

THE 'BRACELIFT' FACELIFT

DENTAL CARE THAT DOES MORE THAN STRAIGHTEN TEETH

BY THOMAS R. PITTS, D.D.S.

AS WE GROW OLDER, MANY of us turn to expensive and invasive cosmetic treatments ranging from lip augmentations to facelifts in an effort to retain a youthful appearance. More and more adults, however, are now turning to less traumatic orthodontic treatments as an anti-aging tool and are gaining not just a beautiful smile, but some remarkable facial aesthetics, as well. "Bracelift" treatments can help you look younger and feel more confident about your appearance than ever before.

Of course, most people want a nice smile with straight, white teeth, but properly aligned teeth can do much more than just improve a smile. By enhancing the alignment and widening the arch of the teeth, orthodontic treatment can create better facial balance and aesthetics, lending the appearance of fuller cheeks and lips, smoother and higher cheek contours, and broader smiles, as well as compensate for the inevitable loss of facial muscle over time.

BRACES? AT MY AGE?

While the thought of braces may conjure up images of a metal-mouth teenager—perhaps you've even seen wildly-colored braces on your children or grandchildren—new technology is making treatment faster, more comfortable and more discrete. These advancements are also helping orthodontists achieve remarkable aesthetic results for patients.

Bracelift patients often experience a dramatic improvement in their overall appearance. Beyond just straight teeth, they can gain a broader arch,

more mid-face support, and a fuller, wider smile with wall-to-wall teeth, resulting in a more youthful look.

HOW IT WORKS

Unlike traditional braces, the Damon System incorporates "tieless" brackets instead of elastic ligatures to hold the archwire in place. These brackets allow the archwire to slide and move more freely, reducing the friction and tension on the teeth. Patients report the brackets more comfortable than traditional braces, but extremely easy to keep clean.

Far more than just a bracket, the Damon System uses archwires made of a unique hi-tech memory-shape alloy that is initially formed into the desired arch shape. Throughout treatment, the wire works to regain its original shape, gently moving the teeth into their optimal arch shape based on the patient's unique biology.

Because the system exerts only gentle pressure, the blood flow to the surrounding gum tissues is not interrupted, and teeth don't have to be extracted to make room as in the past.

NO MORE PULLING TEETH

When H. H., now in her 40s, first arrived in her orthodontist's chair in 1990, she suffered from extensive crowding of her teeth, loss of bone structure and tissue, TMJ and other issues. A common practice at the time would have been extractions of at least four teeth to make room to straighten her teeth with traditional braces. Because of the possible negative long-term impact removing teeth could have on the appearance of her face, her



Before and after a Damon 'Bracelift'

WE ALL KNOW THAT HEALTHY TEETH ARE IMPORTANT TO MAINTAINING OVERALL HEALTH, ESPECIALLY AS WE AGE AND NUTRITIONAL NEEDS CHANGE.

doctor initially advised against orthodontic treatment.

Several years later, with the availability of more minimally invasive treatment using the Damon System, H.H. returned for treatment and was able to avoid tooth extractions. In addition to straight teeth, she gained a broader arch and wider smile that help accentuate her cheek contours and lip support, giving her a more youthful appearance.

MORE THAN GOOD LOOKS

We all know that healthy teeth are important to maintaining overall health, especially as we age and nutritional needs change. But we sometimes overlook the impact our teeth can have on our mental and emotional well-being. Poor alignment cannot only affect your speech

and airway, contributing to sleep apnea, but also your self-confidence and poise. A "bracelift" can provide a life-long improvement to your overall appearance and self-confidence at a comparable cost to traditional orthodontic treatment.

Of course, when seeking treatment, it's important to consult a trained professional. And patients with severe periodontal disease should be aware that orthodontic treatment may impact their existing condition. ■

Dr. Pitts is a practicing orthodontist in Reno, NV, and associate clinical professor at the University of Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry. He specializes in orthodontia treatments for his patients using the Damon System and lectures throughout the world on clinical and practice management efficacy.