

Elastics (Rubber Bands)

Once teeth are straight from the use of the high-tech shape memory archwires, the next step in your orthodontic treatment is to correct your bite and make your teeth fit together. This phase involves moving groups of teeth so that the upper set of teeth fits perfectly over the lower set of teeth. The doctor will use elastic rubber bands worn by the patient nearly all day and night to accomplish this.

When Should Elastics Be Worn:

The doctor will inform you the length of time per day elastics should be worn to achieve the fastest most stable results. Initially, elastics need to be worn 24 hours per day except for eating and brushing your teeth. New rubber bands should be used after every meal. This will allow the tension in the rubber bands to remain constant throughout the day for the fastest tooth movement.

How Will It Feel:

Teeth only move with pressure. Using rubber bands will feel like something is pulling your teeth in a certain direction. The discomfort that you experience will only last 1-3 days. Mild over-the-counter pain relieving medication such as Tylenol, Advil, or Motrin is very effective to make you comfortable. Any discomfort will subside as the teeth shift into a better position and as you get use to the pressure. Don't stop to give yourself a break, you will only experience the discomfort again. Get through the first few days and keep up the good work!

What Not To Do:

- Do not double or triple the number of rubber bands per side. Teeth move at a specific level of pressure. Too little pressure from not wearing rubber bands will not move the teeth. Too much pressure will reduce the blood supply to the bone around the teeth, significantly slowing to even stopping tooth movement. Teeth move the fastest with light and constant pressure.
- Do not skip using rubber bands for more than 3 hours. The bone around a moving tooth is soft and malleable. Teeth that shift to their new positions can easily slip back to their original positions. Only constant pressure over many months will allow teeth to move to the ideal position that is stable. Wearing "most of the time" will only slow down treatment.

How To Wear Them:

There are numerous length, pressure, and patterns to wearing rubber bands. Please make sure you check with the doctor the correct direction and size of the rubber bands to make your treatment as efficient as possible.

