Crown Removal: 
It’s Making My Life Difficult

ryconnoran | Ryan  | Total Posts: 12 | Member Since: 8/7/2003 | Posted: 8/7/2003 6:08:23 AM | Post 1 of 71
I've been having serious trouble removing crowns recently. My instruments have seen better days to be honest. What do you guys use? What's the best thing on the market?

Mike Barr | Total Posts: 7,273 | Member Since: 5/30/2000 | Location: Boynton Beach, FL | Posted: 8/7/2003 6:43:34 AM | Post 3 of 71
The best way I know to remove a crown is an electric handpiece with a metal cutting bur by Brasseler called the “H34” (I think). I don't try to tap off crowns. It simply doesn't work, and it puts the tooth at risk for fracture. Furthermore, patients hate it when you hammer on their head!

To remove a temporary crown, I recommend Premier's Flashing Crown Remover, designed by Dr. Donald Flashing. It has a sturdy handle with curved, beveled edges to go under the margins of the crown. The instrument is then used as a fulcrum to pry up the crown. The benefits of this instrument are that it is less traumatic to the patient and it preserves the crown—an important feature when removing a provisional that may need to be replaced. (Ever have a problem with the permanent crown?) We actually discontinued this instrument a few years ago, but brought it back after so many dentists requested its return.

Illustration courtesy of Premier USA

Albodmd1 | Albert B. Boholst | Total Posts: 4,221 | Member Since: 5/8/2001 | Location: Tampa, FL | Posted: 8/7/2003 6:56:08 AM | Post 7 of 71
I've had luck tapping off anterior bridges if one abutment is loose. You can also try those Richwill crown removers that you heat up and bite into. If it's well cemented and I'm making a new crown, I section it with a burr about halfway across, stick a flatblade screwdriver (I refer to it as my crown torquing device) in the slot and torque it. That's how I get the majority of my crowns off.

donnanick | Total Posts: 16 | Member Since: 10/16/2002 | Location: Mobile, AL | Posted: 8/7/2003 6:57:40 AM | Post 8 of 71
We've found the WAMkey to work well in most cases. There is a short learning curve and you have to make a small slot in [the] buccal of [the] crown, but it is repairable. The WAMkey is one of many tips I've picked up lurking on Dentaltown.

kctoothdoc | John | Total Posts: 320 | Member Since: 2/17/2002 | Location: Kansas City | Posted: 8/7/2003 7:01:59 AM | Post 9 of 71
I also use the Brasseler "H34" to section the crown, then Brasseler makes a crown removing instrument similar to an elevator, but angled very nicely, to leverage the crown off. This works for me every time. Hope this helps!!

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I agree removing crowns is a pain. After using the crown bumper with little success for a couple of years, I have gone to cutting a slot on the buccal, and sometimes across the occlusal, if needed. I then use a straight elevator to spread the crown a bit, and they come off a lot more easily.

I have also found a great way to remove temporaries. Get some towel clips. They work like hemostats with the lock and all, but you won’t need to lock them. The business end of these things is very sharp, and I just grab the buccal and lingual of the temp with light pressure, flick my wrist, and the temp is off. Hope this helps!

I’ve used the WAMkey since about March of this year. It’s a cinch to use, one of those devices you think to yourself, “I should have thought of that.”

You put a small slot (about 2-3 mm wide) at the spot on the facial or lingual of the crown where you figure the prepared tooth meets the crown material. This is where the learning curve is. Pretty much you want to be as close to this junction as possible. Probably 2/3s of the time my first guess is right and I can use the #1 WAMkey. However, when I’ve gone too occlusal or gingival, you can widen the slot occluso-gingivally as needed and use the slightly bigger #2 or #3 instruments. Check the case presentations to see some “cases.” I posted one, but since the technique is so simple it’s hard to see in my case what I did.

J. Morita has a great crown remover that will work most of the time without damaging the crown. The plier has soft plastic tips on which you put amalgam fillings to give you a grip. This is a great product to add to your crown remover instruments. They also make a reverse hammer with a steel wire that goes under porcelain bridgework, and can remove these bridges without damage. I have used both with great success and could not have practiced over 40 years until I retired without them.

If you take a triple tray Blu-Mousse bite imp for quick temp construction, cut up the buccal across the occlusal and split off crown with small surgical elevator, off it comes. The best method would be electric hand-piece with 98 cent cross-cut burs. I haven’t used the WAMkey or any of the other above mentioned crown removers, which I’m sure have merit. I rarely remove crowns, but I know for sure the patients do not like any “hammering” techniques so I just cut ‘em off and avoid fractures and crown full of tooth structure.

Try the Metalift. It is a little pricey but it works as advertised. Simple removal of a 4 PFM unit bridge today in less than five minutes. Great device.
WAMkey…ain’t nothing better in my book.

Guys, we can’t even compare the Metalift to the WAMkey. With the Metalift you’ve very little control over the amount of force you’re applying. Look at the physics of the thing. In my opinion there’s simply too much of a leverage effect. With the WAMkey on the other hand, because of the oval shaped head and entry position on the vestibular, you simply can’t apply too much force. There’s virtually no risk of accident. I’ll eat my shorts if someone can tell me they’ve done damage with a WAMkey.

I used to always cut ’em off. Now I don’t see the need. Too much time, too much drilling, then the need for temps, etc. The WAMkey cuts out all the fuss. Modern instruments just make my life so much easier!

The WAMkey is an old technique, people have been removing crowns with a straight elevator for decades. The WAMkey also has a mechanic advantage of the elevator handle and it does destroy the facial surface of a crown.

The Metalift makes a small hole, 1.1 millimeters to be exact. There are stainless-steel screws that come with the kit, they allow you to repair the crown. You can see the handle attached to the actual instrument, but it is not used to remove the crown. That handle keeps the instrument from falling down the patient’s throat.

The Metalift works with finger pressure. It is very gentle.

Hey guys, I apologize if you feel that I’ve unjustly criticized the Metalift. I own a Metalift remover and in the past I have used it on numerous occasions. All in all, I’d regard it as a useful instrument and it will certainly always remain one of my “specialty instruments,” as you put it Rance.

Since I got the WAMkey though (about six months ago), I rarely use my Metalift. Having said that, I wouldn’t give it away. I am sure it will come in handy at some stage. I do prefer the WAMkey though, for reasons I’ve given before.

I don’t know how long you have had the Metalift. Many people overlook the tips in the technical manual. Here’s one of them for thin metal and not being able to get it to grab. Under porcelain, [it’s] standard [to] use the medium size twist drill to make the channel. Do not go to the regular size twist drill, because so many times the metal is thin under porcelain. You need at least half a millimeter. By stopping at the medium, it will bite better. You can always go to another area. Then as you stated, start with the small instrument and if that strips go to the magnum. If you are removing a roundhouse or 8-unit bridge, it’s a gem.

Nothing works 100% of the time. I know as of today, Metalift is the highest rated by CRA and considered the “new control instrument, which all others should be compared.”

To read this thread in its entirety go online to: www.dentaltown.com/idealbb/view.asp?topicID=19776