

Aesthetics of removable dentures



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Wax finishing

Begin by making a traditional carving where the approximal spaces are filled with wax.



Introduction

With regards to the aesthetic implementation of removable prosthetics there are several techniques which are described in further detail in my book* that will improve a naturally looking result. The use of multicoloured acrylic, characterised teeth, individual staining of acrylic teeth as well as a special carving technique has great importance with regards to aesthetics. In the following the special carving technique will be detailed

Carve the front teeth with individual lengths (retract the gingiva of just a few front teeth making the carving asymmetric). Refine the necks of the teeth with a pointed instrument and burn the wax carefully to make a rounded edge.



Natural gingiva

The natural gingiva is often uneven, having a surface that is slightly granulated, also the shape at the gingival edge may vary from tooth to tooth.

Elder people who still have their natural teeth usually have retractions of various papillae in the front tooth area, and retracted gingiva at various teeth.

Melt the wax carefully in an area of 3-4 teeth and press a sponge against the hot wax for a few seconds. Finish by melting the wax very carefully in the same area again. This will provide a natural, granulated gingival surface. The sponge will leave rounded grains which are hygienic and easy for the patient to get used to.



Case Presentation

The shape of natural gingiva may be imitated in the carving phase. A special carving technique makes it possible to imitate gingival pockets, retract papillae and form a granulated surface. This patient is 60 years old and in order to have a natural appearance we will make the carving asymmetric with retracted papillae between various teeth and make individual lengths at the front teeth. The tooth set-up that has been based on a photo has been accepted by the patient:

Cut the front teeth free lingually, just below the tubercle. This will make it easy to remove the front teeth.



Pull and take off carefully the front teeth (start with the most projecting tooth). Do not push to much facio-lingually as this may create a crack at the neck.





Hold the model in a vertical position and melt the area at the marginal gingiva and papillae very carefully.



This will round off the gingival edge inwardly, and the facial contours of the interdental papillae become retracted, convex and look natural.



Replace tooth by tooth in the artificial alveolus and fuse the teeth lingually. Place molten wax (not so hot that it runs) from the tubercle to the oral surface. This will ensure a good connection between the teeth and the acrylic.



Traditional modelling with smooth facial surfaces, uniform gingival edge carving and papillae that fill all approximal spaces do not correspond exactly to natural gingiva on a 60 year old. The transition between the teeth and the wax does not exactly match the transition between natural gingiva and teeth.



This modelling technique with retracted papillae and asymmetric modelling will make the final denture look natural on a 60 year old.



Illustration of Natural gingiva of a 62-year-old beautiful Danish mother-in-law. Please note the transition between the teeth and the gingiva and also make a note of the retracted papillae. Illustration of a full upper denture. With the special carving technique we have tried to make the denture as asymmetric as the natural lower teeth. The Myerson characterised teeth and the use of multicoloured acrylic also has great aesthetic value.



Conclusion

It might sometimes seem futile to do so much for carving, as described if the patient, even in a big smile, will never show much (or perhaps no) gingiva. However, it is important to consider the psychological factor. Most patients value the fact that the entire denture, not just the teeth, looks natural. As a result, they will not hold back their smiling.

With regards to immediate dentures patients often give aesthetics higher priority than function. They are afraid that the denture will change their look completely so that family, friends and acquaintances will see that a denture has been put in. In these cases a good aesthetic carving and gingival imitation with multicoloured acrylic is very important. These last two pictures show the importance of correct placement of teeth and of imitation gingiva.

René la Cour's book 'Aesthetics of Removable Dentures' is available from:

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