

### IMPORTANT FACTS TO REMEMBER

- It is your responsibility to keep your teeth straight
- It is normal for your teeth to move slightly throughout your life
- Wearing retainers long term is the best way to maintain your smile
- Have your teeth and retainer wires checked regularly by your dentist
- Good flossing and brushing is essential around retainer wires
- If you loose or damage your retainer contact your orthodontist



## Retainers

### Hours of Operation

Day	Hours
Monday	8:30am - 5:00pm
Tuesday	8:30am - 5:00pm
Wednesday	8:30am - 5:00pm
Thursday	8:30am - 5:00pm
Friday	8:30am - 5:00pm
Saturday	Closed
Sunday	Closed



**NZAO**<sup>®</sup>  
Association of Orthodontists

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**OTAGO**  
**ORTHODONTICS**



# Removable Clear Retainers

## What does a retainer do?

A retainer is a clear plastic plate that helps hold your teeth in place once orthodontic treatment has been completed. It is a direct copy of what the teeth look like after the braces come off.

## Wearing your retainer

When wearing your retainer, it should fit like a glove over your teeth. There should be no excess plastic sitting below each tooth.



## Wire Retainers

Wire retainers need to stay in place for as long as you want straight teeth. If they feel loose or teeth feel sore, please contact us as soon as possible for a repair. If you live out of town, call us so we can post you a clear lower retainer to wear until we can see you in Balclutha to repair your wire. If your clear retainer no longer fits with the wire - remove it with some pliers very carefully and bring wire in with you to your next visit.

## Cleaning

Use Superfloss to clean under these wires 3 times per week.

# Important Information

## Fitting

When fitting your retainer, always make sure you look into a mirror so that you can correctly position the retainer. Once your retainer is in the correct position, simply use your fingers to push against the plastic and the plate will click into place.

## Removal

When removing your retainer, always use your index fingernails to pull downwards on the back of the retainer. To remove the lower, use your thumbs and push up. Ensure that you always remove from the back of the retainer, this will make your retainer last longer. If you remove from the front you run the risk of putting too much pressure on the retainer and your teeth.

## Wear

Initially you will wear your retainer full time for 6 months (24 hours a day). This means that you leave your retainer in place for sleeping and talking. The only times you may remove your retainer is when you are cleaning your teeth, playing a contact sport, eating or swimming. Do not remove it to drink cold water. After this 6 months period, you will wear your retainer every night until otherwise instructed by the Orthodontist.

## Speech

In the first few days your speech will be altered and you will produce extra saliva. This will reduce with time and practice. Reading out loud for 5 to 10 minutes a day will help you get your speech back to normal again. A good idea would be to read this pamphlet out aloud to yourself.

## Cleaning

Your retainer should be cleaned every day with a soft toothbrush and cold water (not hot water). The best time to clean your plate is usually when you brush your teeth, as you will be near a sink and the plate needs to be removed anyway.

## How Long?

Generally, removable retainers are worn full time for the first 6 months and then at nights for another 6 months and less regularly after the first year. This will depend on the original problem. Problems that are more severe will require more retainer wear to support the teeth and tissues that have been moved orthodontically. Long term and permanent retention is recommended in some cases.

# Instructions

1. Begin by looking in the mirror and positioning the retainer so that your teeth are correctly lined up with the shape of the retainer.
2. Push up with your thumbs for the top. Push down with your fingers to place the lower one. They may make a clicking noise to signify they are in place. Note: do not bite the retainer into place, this will weaken it and it will break.
3. The retainer should feel tight at first, then normal as if it's not there. It will take a few days to get use to wearing it and talking with it in.
4. Keep it in a safe place when it is not in your mouth (e.g. in the container we have provided).
5. If you can not get it to fit properly, please contact us as soon as possible.
6. If all is well, we will see you at your next appointment - bring your plate with you every time you come in to see us.

If you lose or break your retainer, if it feels strange or if it is not fitting as well as it used to, make sure that you make an appointment to see us as soon as possible. There will be a fee to replace a lost or broken retainer. Make sure you always use cold or luke warm water to clean your retainer. Boiling hot water will distort it.

**Warning: not wearing your retainer may result in you needing braces again.**