

On Effects of Sleep Position on Breathing

Jackson et al. (2015) studied the effects of sleep position on breathing (namely the problem of obstructive sleep apnea or OSA). Jackson et al. (2015) noted that sleep-position/posture can affect structural change in the upper airway, the position of diaphragm, and the shapes of velopharyngeal/oropharyngeal airways. Jackson et al. (2015) noted that sleeping on the side is the best position for those with sleep apnea. Morong, Hermsen, and de Vries (2014) noted that breathing changes occurred in pregnant women as well throughout the pregnancy due to body changes (especially in thoracic area such as elevated diaphragm). I think people with varying body types (and weight distribution) will experience different "good positions" for breathing. Hareem's post in this thread provided a good article by Nelson (2012) and mentioned how muscle imbalances (especially upper cross) affect breathing. Since, posture and muscular imbalances are specific to an individual (and also taking into account their physical activity lifestyle), I think it makes sense that different people might have some differences in optimal breathing position.

References

Jackson, M., Collins, A., Berlowitz, D., Howard, M., O'Donoghue, F., & Barnes, M. (2015). Efficacy of sleep position modification to treat positional obstructive sleep apnea. *Sleep Medicine, 16*(4), 545-552.

Morong, S., Hermsen, B., & de Vries, N. (2014). Sleep-disordered breathing in pregnancy: A review of the physiology and potential role for positional therapy. *Sleep & Breathing Schlaf & Atmung, 18*(1), 31-37.

Nelson, N. (2012). Diaphragmatic breathing: The foundation of core stability. *Strength and Conditioning Journal, 34*(5), 34-40.