



Retention

WELL, AT THIS POINT,
YOU'VE JUST ABOUT HAD IT!

At the completion of the active phase of your orthodontic treatment you begin the period we call retention. To retain means to hold. In the case of your teeth, they must be retained or held in their new positions until the tissues, meaning the bone, the elastic membrane surrounding the root, the gingivae or gums, and the tongue and lips have adapted themselves to the new tooth positions. If we did not make an effort to retain the teeth following orthodontic movement, they would tend to move back to their original positions. Teeth have amazing memories.

The length of time the teeth must be retained, of course, varies with each individual. The average patient must be retained for about eighteen months to two years, some even indefinitely. In most cases, some type of retainer is usually required until the third molars, or wisdom teeth, have erupted or have been extracted. Often the latter part of the retention period will require retainer wear only while sleeping.

On certain types of completed cases we find it is wise to use a rubber or plastic mouthpiece called a finishing appliance. By making minor corrections on the plaster molds of your teeth, taken at the time the fixed appliances are removed, we are able to make subtle changes. The appliance is made and worn in the mouth to gently massage the teeth into a finer relationship. Should you have this type of retainer, you will receive specific instructions concerning its wear at the time you receive it.

It has been our experience that retainers are not broken and certainly cannot be lost while in the mouth. Find a safe place to keep it. However, should it become lost or broken, please notify our office immediately so that we can replace it as soon as possible. Should this become necessary, we reserve the right to charge an additional fee.