

Simple Solutions

In IVUN's seventh conference call, polio survivor and ventilator user Nancy Baldwin Carter, Omaha, Nebraska, shared how she solved problems she has encountered by inventing simple devices.

Carter has neck muscle weakness and needs assistance in keeping her neck up. Her adjustable "chin crutch" assists her in breathing, swallowing and speaking. The base is a red rubber ball that prevents the chin crutch from sliding around and the top is a block of wood that is padded and covered with sheepskin. The device is placed under the back of her right jaw but does not hold her jaw shut. "It feels like a little shelf that holds up my head and opens the passageways." She uses it most of the day and can adjust its length, and she uses it all night long with her mask.



Typical headgear is too heavy and can interfere with wires from spinal surgery. The best solution for Carter is taping a stripped-down nasal mask (Breeze) to a plastic head band that provides stability. The device weighs 3.5 ounces.



Nancy Carter and her "chin crutch."

This sketch describes the setup that allows Carter to use her arms, which are non-functioning due to polio. The slings attached to her back brace are made of leather and positioned so her arms touch her sides, the position in which she can use her arms. The device is designed so there is no weight on her shoulders. ■



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