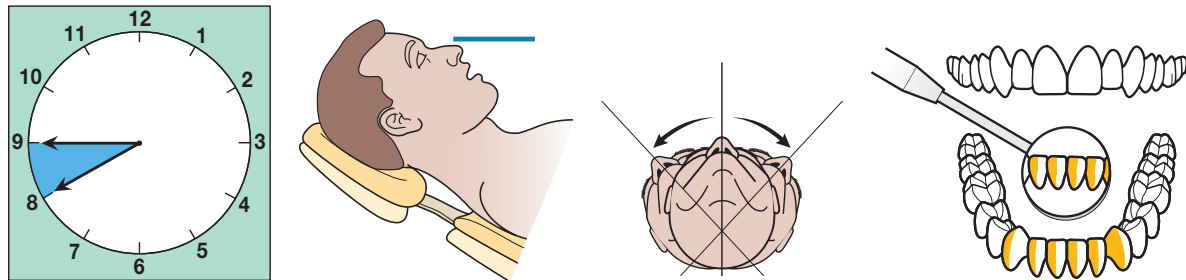
- The anterior surfaces shaded in purple on this drawing are called the **anterior surfaces away from the clinician**.
- The **clock position** for anterior surfaces away from the clinician ranges from **11 to 1 o'clock**.





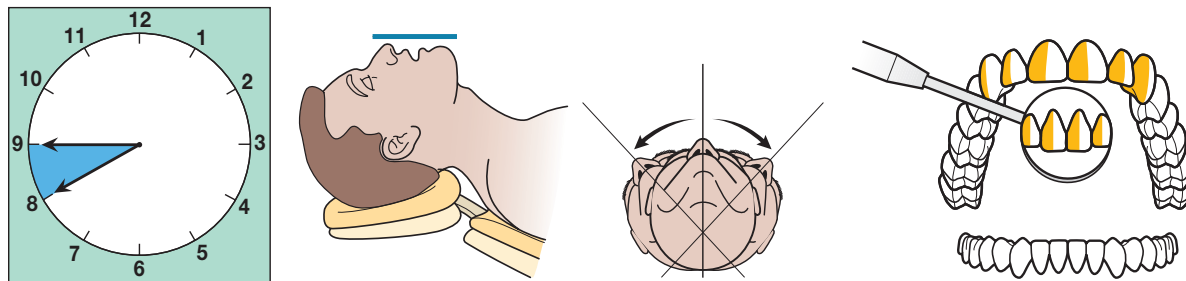
**SKILL BUILDING**  
**Clock Positions for the Anterior Surfaces Toward**

**Directions:** Practice the recommended clinician clock and patient head positions for the anterior “SURFACES TOWARD” by following the illustrations shown below in Figures 2-9 and 2-10.



**Figure 2-9. A-D: Mandibular Anterior Surfaces, TOWARD.**

- Clinician in the 8 to 9 o'clock position.
- Patient chin DOWN; place the mandibular occlusal plane as parallel to the floor as possible.
- Patient head position ranges from neutral to turned to the right or left to facilitate vision of the tooth surfaces.



**Figure 2-10. A-D: Maxillary Anterior Surfaces, TOWARD.**

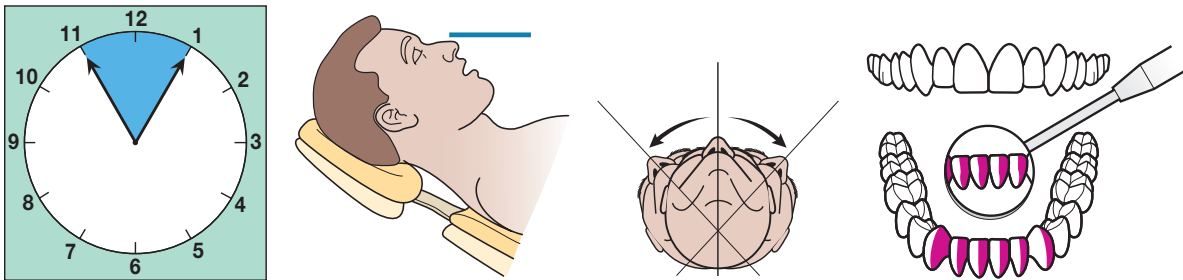
- Clinician in the 8 to 9 o'clock position.
- Patient chin UP; place the maxillary occlusal plane perpendicular to the floor.
- Patient head position ranges from neutral to turned to the right or left to facilitate vision of the tooth surfaces.



**SKILL BUILDING**

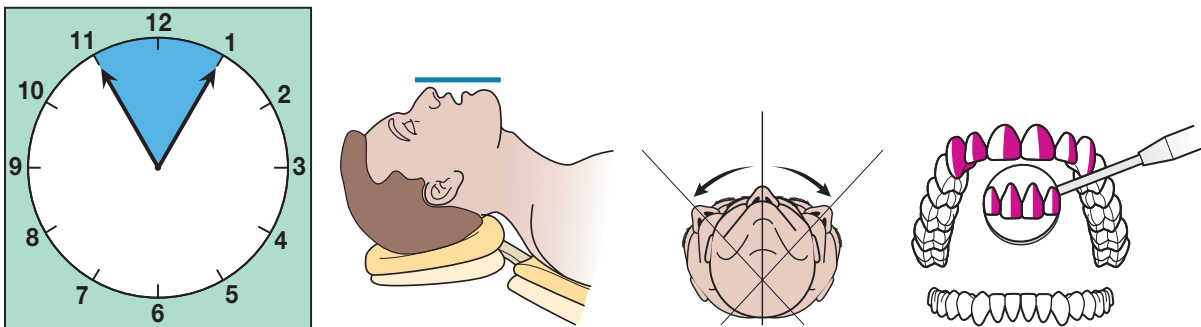
**Clock Positions for the Anterior Surfaces Away**

**Directions:** Practice the recommended clinician clock and patient head positions for the anterior “SURFACES AWAY” by following the illustrations shown below in Figures 2-11 and 2-12.



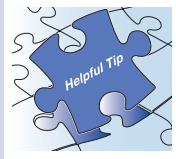
**Figure 2-11. A–D: Mandibular Anterior Surfaces, AWAY.**

- Clinician in the 11 to 1 o’clock position.
- Patient chin DOWN; place the mandibular occlusal plane as parallel to the floor as possible.
- Patient head position ranges from a neutral position to turning the head to the right or left to facilitate vision of the tooth surfaces.



**Figure 2-12. A–D: Maxillary Anterior Surfaces, AWAY.**

- Clinician in the 11 to 1 o’clock position.
- Patient chin UP; place the maxillary occlusal plane perpendicular to the floor.
- Patient head position ranges a neutral position to turning the head to the right or left to facilitate vision of the tooth surfaces.

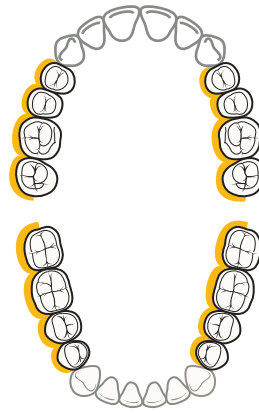


## QUICK START GUIDE TO THE POSTERIOR SEXTANTS

**Directions:** There is no need to waste time memorizing the clock position for each posterior treatment area. The clock positions are easy to remember if you learn to recognize the positioning pattern for the posterior sextants (Figs. 2-13 and 2-14). *For periodontal instrumentation each posterior sextant is divided into two aspects: the (1) facial aspect and (2) lingual aspect of the sextant.*

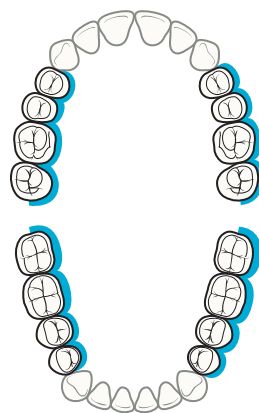
**Figure 2-13. Posterior Aspects Facing Toward the Right-Handed Clinician.**

- The posterior surfaces shaded in yellow on this drawing are called the **posterior aspects facing toward the clinician**.
- The **clock position** for posterior aspects toward the clinician is 9 o'clock.



**Figure 2-14. Posterior Aspects Facing Away from the Right-Handed Clinician.**

- The posterior surfaces shaded in blue on this drawing are called the **posterior aspects facing away from the clinician**.
- The **clock position** for posterior aspects away from the clinician ranges from **10 to 11 o'clock**.

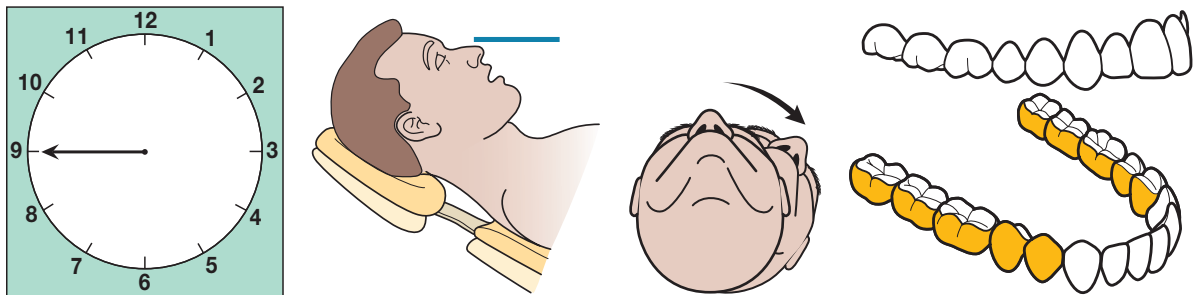




## SKILL BUILDING

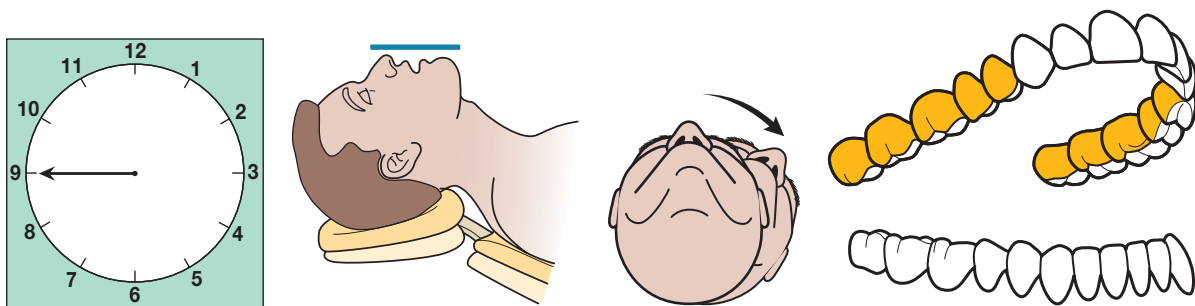
### Clock Positions for the Posterior Sextants, Aspects Facing Toward the Clinician

**Directions:** Practice the recommended clinician clock and patient head positions for the posterior sextants “FACING TOWARD” the clinician by following the illustrations shown below in Figures 2-15 and 2-16.



**Figure 2-15. A–D: Mandibular Posterior Aspects Facing TOWARD.**

- Clinician in the 9 o'clock position.
- Chin DOWN; place the mandibular occlusal plan as parallel to the floor as possible.
- Patient head position ranges from a neutral position to turning the head slightly away from the clinician.



**Figure 2-16. A–D: Maxillary Posterior Aspects Facing TOWARD.**

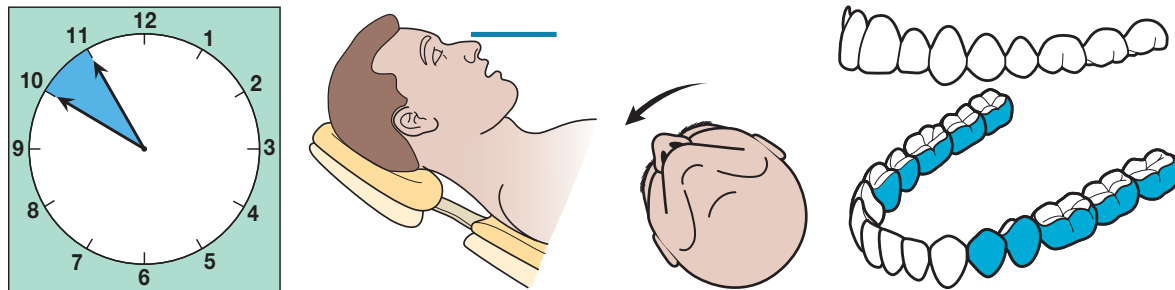
- Clinician in the 9:00 o'clock position.
- Chin UP; place the maxillary occlusal plane perpendicular to the floor.
- Patient head position ranges from a neutral position to turning the head slightly away from the clinician.



### SKILL BUILDING

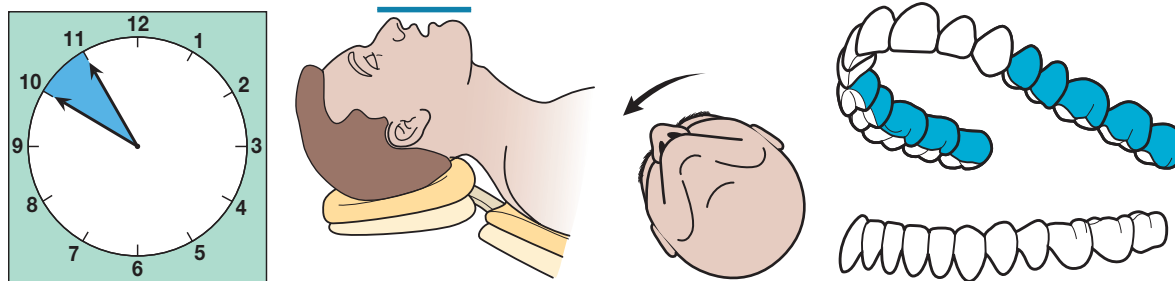
#### Clock Positions for the Posterior Sextants, Aspects Facing Away From the Clinician

**Directions:** Practice the recommended clinician clock and patient head positions for the posterior sextants “FACING AWAY FROM” the clinician by following the illustrations shown below in Figures 2-17 and 2-18.



**Figure 2-17. A–D: Mandibular Posterior Aspects Facing AWAY.**

- Clinician seated in the 10 to 11 o'clock position.
- Chin DOWN; place the mandibular occlusal plan as parallel to the floor as possible.
- Patient head position is turned toward the clinician.



**Figure 2-18. A–D: Maxillary Posterior Aspects Facing AWAY.**

- Clinician seated in the 10 to 11 o'clock position.
- Chin UP; place the maxillary occlusal plane perpendicular to the floor.
- Patient head position is turned toward the clinician.

## REFERENCE SHEET: POSITION FOR THE RIGHT-HANDED CLINICIAN

Table 2-1 summarizes the clock positions for the right-handed clinician. Photocopy this page and use it for quick reference as you practice your positioning skills. Place the photocopied reference sheet in a plastic page protector for longer use.

**TABLE 2-1. CLOCK POSITIONS—POSITIONING SUMMARY**

Treatment Area	Clock Position	Patient Head Position
Mandibular arch—Anterior surfaces toward	8–9	Chin-down; neutral to turned right or left
Maxillary arch—Anterior surfaces toward	8–9	Chin-up; neutral to turned right or left
Mandibular arch—Anterior surfaces away	11–1	Chin-down; neutral to turned right or left
Maxillary arch—Anterior surfaces away	11–1	Chin-up; neutral to turned right or left
Mandibular arch—Posterior aspects toward	9	Chin-down; neutral
Maxillary arch—Posterior aspects toward	9	Chin-up; neutral to turned slightly away
Mandibular arch—Posterior aspects away	10–11	Chin-down; toward
Maxillary arch—Posterior aspects away	10–11	Chin-up; toward

**RIGHT-Handed Clinicians:** This ends Section 2 for the RIGHT-Handed clinician. Please turn to Section 4. Working from a Standing Position.

## Section 3

## Positioning for the LEFT-Handed Clinician



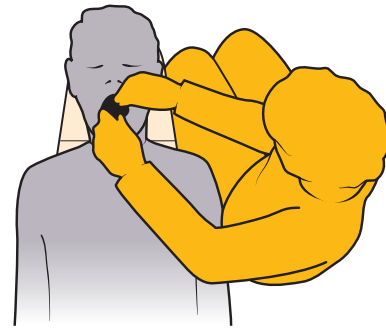
## SKILL BUILDING

## Clock Positions for the LEFT-Handed Clinician

**Directions:** Practice each clock position by following the criteria outlined below.

## 3 to 4 o'clock Position (To the Front of the Patient)

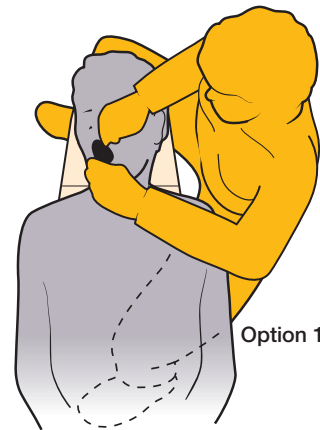
- **Torso Position.** Sit facing the patient with your hip in line with the patient's upper arm.
- **Leg Position.** Your thighs should rest against the side of the patient chair.
- **Arm Positions.** To reach the patient's mouth, hold your arms slightly away from your sides. Hold your lower left arm over the patient's chest. The side of your right hand rests in the area of the patient's right cheekbone and upper lip. **NOTE:** Do not rest your arm on the patient's head or chest.
- **Line of Vision.** Your line of vision is straight ahead, into the patient's mouth.



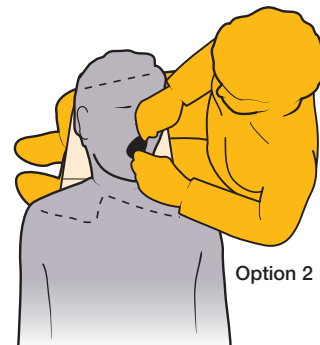
**Ergonomic Considerations:** Use of the 4 o'clock position should be limited since it is difficult to maintain neutral arm and torso posture in this clock position. The goal is to minimize postural abnormalities whenever possible.

## 3 o'clock Position (To the Side)

- **Torso Position.** Sit facing the side of the patient's head. The midline of your torso is even with the patient's mouth.
- **Leg Position.** Your legs may be in either of two acceptable positions: (1) straddling the patient chair or (2) underneath the *headrest* of the patient chair. Neutral position is best achieved by straddling the chair, however you should use the alternative position if you find straddling uncomfortable.
- **Arm Positions.** To reach the patient's mouth, hold the lower half of your left arm in approximate alignment with the patient's shoulder. Hold your right hand and wrist over the region of patient's left eye.
- **Hand Positions.** Rest your right hand in the area of the patient's left cheekbone. Rest the fingertips of your left hand on the premolar teeth of the mandibular left posterior sextant.
- **Line of Vision.** Your line of vision is straight down into the mouth.



Option 1



Option 2



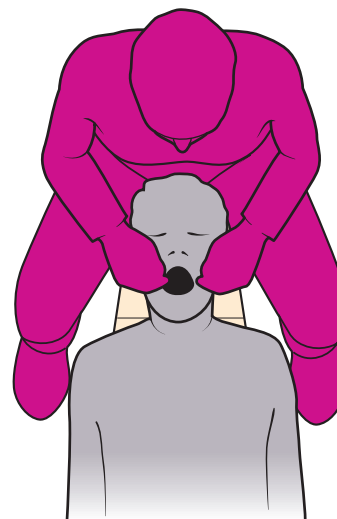
### 1 to 2 o'clock Position (Near Corner of Headrest)

- **Torso Position.** Sit at the top left corner of the headrest; the midline of your torso is even with the temple region of the patient's head.
- **Leg Position.** Your legs should straddle the corner of the headrest.
- **Arm Positions.** To reach the patient's mouth, hold your left hand directly across the corner of the patient's mouth. Hold your right hand and wrist above the patient's nose and forehead.
- **Line of Vision.** Your line of vision is straight down into the mouth.



### 12 o'clock Position (Directly behind Patient)

- **Torso Position.** Sit directly behind the patient's head; you may sit anywhere from the left corner of the headrest to directly behind the headrest.
- **Leg Position.** Your legs should straddle the headrest.
- **Arm Positions.** To reach the patient's mouth, hold your wrists and hands above the region of the patient's ears and cheeks.
- **Line of Vision.** Your line of vision is straight down into the patient's mouth.



LEFT-HANDED CLINICIAN

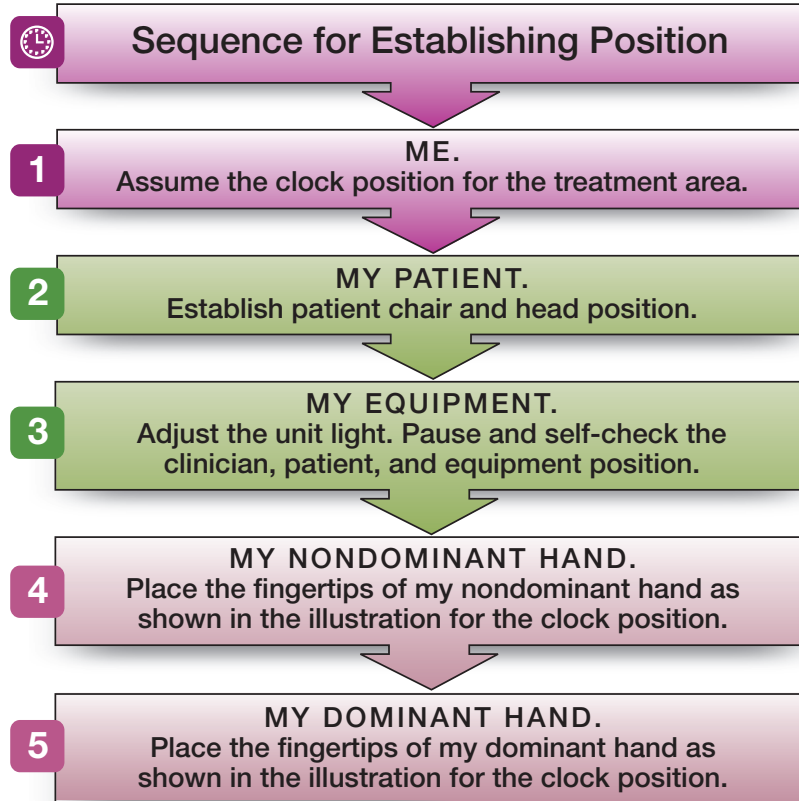
### 10 to 11 o'clock Position (Near Corner of Headrest)

- **Torso Position.** Sit at the top right corner of the headrest; the midline of your torso is even with the temple region of the patient's head.
- **Leg Position.** Your legs should straddle the corner of the headrest.
- **Arm Positions.** To reach the patient's mouth, hold your right hand directly across the corner of the patient's mouth. Hold your left hand and wrist above the patient's nose and forehead.
- **Line of Vision.** Your line of vision is straight down into the mouth.



**FLOW CHART: SEQUENCE FOR PRACTICING PATIENT/CLINICIAN POSITION**

For successful periodontal instrumentation, it is important to proceed in a step-by-step manner. A useful saying to help you remember the step-by-step approach is “*Me, My Patient, My Light, My Non-dominant hand, My Dominant hand*” (Fig. 2-19).



**Figure 2-19. Sequence for Establishing Position.**

## USE OF TEXTBOOK DURING SKILL PRACTICE

The Skill Building sections of each module are designed to lead the reader step-by-step through each skill practice. It is important to position the textbook for ease of viewing throughout each skill practice (Figs. 2-20 and 2-21).



**Figure 2-20. Position the Book for Ease of Viewing.** Position the book so that it is easy to view during skill practice. Follow along step-by-step with the steps shown in the book.

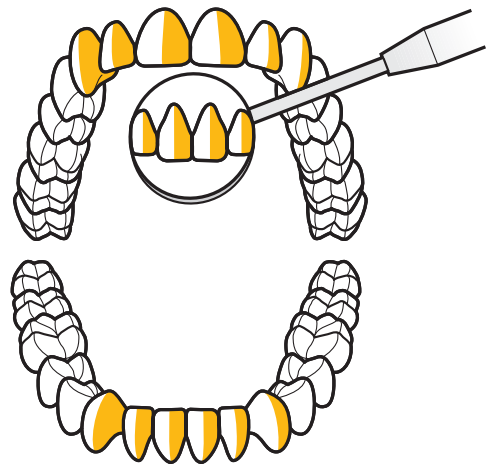


**Figure 2-21. Book Position When Working Behind the Patient.** Position the book so that it is easy to view when seated behind the patient.



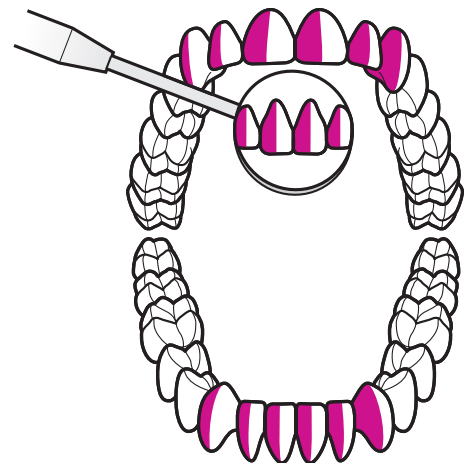
## QUICK START GUIDE TO THE ANTERIOR SEXTANTS

**Directions:** There is no need to waste time memorizing the clock position for each treatment area. The clock positions are easy to remember if you learn to recognize the positioning pattern for the anterior teeth (Figs. 2-22 and 2-23). *For periodontal instrumentation of the anterior teeth, each tooth is divided in half at the midline.*



**Figure 2-22. Anterior Surfaces Toward the Left-Handed Clinician.**

- The anterior tooth surfaces shaded in yellow on this drawing are called the **anterior surfaces toward the clinician**.
- The **clock position** for the anterior surfaces toward the clinician ranges from **3 to 4 o'clock**.



**Figure 2-23. Anterior Surfaces Away from the Left-Handed Clinician.**

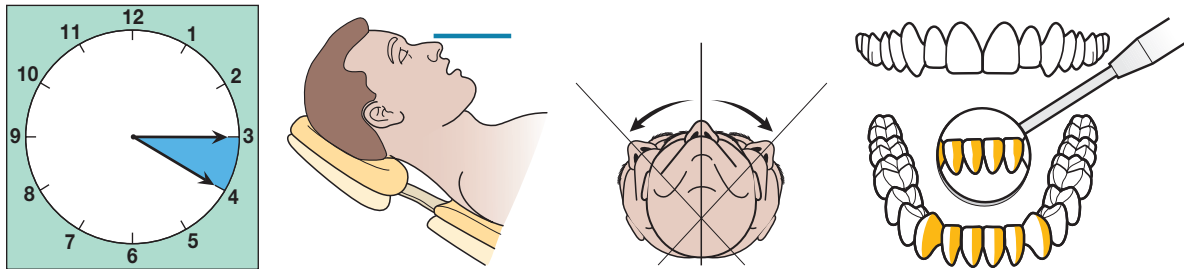
- The anterior surfaces shaded in purple on this drawing are called the **anterior surfaces away from the clinician**.
- The **clock position** for the anterior surfaces away from the clinician ranges from **11 to 1 o'clock**.



**SKILL BUILDING**

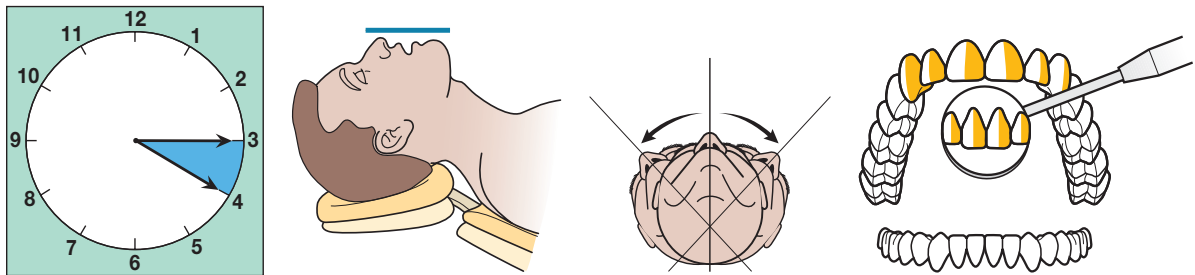
**Clock Positions for the Anterior Surfaces Toward**

**Directions:** Practice the recommended clinician clock and patient head positions for the anterior “SURFACES TOWARD” by following the illustrations shown below in Figures 2-24 and 2-25.



**Figure 2-24. A–D: Mandibular Anterior Surfaces, TOWARD.**

- Clinician seated in the 3 to 4 o’clock position.
- Patient chin DOWN; place the mandibular occlusal plane as parallel to the floor as possible.
- Patient head position ranges from neutral to turned to the right or left to facilitate vision of the tooth surfaces.



**Figure 2-25. A–D: Maxillary Anterior Surfaces, TOWARD.**

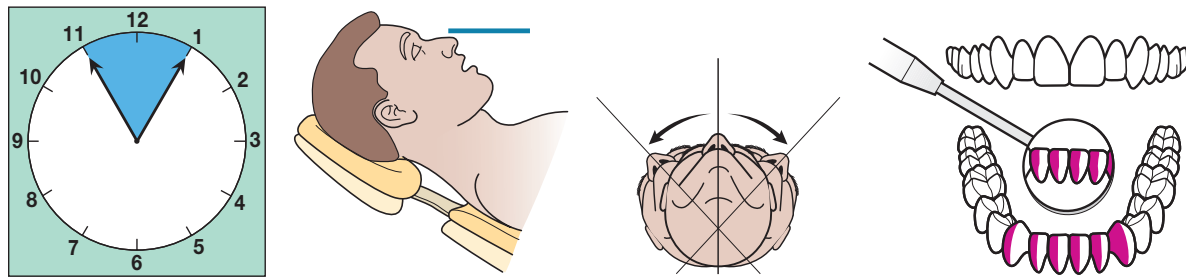
- Clinician in the 3 to 4 o’clock position.
- Patient chin UP; place the maxillary occlusal plane perpendicular to the floor.
- Patient head position ranges from neutral to turned to the right or left to facilitate vision of the tooth surfaces.



**SKILL BUILDING**

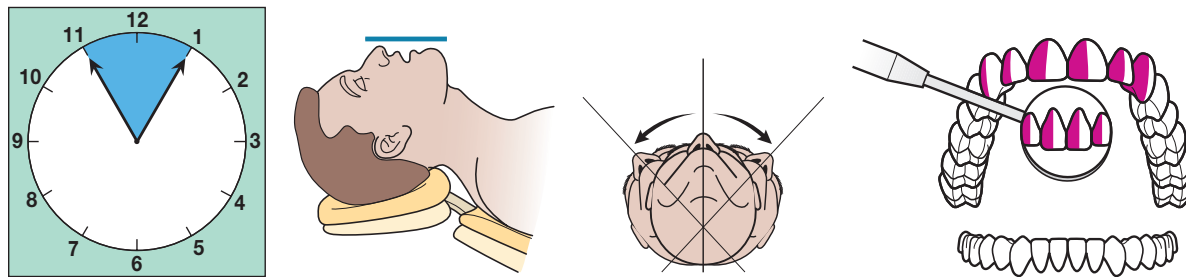
**Clock Positions for the Anterior Surfaces Away**

**Directions:** Practice the recommended clinician clock and patient head positions for the anterior “SURFACES AWAY” by following the illustrations shown below in Figures 2-26 and 2-27.



**Figure 2-26. A–D: Mandibular Anterior Surfaces, AWAY.**

- Clinician seated in the 11 to 1 o’clock position.
- Patient chin DOWN; place the mandibular occlusal plane as parallel to the floor as possible.
- Patient head position ranges from a neutral position to turning the head to the right or left to facilitate vision of the tooth surfaces.



**Figure 2-27. A–D: Maxillary Anterior Surfaces, AWAY.**

- Clinician seated in the 11 to 1 o’clock position.
- Patient chin UP; place the maxillary occlusal plane perpendicular to the floor.
- Patient head position ranges from a neutral position to turning the head to the right or left to facilitate vision of the tooth surfaces.

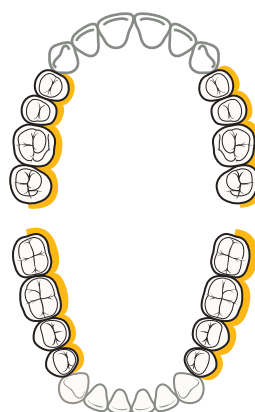


## QUICK START GUIDE TO THE POSTERIOR SEXTANTS

**Directions:** There is no need to waste time memorizing the clock position for each posterior treatment area. The clock positions are easy to remember if you learn to recognize the positioning pattern for the posterior sextants (Figs. 2-28 and 2-29). *For periodontal instrumentation each posterior sextant is divided into two aspects: the (1) facial aspect and (2) lingual aspect of the sextant.*

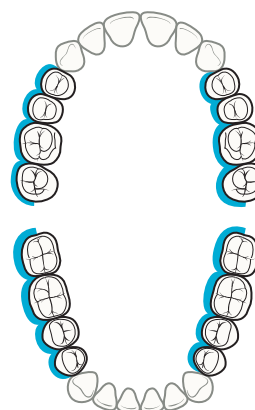
### Figure 2-28. Posterior Aspects Facing Toward the Left-Handed Clinician.

- The posterior surfaces shaded in yellow on this drawing are called the **posterior aspects facing toward the clinician**.
- The **clock position** for the posterior aspects toward the clinician is **3 o'clock**.



### Figure 2-29. Posterior Aspects Facing Away from the Left-Handed Clinician.

- The posterior surfaces shaded in blue on this drawing are called the **posterior aspects facing away from the clinician**.
- The **clock position** for posterior aspects away from the clinician ranges from **1 to 2 o'clock**.

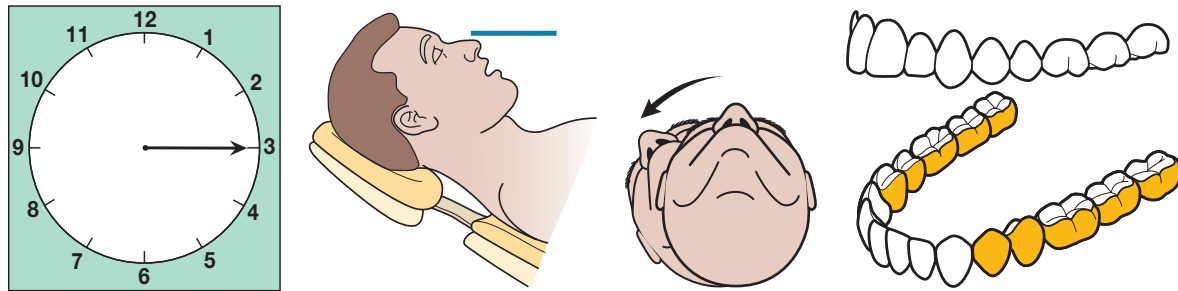




### SKILL BUILDING

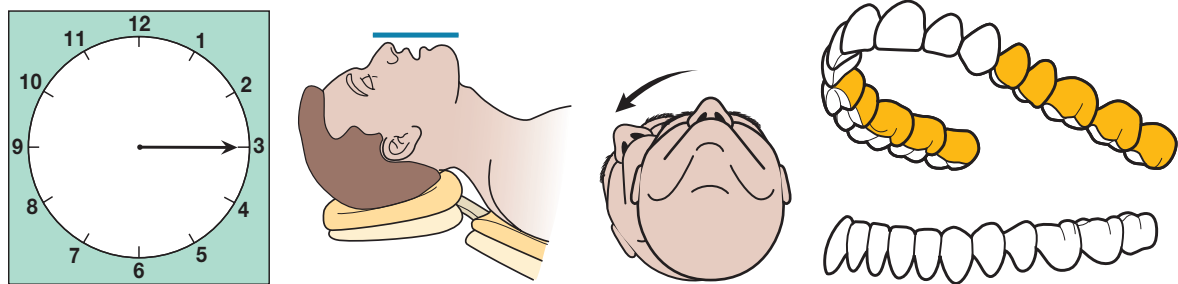
#### Clock Positions for the Posterior Sextants, Aspects Facing Toward the Clinician

**Directions:** Practice the recommended clinician clock and patient head positions for the posterior sextants “FACING TOWARD” the clinician by following the illustrations shown below in Figures 2-30 and 2-31.



**Figure 2-30. A–D: Mandibular Posterior Aspects Facing TOWARD.**

- Clinician seated in the 3 o’clock position.
- Chin DOWN; place the mandibular occlusal plane as parallel to the floor as possible.
- Patient head position ranges from a neutral position to turning the head slightly away from the clinician.



**Figure 2-31. A–D: Maxillary Posterior Aspects Facing TOWARD.**

- Clinician seated in the 3 o’clock position.
- Chin UP; place the maxillary occlusal plane perpendicular to the floor.
- Patient head position ranges from a neutral position to turning the head slightly away from the clinician.

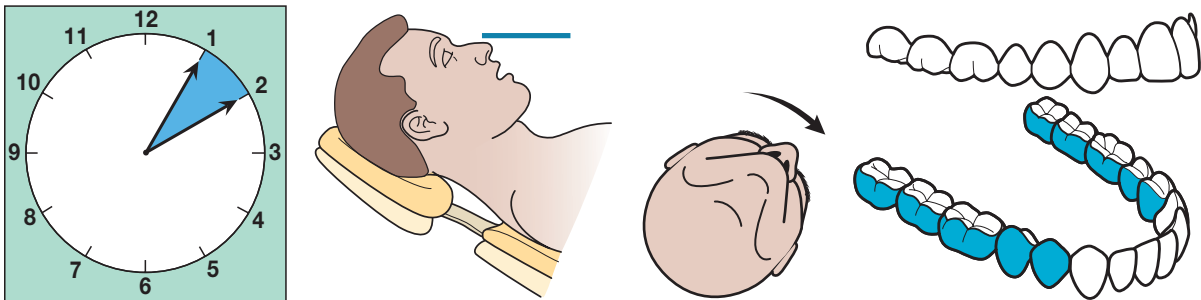




**SKILL BUILDING**

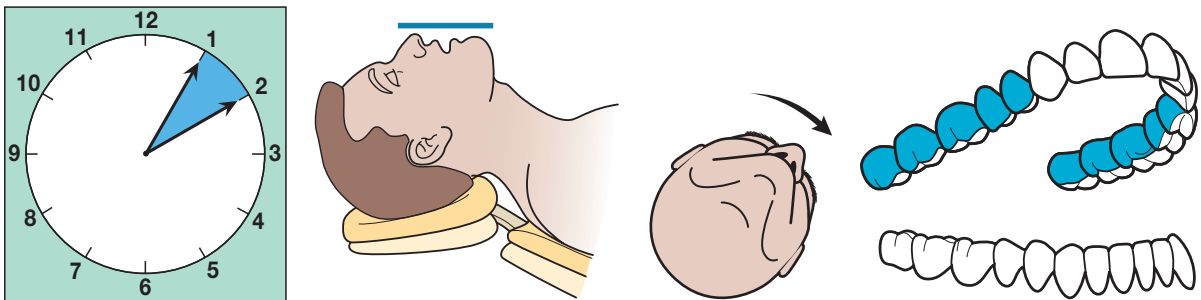
**Clock Positions for the Posterior Sextants, Aspects Facing Away From the Clinician**

**Directions:** Practice the recommended clinician clock and patient head positions for the posterior sextants “FACING AWAY FROM” the clinician by following the illustrations shown below in Figures 2-32 and 2-33.



**Figure 2-32. Mandibular Posterior Aspects Facing AWAY.**

- Clinician seated in the 1 to 2 o'clock position.
- Chin DOWN; place the mandibular occlusal plane as parallel to the floor as possible.
- Patient head position is turned toward the clinician.



**Figure 2-33. Maxillary Posterior Aspects Facing AWAY.**

- Clinician seated in the 1 to 2 o'clock position.
- Chin UP; place the maxillary occlusal plane perpendicular to the floor.
- Patient head position is turned toward the clinician.

**REFERENCE SHEET: POSITION FOR THE LEFT-HANDED CLINICIAN**

Table 2-2 summarizes the clock positions for the left-handed clinician. Photocopy this page and use it for quick reference as you practice your positioning skills. Place the photocopied reference sheet in a plastic page protector for longer use.

**TABLE 2-2. CLOCK POSITIONS—POSITIONING SUMMARY**

<b>Treatment Area</b>	<b>Clock Position</b>	<b>Patient Head Position</b>
Mandibular arch—Anterior surfaces toward	3–4	Chin-down; neutral to turned right or left
Maxillary arch—Anterior surfaces toward	3–4	Chin-up; neutral to turned right or left
Mandibular arch—Anterior surfaces away	11–1	Chin-down; neutral to turned right or left
Maxillary arch—Anterior surfaces away	11–1	Chin-up; neutral to turned right or left
Mandibular arch—Posterior aspects toward	3	Chin-down; neutral
Maxillary arch—Posterior aspects toward	3	Chin-up; neutral to turned slightly away
Mandibular arch—Posterior aspects away	1–2	Chin-down; toward
Maxillary arch—Posterior aspects away	1–2	Chin-up; toward

## Section 4

# Modified Positioning: Working from a Standing Position

At times, it may be helpful for the clinician to use a standing, rather than a seated position, for periodontal instrumentation. A standing position can be used when there is difficulty accessing the treatment area, when the patient cannot be placed in a supine position due to medical or physical contraindications, or when working on mandibular treatment areas (Figs. 2-34 and 2-35).



**Figure 2-34. A–B: Correct Standing Clinician Position.**

- A standing clinician position can be used to facilitate access to a treatment area or when a supine position is contraindicated for a patient due to medical or physical limitations.
- Notice that the clinician's shoulders are relaxed, the elbow of her dominant hand is a waist level, her torso is in neutral position, and she is not leaning over the patient.

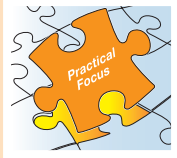


**Figure 2-35. Incorrect Standing Clinician Position.**

- This is an example of incorrect standing position.
- Note that the clinician's shoulders are hunched, her torso is tilted and twisted, and her elbows are raised.

## Section 5

# Skill Application



### PRACTICAL FOCUS

#### Assessing Patient and Clinician Position

Evaluate the photographs shown in Figures 2-36 to 2-43:

- (1) Evaluate the clinician, patient, and equipment position in each photograph.
- (2) For each incorrect positioning element describe (a) what the problem is, (2) how the problem could be corrected, and (c) the musculoskeletal problems that could result from each positioning problem.



**Figure 2-36. Photo 1**



**Figure 2-37. Photo 2**



**Figure 2-38. Photo 3**



Figure 2-39. Photo 4



Figure 2-40. Photo 5

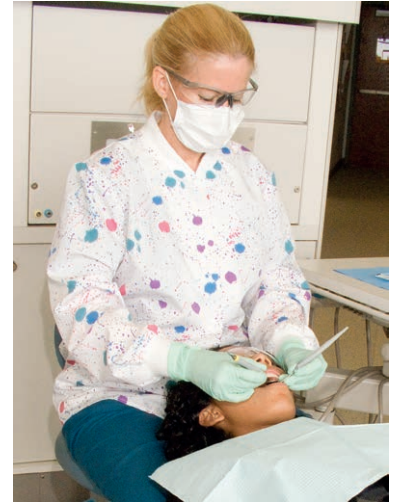


Figure 2-41. Photo 6



Figure 2-42. Photo 7



Figure 2-43. Photo 8

## Student Self Evaluation Module 2: Positioning and Clock Positions

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Area 1 = anterior sextant, facial aspect
- Area 2 = anterior sextant, lingual aspect
- Area 3 = right posterior sextant, facial aspect
- Area 4 = right posterior sextant, lingual aspect
- Area 5 = left posterior sextant, facial aspect
- Area 6 = left posterior sextant, lingual aspect

**DIRECTIONS:** Self-evaluate your skill level in each treatment area as: **S** (satisfactory) or **U** (unsatisfactory).

Criteria: Mandibular Arch						
Positioning/Ergonomics	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6
Adjusts clinician chair correctly						
Reclines patient chair and assures that patient's head is even with top of headrest						
Positions instrument tray within easy reach for front, side, or rear delivery as appropriate for operatory configuration						
Positions unit light at arm's length or dons dental headlight and adjusts it for use						
Assumes the recommended clock position						
Positions backrest of patient chair for the specified arch and adjusts height of patient chair so that clinician's elbows remain at waist level when accessing the specified treatment area						
Asks patient to assume the head position that facilitates the clinician's view of the specified treatment area						
Maintains neutral position						
Directs light to illuminate the specified treatment area						
Criteria: Maxillary Arch						
Positioning/Ergonomics	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6
Adjusts clinician chair correctly						
Reclines patient chair and assures that patient's head is even with top of headrest						
Positions instrument tray within easy reach for front, side, or rear delivery as appropriate for operatory configuration						
Positions unit light at arm's length or dons dental headlight and adjusts it for use						
Assumes the recommended clock position						
Positions backrest of patient chair for the specified arch and adjusts height of patient chair so that clinician's elbows remain at waist level when accessing the specified treatment area						
Asks patient to assume the head position that facilitates the clinician's view of the specified treatment area						
Maintains neutral position						
Directs light to illuminate the specified treatment area						



**NOTE TO COURSE INSTRUCTORS:** Module Evaluation forms—in both computerized and paper formats—are available online.