

THE CHANGING FACE OF ORTHODONTICS

BY PAMELA HAMMONDS

Metal mouth. Tinsel Teeth. Braceface. The discomfort of wearing braces was often made more painful by enduring the teasing and taunting of one's classmates. For adults, tolerating months or even years of braces while trying to appear professional could be even more taxing. Thankfully, orthodontic options have progressed over the decades to include barely-noticeable brackets, thinner wires and clear aligners that can straighten teeth and correct bites as effectively as traditional metal braces.



 **Incognito™**
Hidden Braces



DAMON CLEAR

WHAT'S NEW?

Tieless (self-ligating) brackets are clinically proven to move teeth faster and more comfortably than traditional braces without using metal ties, O-rings or elastics around the individual brackets. Added perks include fewer office appointments and shorter visits. Plus the brackets are smaller, more comfortable, and the archwire is lighter weight.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

Self-ligating "passive" slide mechanisms maintain archwires within the bracket, allowing them to move freely without needing to be tightened like traditional braces. Damon Clear is one brand featuring clear ceramic brackets; In-Ovation incorporates tieless brackets through low-profile metal clips. Both reduce friction and binding, so teeth move quickly and more comfortably.

WHAT'S NEW?

Clear aligners were introduced in 2000 with Invisalign being the first on the market. Today's competitors such as ClearCorrect and Originator are making the process a little more affordable. Aligners are molded from clear plastic or acrylic, and subtle changes are introduced via a series of aligners to reach a patient's treatment goal.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

Each aligner is worn for a short duration to progressively move teeth toward their desired positions. Aligners must be removed to eat, brush and floss. Because they are removable, patients must be sure to follow their orthodontist's instructions on daily wear. Since they are clear, the aligners are barely visible to others making them popular for adults. Aligners cannot correct every problem and can take longer than traditional braces.

WHAT'S NEW?

Lingual (behind the teeth) braces have been around for years but were costly, uncomfortable and typically took longer to see results than traditional braces. Today's technology, such as 3M's Incognito™ Hidden Braces, makes them more popular for people besides models and actors who needed their teeth braces-free for the camera.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

Lingual braces are placed behind the teeth (sometimes behind only the front six teeth) to straighten teeth while completely hidden from view. Unlike clear aligners, lingual braces are not removable and therefore work around the clock to straighten teeth. Although they are traditionally more expensive than conventional braces, they can be priced competitively with Invisalign, but fewer orthodontists offer them.

While options exist for aligning teeth, not every patient will achieve satisfactory results with each method. Trust your experienced orthodontist to guide you in choosing the best course of treatment. A second or even a third opinion never hurts and consultations should be available to you at no charge. ///