

Dental 101 Guidelines: How to Floss (Properly)

For those of you that listen to your dentist when he/she tells you to floss daily – kudos to you! You may be aware that flossing is one of the most critical practices you can perform to maintain good oral hygiene. But if you are not flossing correctly, your efforts and time to keep your teeth clean and healthy may be going to waste. Make sure you are effectively removing unwanted plaque from your teeth by following our flossing guide below.

- **Use a good floss**
Johnson and Johnson, Oral-B, REACH – you really can't go wrong with any of these brands. What you want to look for is "woven" floss. The thick surface area on this kind of floss allows you to remove plaque efficiently. Of course, there are circumstances that may require you to use a different kind of floss than we recommend. For example, if you have braces, "waxed" floss is your best option because it works best with the wires involved in orthodontia.
- **Unwind a lot, use a little**
You should be unraveling about an arms-length of floss each time you start the process (give or take). We know, you're thinking "that's a lot of floss for one mouth!" Truth is, you will use all of it. Not convinced? Take a look at the next point.
- **Use your index fingers & thumbs**
You're not supposed to use the entire strand of floss you unwound at once. Grab each end of the floss strand and wrap them around both your middle fingers until you reach the middle of the strand, leaving about 2 inches in between. That's the space you should be using for the space between 2 – 3 teeth max. From there, hold the floss with your index finger and thumb and start unwinding one finger to get new floss for the rest of your mouth.
- **Pick a starting point**
You want to pick a side (left or right) and region (top or bottom) of your mouth as a starting point when you floss. Many people like working their way through the top, left to right – there's no specific way to do it. The point is to make sure you don't miss any teeth!
- **Give a good few swipes**
You don't want to drop the floss between your teeth and take it out right away. Tug the floss in between your teeth back and forth a few times to really rub out the plaque on the tooth's walls. If the floss doesn't fall easily between your teeth, chances are you have excess plaque buildup in that region. Give it a few extra swipes for extra polishing.



- **Be gentle**

When you drop the floss between your teeth, make sure you don't do so too roughly. If you do, you may cut your gums which could cause bleeding, irritation, inflammation and discomfort. The more concentrated the space of floss you are using is, the less likely you are to encounter this problem.

- **Don't forget to rinse**

After flossing, you will have residue from all the plaque you have tried to remove from your teeth. Take some Listerine and wash that remaining bacteria out. Not only will you complete your flossing process, you'll also have minty-fresh breath!

As we mentioned – flossing is easy, but the method behind it is what makes it effective. Make sure you're not wasting your time. If you aren't already practicing what we have outlined in our guideline, today would be a perfect time to start! We're sure you'll see a difference within your first try! Good luck!

