

DENTISTRY

# Adult Braces—A Periodontist’s Perspective



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By *Dmitriy Klass, DDS, MSD*

Straight teeth not only help improve the appearance of your smile — they help you feel confident and can improve your self-esteem. But the human jaw is shrinking. That means that many adults may experience a discrepancy between the giant smile they hold inside them and the space to display it.

To achieve straighter teeth, many adults may consider the same sort of orthodontic force used to straighten teeth for millions of teens across the country. Carefully planned bone remodeling leads to tooth movement. Despite the success of this treatment, some adults who would like to straighten (or re-straighten their teeth) shy away from the process for a variety of reasons that aren’t just financial. They simply don’t have the time and patience for the lengthy process of straightening a full mouth of adult teeth where bone formation is mature and therefore often harder to shift. For this reason, many adults with crooked teeth shy away from treatment.

Benefits of Straight Teeth

When adults improve the positioning of their teeth, they can:

- Reduce wear on teeth from abnormal positioning
- Create space for dental implants
- Decrease risk of tooth injury from protrusions
- Help relieve TMJ discomfort
- Make it easier to chew food and aid in digestion
- Clean their teeth more easily

Assessing Your Oral Health

In the field of periodontics, we value straight, healthy teeth for much the same reasons as your orthodontist. Yet many patients with crooked teeth are also dealing with gum disease, a malady that’s all too common in the U.S.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that more than 47% of adults aged 30 and over have some form of the disease, which is statistically more common in men, in individuals living below the poverty level, and in current smokers. If mild gum disease (gingivitis) is under control, you may be able to seek orthodontic appliances. However, with traditional braces, teeth are harder to clean, allowing gum disease to progress more rapidly.

If your orthodontist and periodontist give you the green light, you might want to consider removable aligners instead as a better option.



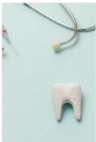
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### Accelerating the Process with Piezocision

If you're a candidate for adult braces or aligners and your gum tissue and bone around your teeth are relatively healthy, your periodontist may be able to assist your orthodontist in accelerating the tooth movement process, shifting your teeth faster with a process we refer to as accelerated orthodontics.

At our practice, we promote orthodontic movement with a surgical procedure called piezocision. We numb the gums and make tiny, pin-sized micro-perforations between the teeth roots which help speed up tooth movement. Bone cells called osteoclasts are activated and help increase the speed of the bone remodeling process, allowing for faster tooth movement.

### Keeping Your Teeth Healthy at All Ages

Many adults can be candidates for today's less noticeable teeth straightening options, like clear braces or aligners that are virtually invisible. And processes like piezocision can speed up the process even more. When you improve the function and health of your teeth, you can improve much more than just the aesthetics of your smile.

Talk to an orthodontist (and your periodontist!) to see what adult teeth straightening options — and ways to accelerate the process — are available to you to bring out the best of you in your smile.

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