

Elastics:

They're Pulling For You



About the AAO:

Founded in 1900, the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) has more than 15,000 members. Active AAO members limit their practices to the dental specialty of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics. Orthodontists are dental specialists with at least two years of advanced orthodontic education after dental school.

The purposes of the American Association of Orthodontists and its member orthodontists are:

to advance the art and science of orthodontics;

to encourage and sponsor research;

to strive for and maintain the highest standards of excellence in orthodontic education and practice;

and to make significant contributions to the health of the public.



Successful orthodontic treatment primarily depends on two things: constant pressure and time. Sometimes it takes added force to move teeth and jaws into their correct positions. Elastics, also called rubber bands, have the pull to make that happen. But they won't work without you. To achieve the healthy, beautiful smile you're working for, you must carefully follow your orthodontist's instructions about placing and using your rubber bands.

At first, the elastics may cause your teeth to be tender. That's because your teeth are moving, which is the goal. Usually the tenderness lasts only a day or two. Not wearing your rubber bands as instructed will only make the tenderness last longer, and make the tooth movement take more time.

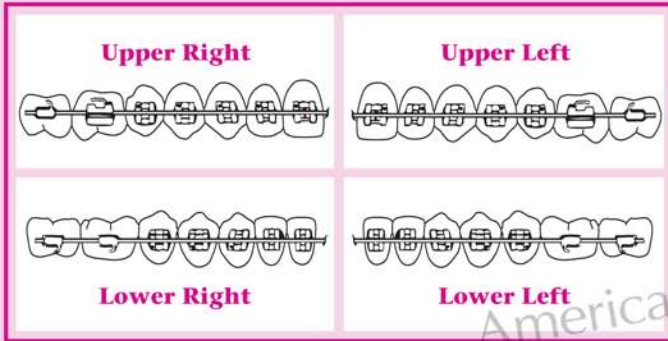
To get the best results from your rubber bands, remember:

1. You are responsible for placing the elastics on your braces every day. Be sure to wear them as instructed.
2. Always carry a few rubber bands with you, so if one breaks you can replace it right away. If your supply is low, call your orthodontist to get more.
3. If you happen to forget to wear your elastics one day, don't double up the next – just follow your regular instructions.
4. Rubber bands get tired. When they lose their stretch, they don't provide the proper pressure on your teeth and jaws. So it's very important to change them as directed, even when they're not broken.

If you have any problems – like elastics breaking frequently, a loose wire or band, or a hook that's broken – call your orthodontist's office. Don't wait until your next scheduled appointment. These problems should be corrected as soon as possible.

Remember, faithfully wearing your rubber bands, following all instructions and keeping appointments is the quickest, easiest way to achieve your goal of a healthy, beautiful smile.

To get the desired results, follow this chart to use your elastics as instructed:



What Is An Orthodontist?

An orthodontist is a specialist in the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of dental and facial irregularities. All orthodontists are dentists, but only about six percent of dentists are orthodontists. Admission to orthodontic post-graduate programs is extremely competitive and selective.

It takes many years to become an orthodontist and the educational requirements are demanding.

An orthodontist must complete college requirements before starting a three- to five-year graduate program at a dental school accredited by the American Dental Association (ADA). After dental school, at least two or three academic years of advanced specialty education in an ADA-accredited orthodontic program are required to be an orthodontist. The program includes advanced education in biomedical, behavioral and basic sciences. The orthodontic student learns the complex skills required to manage tooth movement (orthodontics) and guide facial development (dentofacial orthopedics).

Only dentists who have successfully completed these advanced specialty education programs may call themselves orthodontists.

Partnership: You, Your Orthodontist and Your Dentist.

Achieving healthy, beautiful smiles is a team effort that involves the orthodontist, the family dentist, the patient (and the parents, if the patient is young) and, as needed, other dental specialists. The orthodontist provides the expertise, the treatment plan and the techniques to straighten teeth and align the jaws. The family dentist helps make sure that teeth and gums stay clean and healthy. *The patient must cooperate by following the dentist's and the orthodontist's instructions carefully so that the teeth and jaws move in the way desired and on the prescribed schedule.*

Because dental hygiene is so important, regular visits to the family dentist must continue every six months during orthodontic treatment (or more often, if recommended). It is essential that the patient avoid foods which may damage orthodontic appliances. The patient must also maintain a healthy, nutritional diet to achieve the best possible results from treatment. A good diet provides essential nutrients to bones and tissues undergoing change during orthodontic treatment.



Dental Hygiene Is So Important.

For a Smile that's Good for Life:

- Follow the American Dental Association's recommendation and start dental visits by your child's first birthday.
- Make regular visits to your dentist at least every six months.
- Take your child for an orthodontic check-up no later than age 7. If a problem is detected, your orthodontist can determine the best time to start treatment.
- Get your child an orthodontic check-up even if he or she is past age 7. Although an early check-up can be extremely beneficial, the fact is that most orthodontic patients begin active treatment between ages 9 and 14.
- Keep in mind that orthodontic treatment can also benefit adults. Less visible, more comfortable braces make treatment more appealing than ever, and healthy teeth, bones and gums of almost any age respond well to treatment.
- Choose an orthodontist – the dental specialist who is uniquely qualified to treat orthodontic problems.
- Take advantage of the affordability of orthodontic treatment today. Most orthodontists have a variety of convenient payment plans.
- Remember that successful orthodontic treatment is the result of a partnership. The orthodontist, family dentist and, *especially*, a cooperative patient all work together to create a healthy, beautiful smile that's good for life.

*Members of the
American Association of Orthodontists
wish you and your family good dental health.*





American Association of **Orthodontists**

401 North Lindbergh Boulevard
Saint Louis, Missouri 63141-7816
1-800-STRAIGHT
www.braces.org

© 2004 American Association of Orthodontists

The American Association of Orthodontists thanks the faculty and staff representing Orthodontics, Center for Advanced Dental Education, Saint Louis University for their invaluable guidance, generosity, and the use of their facilities during the production of this brochure.