



# Neater Eater Instructions Manual Versions

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Safety .....	page 1
The Neater Eater – a modular system.....	page 2
Setting up the unit: Clamps, Spoon, Plate, User Position .....	page 3
Tips on using the unit: Positioning, Spoon, Practice, Food, Cleaning .....	page 4
Adjusting the Stops: Up, Down, Front, Back .....	page 5
Adjusting the Forward Spring .....	page 6
Adjusting the Lift Spring .....	**NEW easy-adjust design**..... page 7
Right to Left Handed conversion.....	page 7
Using the Adjustable Handle .....	page 8
Using the Plate Turner or Raising Spacers .....	page 9
Neater Eater Accessories .....	page 10



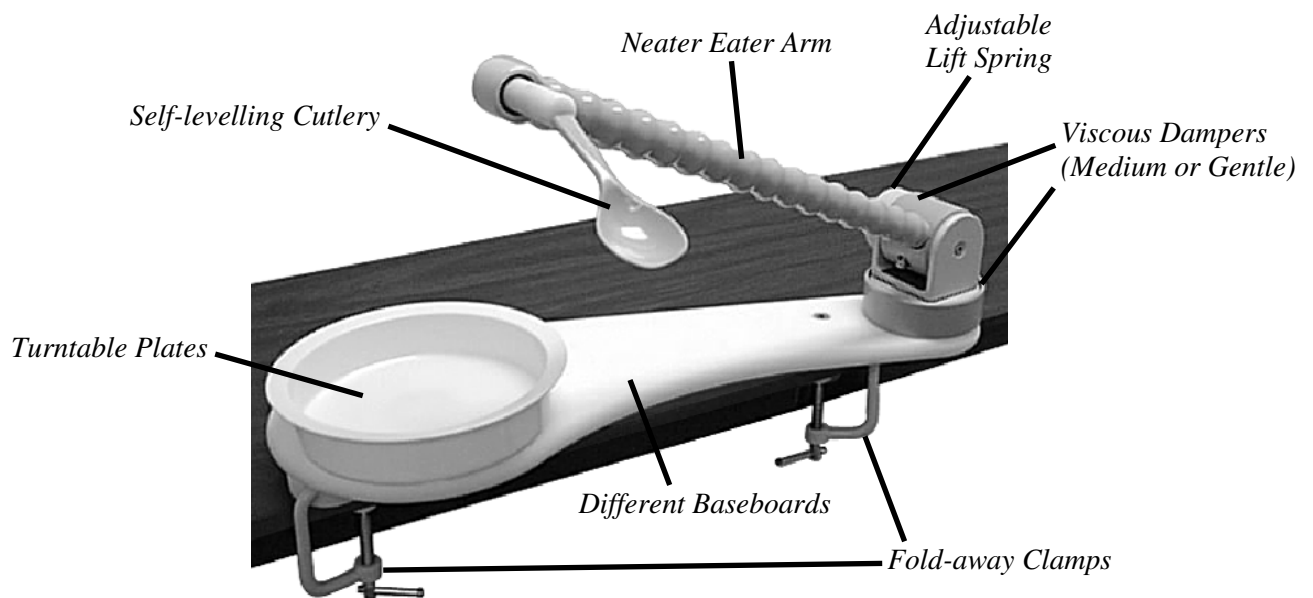
tel: +44 (0)1298 23882  
fax: +44 (0)1298 23883  
email: sales@neater.co.uk  
web: <http://www.neater.co.uk>

## Safety

- Read all instructions carefully before use and particularly before making any adjustments. Incorrect use and adjustment could damage the Neater Eater and/or make its use dangerous in some way.
- The Neater Eater should only be used to assist the eating of consumable foods or for holding safe light objects. Ensure that food is not scalding hot.
- The Neater Eater should not be used by people with swallowing difficulties or who are liable to choke, except under the supervision of a Speech and Language Therapist.
- Do not attempt to eat large amounts of food in one mouthful as this can lead to choking. Use narrower cutlery if necessary to reduce this risk.
- A carer should always be present if there is any risk of choking or any other danger.
- Clean all parts before every meal and check that no cracks or chips have appeared in any components. This is particularly important for parts that touch food or the user's mouth. Most plastic cutlery will crack eventually. This can collect germs, create sharp edges and lead to bits breaking off that may be swallowed. Ceramic plates can chip creating sharp edges.
- Before each meal, check that the peg on the base of the plate is firmly attached.
- Only use attachments supplied by authorized Neater Eater distributors.
- Ensure the Neater Eater is firmly attached to a sturdy table to avoid it overbalancing.
- Take care not to stick the cutlery in your eye or into the back of your throat.
- People with uncontrolled movements, particularly uncontrolled body or head movements, should not use hard or sharp cutlery such as metal spoons or forks.
- Ensure that the M10 nut holding the Neater Eater arm to the baseboard is secure. The nut should be very tight indeed so that the lugs on the base of the arm dig into and grip the baseboard..
- Ensure all stops are properly adjusted and tightened as appropriate before use.
- Be careful not to trap fingers in the stops.
- Do not allow someone else to move the Neater Eater arm when making adjustments.
- Always replace covers after making adjustments before use or before connecting the Version 5 Neater Eater to a power supply.
- Be careful not to hit the clamps when moving into position to use the Neater Eater.
- Wipe the Neater Eater clean after each meal to stop any build up of food which can collect germs and could also get into and damage the mechanism of the Neater Eater. Ensure crockery and cutlery are properly cleaned.
- Crockery and cutlery provided with the Neater Eater are food safe. Other components may not be safe to suck or chew.
- Side effects of using the Neater Eater may include over-eating, fatigue or muscle build-up through the exercise involved. Advice should be sought as appropriate e.g.: from a dietician and a physiotherapist.

Neater Eaters are designed to comply with the essential requirements of the Medical Devices Directive Class 1 (EC Council Directive 93-52-EEC of 14 June 1993).





## The Neater Eater – a modular system

The Neater Eater is a modular system. Different attachments and settings are suitable for people with different abilities.

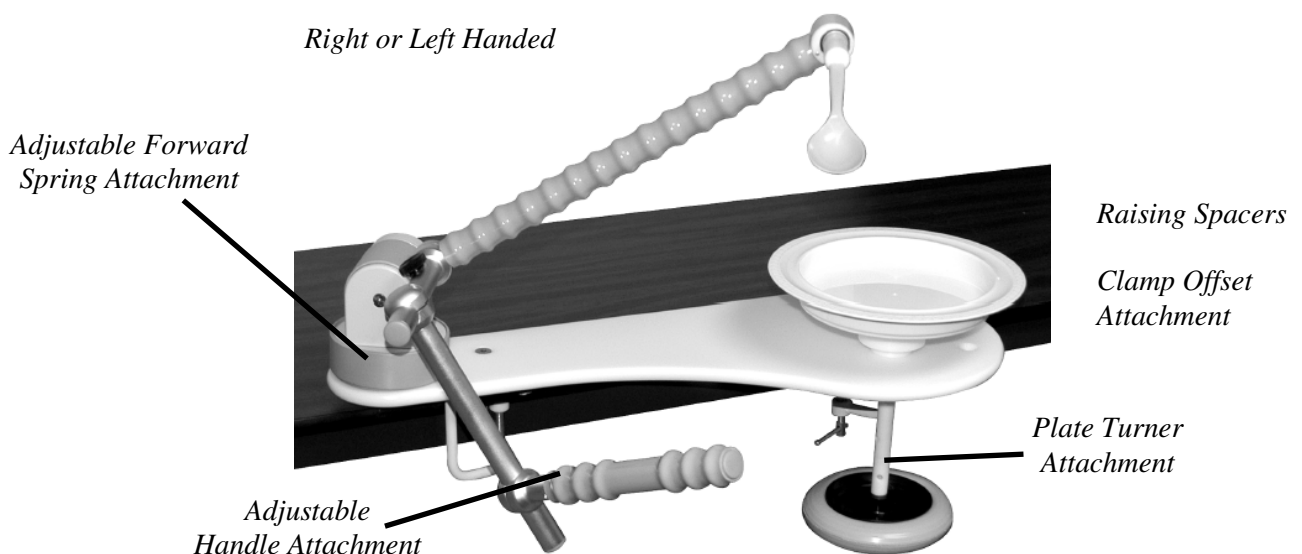
For instance, the medium damped Neater Eater arm is effective at absorbing strong tremors in a person's arm, but may be too heavy for someone with weak arms who should use the gently damped Neater Eater arm.

Different baseboards are available for access, stability and compact size.

The Neater Eater system is designed to be simple – using the minimum technology to enable you to use your own movements to feed yourself. Some people do need or choose more assistance so an **electric powered programmable version of the Neater Eater is also available.**

Latest information on attachments including cutlery and crockery choices is available on the website:

[www.neater.co.uk](http://www.neater.co.uk)



The **NEATER EATER** is pre-adjusted to settings that are suitable for some users.

- The **Lift Spring** and **Forward Spring** (if fitted) are adjusted so you can move the arm down and backward with relative ease. If the Forward Spring is fitted, the spring tensions will normally be set to lift the arm up and forward to your mouth.
- The **Stops** are pre-set so the spoon can be lowered to the back edge of the plate. You will want to adjust the Up Stop and Front Stop (if fitted) according to your height and position.
- The Neater Eater must be at room temperature before use. This may take a couple of hours if it has been stored somewhere very cold or very hot

## Setting Up The Unit:

Unfold the **Clamps** to secure the unit onto a sturdy table. The clamps can be rotated around to the desired position. Tighten the screws on top of the base to hold clamps in place. Tighten the clamps to the underside of the table. (Over-tightening can bend the clamps).

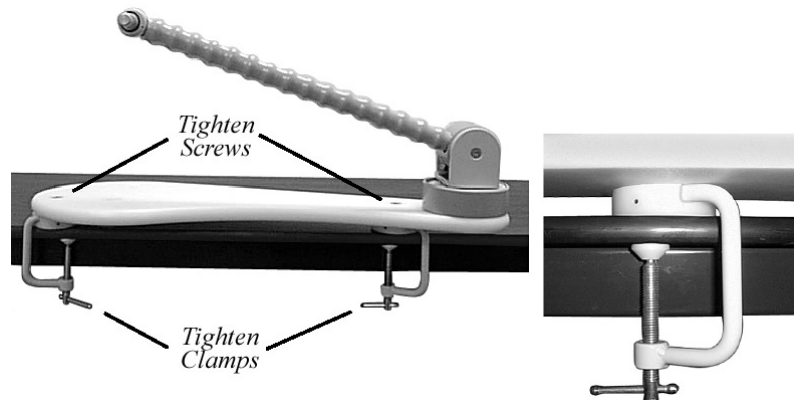
Some baseboards allow a choice of positioning holes for the clamps. When moving the clamp from one hole to the other, it is important to make sure the slot in the clamp fits around the pin in the assembly, because this is what keeps the clamp from sliding out of the assembly. If the clamp position is inconvenient (perhaps obstructing a chair armrest or uncomfortably close to your leg) a Clamp Offset attachment can be fitted to move the clamp position. Additional feet can be attached to aid clamping to wheelchair trays but use of a conventional sturdy table is recommended.

The **Spoon** simply pushes on and pulls off the end of the arm. Do not twist it. The ball on top and the notch on the bottom hold the spoon in place on the spoon receiver.

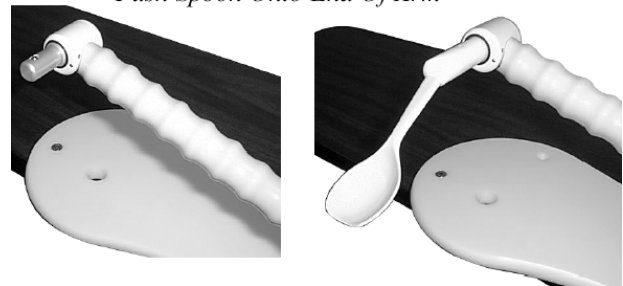
The peg underneath the **Plate** holds it in place in the hole in the base (or in the turntable attachment if fitted), and allows it to be turned to select the food.

**Position yourself** between the plate and the centre of the base. Many users choose to sit facing the plate, at a slight angle from the table.

The Neater Eater must be adjusted so the spoon is aligned correctly to the mouth when the arm is in the up/forward position. Follow the steps on the next few pages *in the order shown*.



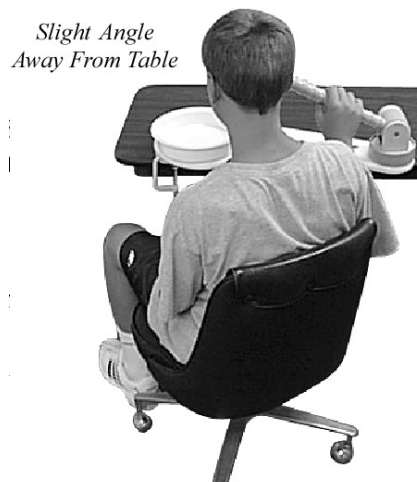
*Push Spoon Onto End Of Arm*



*Place Plate Onto Base*



*Slight Angle  
Away From Table*



*Spoon Aligned To Mouth*

## Neater Eater Tips

### Using The Unit:

#### *Correct positioning is vital.*

Position yourself so you can take food off the spoon comfortably. Some people like the spoon to stop a little in front of and slightly below their mouths, so they can lean forward and take the food off the spoon. Others (particularly people with head tremor) may need the spoon to come up to mouth level and then move forward all the way into their mouth, so they do not need to move their head very much if at all. Sitting as close as comfortably possible to the table is usually best, reducing the plate to mouth distance.



*Spoon Aligned To Mouth*

Many users let go of the arm after scooping food from the plate. This allows the Lift Spring and Forward Spring (if fitted) to bring the spoon up and forward to their mouths automatically. The springs should be adjusted so the spoon finishes moving up before it finishes moving forward. This allows the spoon to move horizontally to the mouth, rather than coming forward and then lifting up, and possibly hitting the user under the chin.

### Practice using the Neater Eater without food:

- Try holding the Neater Eater arm in different places. Holding near the spoon end may be easier as you have more leverage. Holding the arm nearer the base will absorb tremor more effectively. (Neater Eater arms are fitted with either medium or gentle viscous dampers). Relaxing or concentrating on something else whilst practicing the movements often helps users with tremor.
- You do not necessarily have to grip the arm to move it.
- **Push** the arm back and down so the spoon sits in the middle of the plate.
- Keep the spoon down and bring it forward as if **scooping food** against the edge of the plate.
- Push the arm back away from the edge of the plate. Some Neater Eater plates have a curled over edge to aid scooping. Catching the spoon on this edge can flick the food. Practice usually prevents this, but some users prefer to use straight sided plates. You can also allow the springs to lift the arm if you have a tendency to pull forwards as you lift.
- Bring the arm towards your mouth or let the springs (if fitted) lift the spoon and bring it forward. (This can be a good way to use the Neater Eater if your movements are very uncontrolled).
- Turn the plate to select new food. Most people use one hand to move the spoon and the other to turn the plate. Some use the same hand. It may help to use the baseboard or even the Neater Eater arm as an anchor for your hand and use small finger movements to turn the plate. Remember, the plate is quite secure; it is hard to knock it plate off the baseboard accidentally. A later section describes the plate turner attachment.
- Repeat the scooping moves.

**Food must be chopped up small** enough so that it can be easily scooped with a spoon. Avoid overfilling the plate. Keep different types of food separate from each other on the plate. Turn the plate to choose what food to scoop up. Keep a small area free of food in the middle of the plate, and set the spoon down in this area before scooping. Using a smaller spoon can help avoid scooping up too much food in one go.

The **spoon angle** is the optimum for scooping. Cutlery choices are available for runny food and even soup.

**Read Instructions especially on Safety.** Take special care if you are prone to choking when eating.

### Maintenance and Cleaning:

The Neater Eater is designed for a long maintenance-free life as long as it is kept clean, by wiping with a damp cloth and a little detergent to remove food deposits. Do not immerse the Neater Eater in water. The plate and spoon can be washed in a dishwasher, on the top rack or away from the heating element, though washing by hand will prolong the use of the plastic plates and spoons.

## Adjusting The Stops

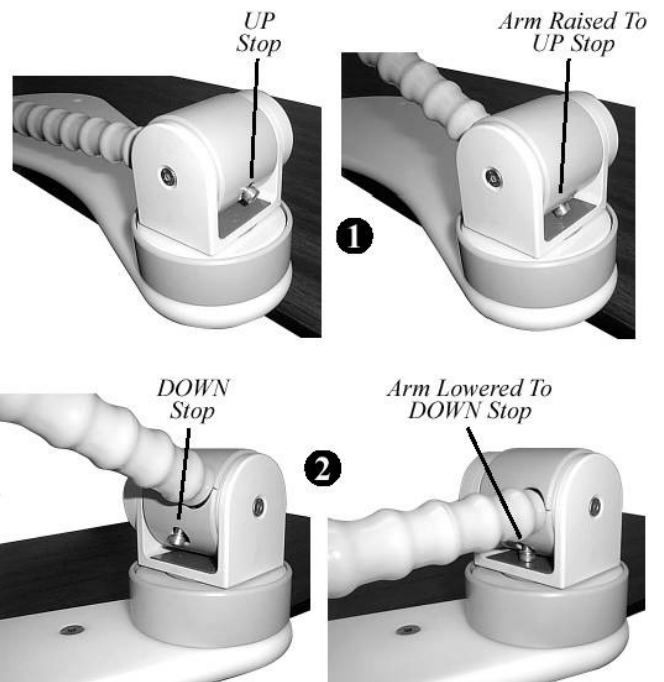
### UP Stop

Adjust the Up Stop so the spoon comes up to mouth level. The head of the screw prevents the arm from lifting too high. Use the large Allen key (5mm) to tighten the screw so the arm can lift up higher, ❶ or loosen the screw to prevent the arm from lifting too high.

The height can be further increased by fitting Raising Spacers (see later section) or reduced using a Stop screw with an enlarged head.

### DOWN Stop

The Down Stop prevents the spoon from being pushed too far down, which would make scooping food less effective. The Down Stop is pre-set to the plate level. If you need to adjust it, it looks and adjusts ❷ exactly the same as the Up Stop.

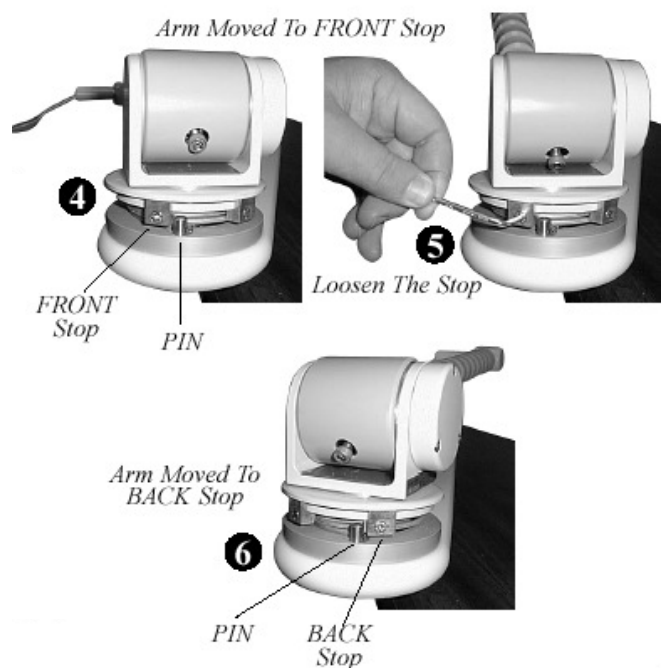
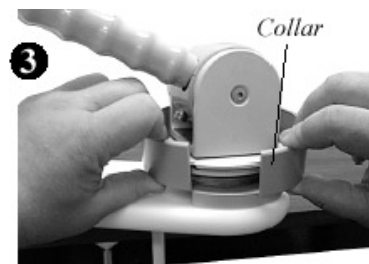


The Neater Eater may be fitted with a **Forward Spring Attachment** to bring the spoon forwards automatically to your mouth. The attachment includes a **Front Stop** and sometimes a **Back Stop**.

### FRONT Stop

The Front Stop determines how far forward the spoon travels to the mouth. To adjust:

1. Stretch apart and remove the grey plastic **Collar** ❸.
2. Move the arm forward manually. You will see that the arm moves forward until the square **Front Stop** ❹ touches the stainless steel **Pin**.
3. Use the small Allen key (3mm) to loosen the screw in the Front Stop. The screw ❺ will be very tight. To avoid the Stop falling off, do not unscrew more than one turn.
4. Move the arm to the forward position you want, and hold it there.
5. Slide the square Front Stop around until it is touching the stainless steel Pin.
6. Tighten the screw in the Front Stop. It must be very tight in order to avoid slipping.
7. Replace the Collar.



### BACK Stop (if fitted)

The Back Stop ❻ prevents the spoon from being pushed behind the plate. The Back Stop is pre-set to the plate size. If you need to adjust it, it is under the Collar, and looks and adjusts exactly the same as the Front Stop.

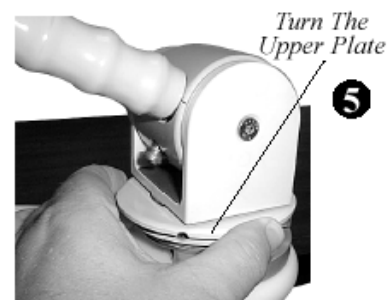
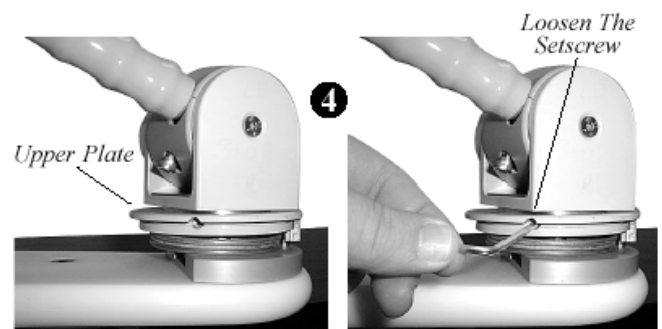
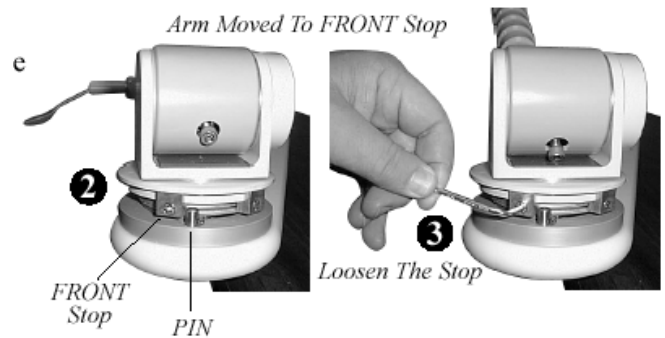
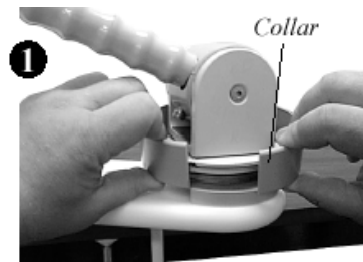
## Adjusting The Spring Tension

Adjusting the spring tension will make movement in one direction easier, but more difficult in the opposite direction. For example, if you increase tension in the spring that lifts the arm, the arm will be easier to lift and will lift up faster if you let go of it. However, it will then be more difficult to push back down.

### FORWARD Spring (if fitted)

Increasing tension on the Forward Spring will make the arm travel faster forward (toward the user), but be more difficult to push back (toward the plate). To adjust:

1. Stretch apart and remove the grey plastic **Collar**. ❶
2. Move the arm forward manually. You will see that the arm moves forward until the square **Front Stop** ❷ touches the stainless steel **Pin**.
3. Use the small allen key (3mm) to loosen the screw in the Front Stop. The screw ❸ will be very tight. To avoid the Stop falling off, do not unscrew more than one turn.
4. Bring the arm forward, quite a way past the position it will be used in.
5. Loosen the setscrew in the **Upper Plate** ❹ with the small allen key. The setscrew will be very tight.
6. **To Increase Tension**, turn the Upper Plate clockwise a little (anti-clockwise if left handed) and tighten the setscrew ❺. **To Decrease Tension**, turn the Upper Plate anti-clockwise a little (clockwise if left handed) and tighten the setscrew. **No Tension** on the Forward Spring will allow the user to move the arm forward under their own power.
7. Now re-adjust the Front Stop: move the arm to the forward position you want, and hold it there.
8. Slide the square Front Stop around until it is touching the stainless steel Pin.
9. Tighten the screw in the Front Stop. It must be very tight in order to avoid slipping.
10. Re-adjust the Back Stop (if fitted) in the same manner: loosen the screw, move the arm backward almost to the back edge of the plate, slide the Back Stop around until it touches the Pin, and tighten the screw.
11. Replace the Collar.



## Adjusting The Spring Tension (continued)

### LIFT Spring (New easy-adjust design)

Increasing tension on the Lift Spring will make the arm travel up faster, but be more difficult to push down.

It is adjusted by turning the Lift Spring Adjusting Screw using the large allen key (5mm).

It is easier to turn the screw with the arm lifted. Turn clockwise to increase the tension and thus the speed.

Anti-clockwise to decrease the tension.

Turn the screw several times round to make significant changes.

The screw will go tight and come to a stop at the end of the adjustment - **Do not force it.**

*Lift Spring Adjusting Screw*



*Turn clockwise to increase speed*



**Mild Tension** will result in the arm being poised in mid position, with some down and up effort needed by the user. This setting is usually used by people with weaker arms.

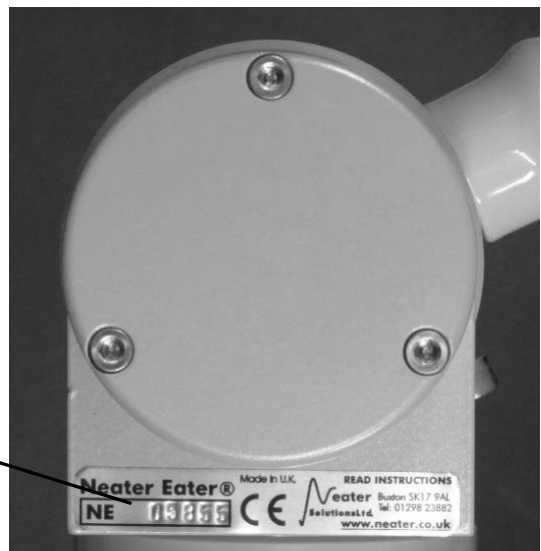
**Heavy Tension** will lift the arm to the top position, as determined by the Up Stop. This setting is usually used by people with stronger arms.

## Right to Left Handed conversion (or vice versa)

*Neater Eaters can be converted for either Right or Left handed use.*

Please contact us for instructions to suit your Neater Eater as well as for spare items such as left handed Cover H or Forward Spring.

*Please let us know your Neater Eater serial number*

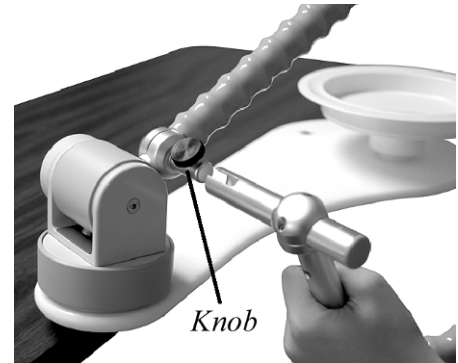




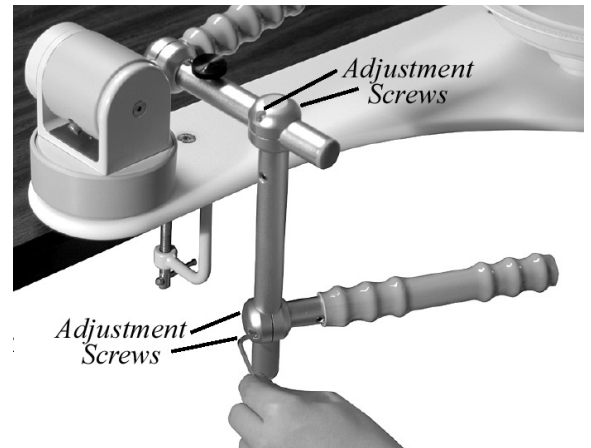
## Using The Adjustable Handle (if fitted)

The Adjustable Handle attachment allows the Neater Eater arm to be moved using relatively small movements of your hand, perhaps while resting your arm in your lap.

The handle may have a quick-release system as shown here. This allows the Handle Assembly to be slid on and off the Neater Eater arm easily. Tighten the knob to hold it in place.



There are two or more sets of adjustment screws. Loosen each pair and adjust the positions and angles of the pieces to suit the user's requirements. Retighten the screws evenly; they will need to be reasonably tight to avoid the pieces from slipping.



The most common position is to have the Handle nearly touch your lap when the spoon is in the plate - the lowest position it can be in. Ensure that no part of the Adjustable Handle Assembly hits any obstacles, such as the baseboard, the armrest of the chair, etc.



**Position the user** between the plate and the centre of the base. Sit facing the plate, at a slight angle from the table.

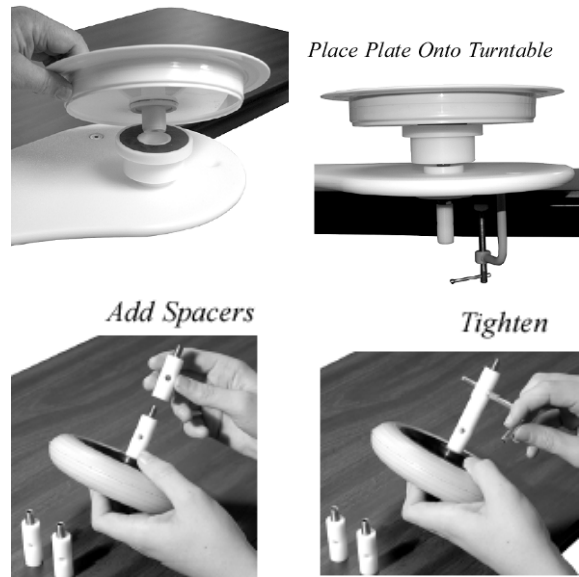
The Neater Eater must be adjusted so the spoon is aligned correctly to the mouth when the arm is in the up/forward position. *Carefully* follow instructions earlier in this manual for adjusting spring tensions and stops.

## Using The Plate Turner (if fitted)

The Plate Turner attachment allows you to turn the plate easily without lifting your hand from your lap.

Screw the Spacers and Wheel to the underside of the plate turntable. Using different numbers of Spacers adjusts the position of the Wheel to suit the user's requirements. The Allen keys can be inserted through the holes in the Spacers to help tighten or loosen them.

People usually turn the plate with their fingers while resting their hands in their lap. Some people use small movements of the back of their hands, or even their knees.



The attachment is fitted through the large hole (25mm) in the baseboard and held in place with a plastic ring nut underneath. Holes in the sides allow insertion of Allen keys to ease unscrewing for removal.



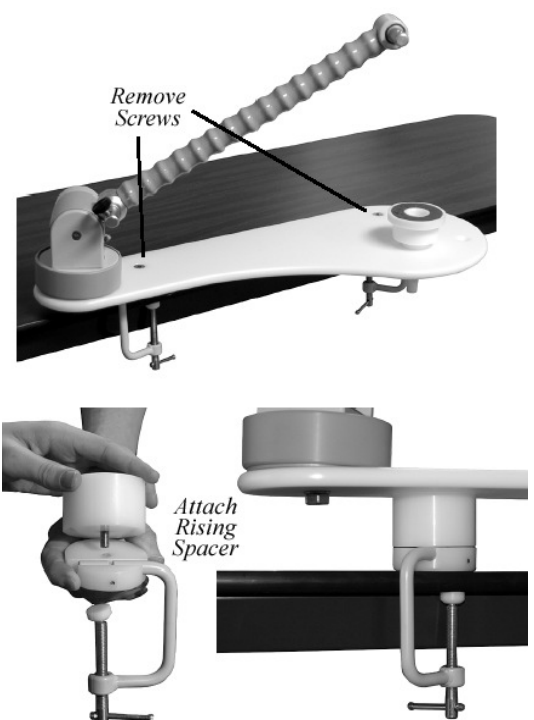
## Raising Spacers

Raising Spacers help to reduce the distance the spoon has to travel, from the plate to the user's mouth. One or two pairs of Raising Spacers can be fitted to raise the baseboard.

Use the large Allen key (5mm) to remove the two screws that hold the clamps to the base of the Neater Eater.

Screw the Raising Spacers into clamp assemblies. It is important to make sure the slot in the clamp fits around the pin in the plastic foot that holds it to the Raising Spacer or baseboard, because this is what keeps the clamp from sliding out.

Use the Allen key to replace the two screws and re-attach the clamps with Raising Spacers to the underside of the base. Tighten the clamps to the underside of the table, as before.



## NEATER EATER ACCESSORIES

**Cutlery** – a range of shapes and materials in holders that clip onto the Neater Eater.

- Standard flattened front spoon shape aids scooping.
- Round front spoons and **soup spoon** for runny food.
- **Narrow spoons** for children, people with head tremor and others.
- Polycarbonate spoons are quite rigid and suitable for most people. Colour: light blue.
- **Unbreakable spoons** are quite soft and suitable for people with a strong bite. Colour: Brown.
- **Stainless steel** spoons, forks and “**Sporks**” only for people with good head control.

The **Sandwich Holder** enables people to eat “finger foods”. The light clamping action allows people with good head control to move the snack within the holder as it is eaten. A different height setting for the Neater Eater arm may be required.



**Crockery** – with or without the peg on the bottom that locates in the Neater Eater baseboard.

- **Deep ceramic plates** with curled-over lip to aid scooping.. Standard rim colour: blue. Sizes: Small 21cm x 3.3cm deep and Large 26cm x 2.5cm deep. Dishwasher, microwave and ovenproof.
- **Plastic plate** - has a vertical lip. Size: 24cm x 2.3cm deep. Colours: Ivory or Blue.
- **Heated ceramic plate.**
- **Ceramic Soup Bowl** – requires the Soup Spoon.

Also: • **Plate Stand** for supporting plates with pegs e.g. on tray or in microwave. Ceramic or plastic.

**Clamp Offset** attachment, additional **Feet** and **Raising Spacers** can be fitted to move the clamps and raise the baseboard for fitting in difficult circumstances such as to wheelchair trays. (Use of a conventional sturdy table is recommended.)

The **Neater Drinker** mug is very stable with a non-slip base. It has a lid that holds the straw in place, and keeps hot drinks warm. The Neater Drinker includes a **Neater Straw** - a long straw (60cm or 120cm special) that can be bent or trimmed, so it can be reached easily. A non-return valve at the bottom of the straw keeps the drink in the straw, preventing the drink from flowing back into the mug. Once the straw is full, every suck will give the user some drink. Includes a soft tubing piece that can be fitted over the end of the straw as a mouthpiece, and a syringe to pre-fill the straw for those users with weak sucking ability. Also available: The **Neater Drinker Metallic** (non-ceramic black & silver mug) and the **Neater Powered Drinker** including peristaltic pump, straws, straw holder, switch and battery charger.



Further details about **the Neater Arm Support, Neater Uni Chair, Neater Table** and wheelchair cup and straw holding kits are on our website.

Latest information on Neater Eater accessories can be found on our website:

[www.neater.co.uk](http://www.neater.co.uk)