Should I invest in a laser?

A Townie discussion from www.dentaltown.com

**ddsjarman**
Draper, UT  
Posts: 43  
Reg. 9/12/2002

Posted: 2/28/2003 7:23:00 AM  
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I need your Townie knowledge! Is it worth it for me to invest in a laser? Can it make me a better dentist and provide better care? Or is it another toy? Please let me know your feelings whether they are pro or con.

**benchwmer**
Annapolis, MD  
Posts: 21  
Reg. 2/13/2002

Posted: 2/28/2003 4:19:00 PM  
Post 6 of 112

What do you want a laser for? The only laser that will pay for itself is one that allows you to perform dental procedures profitably that you normally refer out. Using a Nd:YAG laser to treat a couple of quadrants of perio per month will easily make the payment, then you have the laser paid off in 3 years, plus you have the laser to use daily for soft-tissue contouring, frenectomies, gingival retraction for crowns, veneers, biopsies, coagulation after extractions, etc.

A hard-tissue laser has certain soft-tissue uses, but basically just makes everyday dentistry more high tech and maybe a little easier and faster. It brings in more referrals and is a great practice builder. The hard-tissue laser also takes up space.

I’ve been a PerioLase ND:YAG user for 4 years, I trained and use the Perio treatments of Drs Gregg and McCarthy with Millennium Dental. I purchased the new OpusDuo Erbium at the ADA last fall. Hard-tissue laser w/touch screen and/or foot control to change power levels. Great for anesthesia-free microdentistry, it fits into my amalgam free practice.

Do your research. I don’t know if I could practice without my PerioLase. Soon, I may feel the same about the hard-tissue laser, but not yet.

**cerecdoc**
Conway, AR  
Posts: 155  
Reg.: 8/6/2002

Posted: 2/28/2003 7:44:00 PM  
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It’s no gimmick. You will indeed be a better dentist, and you can almost throw away your needle if you want after about 6 months of learning curve. I am a 4 month Waterlase user myself, and I’m riding the wave crest! You can be the best periodontist in your town unless a periodontist has one. It is here to stay in my life for sure! They are selling as fast as they can make them now!

**jrnmolar**
Canandaigua, NY  
Posts: 737  
Reg.: 4/29/2001

Posted: 3/1/2003 8:26:00 AM  
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I want someone to admit that the #1 reason for purchase is marketing, not to remove a wart from their assistant’s brother-in-law “without novacaine”. I don’t have a problem with the marketing angle, if it gets pts in the door, great then I’m happy for all of you. The technology is just not there yet.

Source: DentalTown.com online survey Mar. 6, - April 8, 2003

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I’m getting more and more interested in the idea of purchasing a Waterlase. Can someone give me their input regarding its use for pedo restorative cases? I live in a rural area that is non-fluoridated and see a lot of primary teeth with caries ranging from barely visible to totally bombed out. I enjoy working with kids but not getting them “numb”.

A practice with a lot of kids is a fantastic practice to add an Er: laser to! They are great for this. I am unsure about which one you want for which reason, but try them both in your office first! I have the Delight and it was a fantastic purchase. The Waterlase would be also I am sure, but test drive them first. I have used my 400 micron for opening only. Either choice will serve you well.

My concern with lasers is this: I have been redoing SEVERAL of the seller’s WFT amalgams. I don’t think that buying a laser will help me in that situation, will it? I know that I could “eat” the tooth structure around a filling out, but that isn’t really practical. I will hold off on buying a laser until I know that it will pay for itself in the first year.

I promise your laser would start paying for itself in one month! If you are redoing a boatload of WFT amalgams then many of your teeth need crown lengthening...at $300 a pop you get a better impression, your patient gets a better restoration, and your patient has less gum problems...just 3-4 of these per month pay for the machine...this alone pays for itself in my office.

With proper training and a little common sense a laser, especially a versatile one such as the Waterlase, should give virtually any practice the best return on investment of any instrument one will ever purchase for his or her practice. The incremental income is largely based on the procedures you will do that presently you are ignoring or referring to specialists. On an investment of about $1000/month the average return of those I have taught and
stewartrosenberg

spoken to have averaged $5000/ month increase in revenue or more. It has meant four to five
times that to us. I had a week recently where we produced over $12,000 in laser-related fees.
Not to mention that we do better dentistry, have more fun and experience a lot less stress.
Bottom line, get one, go through the learning curve and reap the rewards!

Hi Stewart, I couldn’t agree with you more. The erbium:YAG laser I have
(Continuum Delight) allows us to do many procedures I never did before and often without
anesthetic. I use it for a lot of pediatric preps (especially love those different quadrant inter-
proximals I can now do in one appointment) and class 3, 4 and 5s in adults.
Frenectomies, biopsies, gingivectomies, crown lengthenings are all things I never did before
but found the laser made them easy and the healing is amazing.
In addition to doing procedures I hadn’t done prior to the lasers, I am able to do multiple quad-
rant dentistry in one sitting, get higher bond strengths in using laser + Etch and provide the
best marketing tool in dentistry.
The lasers capture the public’s interest, beyond anything else I have tried in dentistry (bleach-
ing is a close 2nd).
My gross income has increased 150% in the last 6 years (I have been out 16 years) and a lot of
the increase is in new patients coming for the high technology of lasers and scopes because
they assume that newer technology means better work. I am not saying this is always the case
but that is the public’s perception.
Go and investigate all the lasers (hard- and soft-tissue lasers) and make your decision on which
one to buy. Education is the key.

Do you believe adding a laser to your practice would bring in more patients?

If you are planning on purchasing a laser, what payment option are you considering?

Source: DentalTown.com online survey Mar. 6, - April 8, 2003
bought a practice (about 700 active patients) and is working on marketing to try to get more patients to the practice?

I’ve signed up for the hands-on course from Waterlase to test-drive the technology. From what I’ve read on the board, I do think I can find use for it, but will it be a good marketing tool to bring in more patients?

dhuang

I really believe that if you only have 700 patients that you must decide what type of practice you want to build. In my heart I believe that the Waterlase or any hard tissue laser including the Delight can really be used to build a practice with kids. No anesthetic is needed for most children and once the kids come in the door, it’s like McDonald’s… the parents start asking… can you use the laser on me, or is it only for kids. A gentleman I know who is a dentist in Florence, Alabama is one of the kings of laser marketing has told me that only 8% of his total income is laser dentistry (mine is higher) but that it brings in patients who are in need and that for every dollar of laser dentistry the new patient brought in 2.5 dollars (I think it was) of additional dentistry.

glennvanas

Want to know more? This is just a sample of the information available on the www.dentaltown.com message boards in the Laser Dentistry forum—Search Words (typed exactly): Invest in laser or not.

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