

Molar power: straight teeth are strong teeth

FIX YOUR JAWS IN 3D

Wonky teeth holding you back? Here's how to get a Hollywood smile using the latest science



ISN'T IT TOO LATE TO GET MY TEETH STRAIGHTENED?

Uneven teeth are not going to improve without treatment, but now you can avoid a metal mouth with lingual (invisible) braces. "As we age, teeth continue to move so any problems will only get worse," says specialist orthodontist, Dr Asif Chatoo. But the good news is it's not too late to take action. "You can straighten teeth at any age but sooner is better as things will be less complicated," says Chatoo. The benefits of lingual braces aren't just aesthetic. Better aligned teeth are easy to clean meaning healthy pegs and gums.

WHY DO IT?

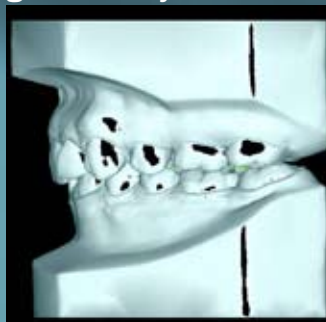
A British Orthodontic Society study found 45% of UK adults are unhappy with their teeth, while 25% said they would have an orthodontic procedure to boost self-esteem. "Previously, patients weren't aware of the possibilities. Braces were abhorrent, adults want to be taken seriously – not look like a metallic teenager look in their thirties," says Chatoo. And now, they don't have to have it.

THE SCIENCE

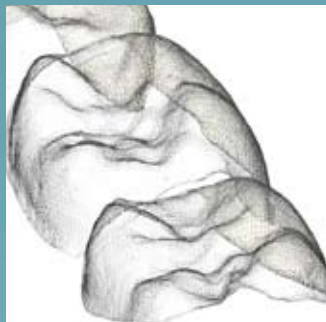
A mould of your teeth is scanned into a computer-aided design programme to build a 3D model. "Using 3D allows you to analyse the teeth in all planes and see where any interference lies, such as a biting action which

HOW IT WORKS

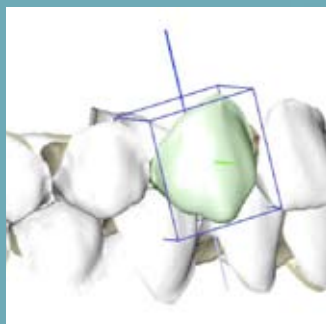
How an orthodontist gets inside your head



A computer-aided X-ray is taken of your upper and lower jaw



3D imaging allows the orthodontist to see every plane of the teeth



Each tooth is viewed individually, making for precise brackets

might dislodge a bracket," says Chatoo. The brackets (known as jigs), are custom built for each tooth and placed invisibly on the inner side of your teeth. And with the mechanics hidden you can sidestep the Bond villain stage.

3D OR NOT 3D; THAT IS THE QUESTION

Dr Chatoo says you can shave up to 20% off your treatment time, (potentially 4-6 months) if you stick to your treatment schedule. Lingual braces, as described above, take longer than other options. However, the process doesn't involve cutting down your teeth which you would need to do to fit veneers, which are quicker. "I don't think you should cut down healthy teeth when you can make them look better with minimal change to the teeth themselves," says Chatoo. Veneers also have a far shorter shelf life and will need replacing every 7-8 years.

THIS WON'T HURT A BIT

We're lying. This will hurt your wallet bad. The technology and the fact that each lingual brace bracket is custom built for each tooth means that this is a very expensive option. Getting your upper and lower teeth realigned will set you back between £6,000 and £9,000, depending on the complexity of your particular case. Removal of teeth or extra corrective surgery will bump the price up. But, compared to veneers it's practically a steal.

"The price of veneers varies depending on how many teeth are prepared but can be anything from £8,000 upward," says Dr Chatoo. That's potentially £8,000 every 7-8 years for the rest of your life. You do the maths. And included in the 3D treatment package is a permanent retainer which will help to protect your investment. That'll put a smile on your face.