Component 15: Tongue Base Retraction

Tongue base retraction is judged at the point of *maximal retraction of the tongue base*. Observations of tongue base retraction are made based on the presence and degree of bolus or air between the base of tongue (BOT) and posterior pharyngeal wall (PPW). In the case of the sequential swallowing task, each swallow is considered in formulating the OI score.

**STRUCTURAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Retraction of the tongue base results in a “merging” of the base of tongue (BOT) with the posterior pharyngeal wall (PPW). These structures are outlined in the image below. Maximal retraction of the tongue base is easily determined by moving “frame-by-frame” within the media player.

**SCORING EXAMPLES**

The following images are intended to help you differentiate between Tongue Base Retraction scores 0-4. The base of tongue (BOT) is indicated in red and the posterior pharyngeal (PPW) wall in blue.

(0) No bolus appearance between the BOT and PPW in the lateral viewing plane:

This resembles a “merging” of the BOT with the PPW.
(1) Trace column of contrast or air between the BOT and PPW:

“Trace” can resemble an outline made with a fine tip pen between the BOT and PPW or a *small* triangle created by the epiglottis, BOT and PPW. The images below represent three variations of “trace”.

(2) Narrow column of contrast or air between the BOT and PPW:
This resembles an amount of air or contrast similar to “collection” (Components 5 and 16).
(3) Wide column of contrast or air between the BOT and PPW:

(4) No appreciable posterior motion of the BOT:

Despite initiating a swallow, the patient below demonstrates no appreciable posterior motion of the BOT.