

SOMETIMES BRACES DO TAKE A WHILE BUT THEN THERE ARE TIMES THAT THE TREATMENT IS
QUICKER THAN YOU MIGHT HAVE THOUGHT, PERHAPS ONLY.....

ONE HOUR BRACES!

BY DR ELIYAHU SIMCHA GHERMAN, DDS

It happens all the time.....a patient comes in a week before the wedding and says "Doc, can you fix my teeth"?

Most of the time the answer is no, teeth take a long time to move; however, there are times when a small problem in the patient's smile can be corrected in a very short period of time. For example, a space in between the teeth, or a tooth that sticks out can be fixed within a couple of months, weeks and yes, even in one hour!

How is that possible? Let me explain.....

When I was in my orthodontic post-graduate program at Montefiore Medical Center, one of my teachers, Dr. Shelton, patented a method called "fingerdantics". Besides being a high-end Manhattan orthodontist, Dr. Shelton was also a professional jazz flutist and naturally a very patient man, and for the method of fingerdantics you needed to have a lot of patience.

(First a warning: do not try this yourself as you may damage your teeth.) He would lean his finger gently on a tooth while explaining to us that teeth are actually joints. The tooth sits in a socket of bone and is surrounded by fibers that connect it to the

bone. These fibers can stretch, so after just a short time the tooth will visibly move. After his "show and tell" he would leave the room and, within seconds, the teeth moved back out of place.

Yet we all learned the lesson - the problem with "fingerdantics" is that the same fibers that stretched and allowed for the tooth to move will then return to their original shape and bring the tooth back with them. This is what orthodontists call tooth memory.

One way to reset tooth memory is through the normal course of orthodontic therapy. This allows for the extra time that enables the fibers to reshape in the new position. The other way is to place a fixed or



Before



After

permanent retainer after the teeth are moved.

So how is it possible to move teeth in one hour and make sure they stay that way? A small and sleek fixed retainer, coated with a very smooth material is placed on the back of the teeth. Instead of Dr. Shelton's "fingerdantic" method, a couple of braces can be used to accomplish the same thing.

To sum up:

Minor spacing or tooth misalignment can often be corrected in one hour with some braces and a fixed retainer. So when you have an important business meeting tomorrow but fear you look like Nanny McPhee, or you are afraid your date tonight might mistakenly call you Sponge Bob, it can't hurt

to give your orthodontist a call. You might still have time; in fact you might have more than enough time! **One hour braces!**

Please note: waiting until the last minute to get orthodontic therapy is not recommended. If you see something in your smile that you want to correct, you should schedule a consultation with an orthodontist as soon as possible.

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Before



After



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