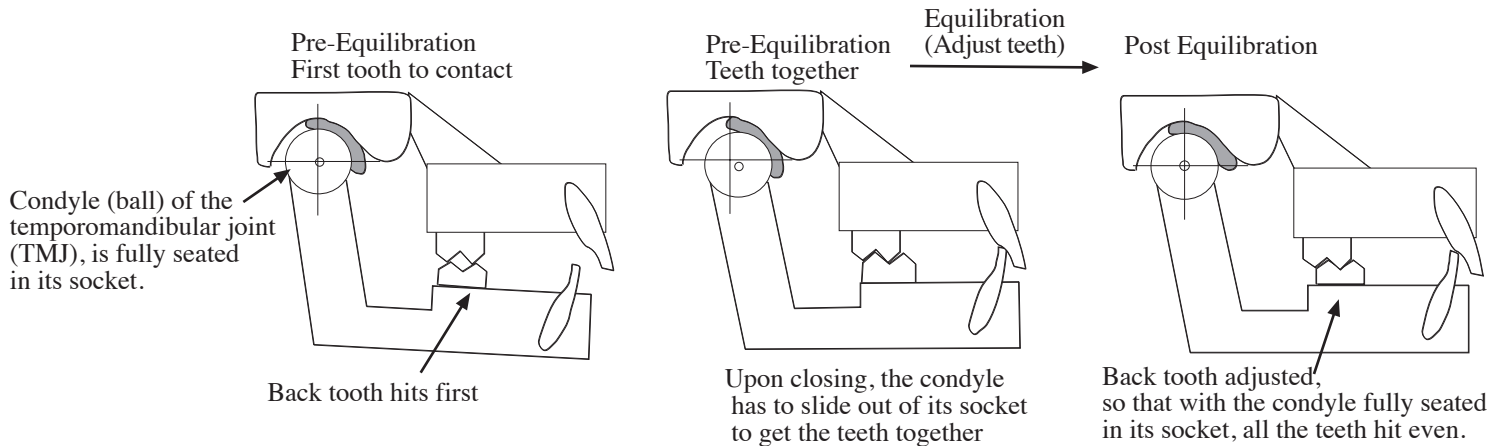


Occlusal Adjustment

An “occlusal adjustment” is an adjustment made to your teeth so that they will all hit evenly and properly when your jaw joint is completely seated in its socket. This is done by a combination of adding to and removing from enamel of the teeth. Composite, a material similar to tooth structure is added to the teeth. A stone in a dental hand-piece is used to reshape and re-contour the teeth. Usually all of the reshaping is done in the enamel of teeth where there are no nerves.

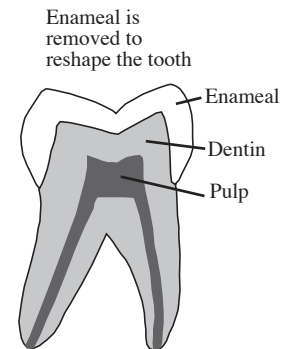


With a proper, ideal occlusion:

- All teeth have an equal amount of force when the TMJ is in its seated position. No single tooth has to endure an excessive load.
- The force through the TMJ is reparative and regenerative, not destructive.

Benefits of having a proper, ideal occlusion:

- Muscles of the jaw are more relaxed and muscle movements are coordinated and smooth.
- Less risk of splitting or breaking teeth.
- Teeth will not become loose, but will remain tight and firm.
- Helps to maintain the health of the temporomandibular joint.
- Helps to maintain the health of the periodontium.
- Front teeth that are adjusted in harmony with all the teeth and the TMJ look better.



Risks of Occlusal Adjustment

- Your bite will feel different. It may take your muscles a little bit of time to adapt to your new bite. Many people notice improved comfort right away, while others take a week or two to adapt.
- If you will need a moderate amount of adjustment on some teeth, dentin may be exposed. If this happens usually a small white composite filling can be placed over top of the dentin.
- Composite (white filling material) may need to be added to the lingual (tongue side) of your upper front teeth to establish contact with the lower teeth. You may be able to feel this bulge behind your front teeth. This is usually not a problem to get use to. After a week, most people have adapted.
- Old fillings may be sensitive to adjusting. This is usually a sign that they are leaking and should be replaced in the near future.
- Most adjustments are done very comfortably without novocain since we are not working on the sensitive parts of teeth. Some people with loose teeth may find the adjustment uncomfortable because the vibrations travel down the tooth into the gums. Usually, I can hold the teeth still while I adjust.
- Hidden damage to the jaw joints can be revealed. This is especially a risk if an appliance was not used prior to the equilibration. The occlusal adjustment did not cause the damage, but will reveal a joint that is mechanically unstable by an increase in TMJ symptoms and muscle splinting/soreness.