

One Year With CEREC 3D

andyhoe | Total Posts: 174 | Member Since: 11/5/2001 | Posted: 11/8/2005 10:14:03 PM | Post 1 of 58

Just celebrated my one year anniversary using the CEREC 3D! Observations:

1. I regret leasing the machine—I should have just paid cash for it! After 300+ units my first year @ \$250/unit (lab bill), I would have paid for half of the machine already (it's 150K in Canada). The first year's worth of CEREC lab bills went directly to my bottom line (six year lease, the first year payment free). Right now, my average monthly CEREC lab bill is twice as much as my lease/CEREC club payment.
2. It takes about 20-30 units to get over the learning curve and find out what the machine can and cannot do. Powdering/picture are the hardest part initially, and then become the easiest part.
3. You can't read or learn about every little tip or trap—some things you have to experience yourself to understand.
4. You start off worrying about the powdering/picture and then realize that a good prep makes everything else easy. I'm still looking for that "perfect" CEREC prep on my monitor.
5. CEREC indirectly enhances your external marketing—it adds to your high-tech "aura," but patients will not seek you out just because you have a CEREC. CEREC directly enhances your internal marketing—it increases case acceptance and referrals, patients really are "wowed" when they get a CEREC restoration.
6. CEREC is fun as hell. I would rather do quadrant CEREC dentistry than veneer cases or full mouths any day. Last month I had to cut off eight Empress veneers a molecule at a time because the patient decided she wanted 010 and not 030.
7. The CEREC community is cool. I have learned a lot from Dennis Fasbinder (basic), Mark Morin (advanced), and Chris Leinwebber/*CEREC made Easy* (Chris lives right here in Calgary). I have learned a lot from the DT [Dentaltown] CEREC forum—ask a question and you will receive.
8. There is no CEREC hotline. When you have a problem save yourself the trouble and use the phone to order a pizza instead. Patterson tries very hard, but there is nobody available to help you right now while you have a patient in the chair. Unless you have a buddy who is an experienced user, take a back-up impression for your first 20-30 units in case you have to make a temporary and send the case to the lab.
9. Don't blame the machine. Garbage in, garbage out. If you don't like doing precise dentistry you will have MEGA problems and you will hate your CEREC. If you like doing precise dentistry, you will have very few problems and you will like your CEREC immensely.
10. CEREC can be very productive. An easy unit takes me 60 minutes, a hard one 70-80 minutes, a two-unit case 100 minutes—all with a 10-12 minute milling break, when you can do something else. My average fee is about \$750 plus \$250 lab. If you want more free time, get your assistant to powder/picture and design.

For anyone out there who has just bought a machine—you're in for a fun year! For anyone out there thinking about buying one—do your homework!

molrman-tfb | Thomas F. Brickey, DMD | Total Posts: 19 | Member Since: 2/3/2005 | Posted: 11/8/2005 10:25:27 PM | Post 3 of 58



Congratulations! One year, huh? Well, I'm only two months into it (approx) and reading your comments longingly. I had a three-unit case today; 29 DO inlay, 30 crown, and 31 MOD inlay...and I finally gave up, took an impression, made temps, (all one piece, ugh) and will now attempt to do it indirectly. I had the patient there for three hours! I admit...I was frustrated. [I] couldn't get a good picture, powder drifts...heme sneaking up the sulcus, hiding the margin on the distal of 31. I really hope I get to where you are.

Reading your comments gives me some hope. I'll keep working. And thanks to Armen, and others, like the great guy who called me out of the blue today to help me with quadrants! Sorry, I couldn't make you proud (but I'll keep trying).

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Mark A. McClure, DDS | Total Posts: 145 | Member Since: 6/12/2002 | Location: St. Louis, MO | Posted: 11/9/2005 7:49:54 AM | Post 6 of 58

Sorry you couldn't get it to work...I can tell you, you'll be cranking this type of stuff out in no time with fantastic results. Knowing when to impress and temp is important. Now you can do the case with no pressure on the models. Great way to learn, just don't make it a habit!

P.S. If you don't have an Isolite, look into it. It makes powdering and picturing much easier! (www.isolitesystems.com)

ricktds | Rick Todd, DDS | Total Posts: 1,443 | Member Since: 1/21/2004 | Location: Bellingham, WA | Posted: 11/9/2005 8:54:35 AM | Post 10 of 58



I'm two weeks into it and today for the first time, I don't have a CEREC on the schedule (two gold crowns on 31 and one on 18, because up in the north country, we still do a few gold ones), but so far, all has gone well. I find that seeing my preps at 14 power is a humbling experience and I'm spending more time smoothing my margins. The powdermeister seems to plug up frequently, I've used the Isolite a couple times and the rubber dam for the rest. A couple I had scheduled for only one hour (scheduled pre-CEREC), I took the optical impressions, assistant temporized and I did them later with a second seat appointment. Yesterday, the cylinder milling bur broke mid-mill. I changed it, and resumed milling, but the margin didn't fit, so I had to re-mill, which fit great. That set me behind a little. I was milling in normal (not fast mill) at the time and wonder why it broke. All in all, I love this machine! I find the ProCAD blocks polish up a lot faster, but am concerned about the talk of lack of strength with them.

augustdds | Total Posts: 3,068 | Member Since: 12/8/2000 | Location: Encino, CA | Posted: 11/9/2005 9:47:24 AM | Post 11 of 58



It's been about six months with mine. I agree with Andy (one of the best CEREC posts BTW). Moved from beginner to advanced, and my stress level is going way down. NO WAY I could go back to completely non-CEREC. One thing I am finding is that I am getting better at picking my battles and know when to do a case with CEREC and which to do lab fabrication. But, I do like my no brainer (ha!) eight-unit veneer cases better than quadrant CEREC.

Dr. Duke | Total Posts: 477 | Member Since: 3/24/2004 | Location: Alberta, Canada | Posted: 11/9/2005 10:14:38 AM | Post 12 of 58

I am about one and a half years into it with mine and agree with what Andy has posted, although for myself the learning curve for crowns vs. inlays and onlays was very different. I think the average dentist can get this thing milling crowns that fit and look beautiful in about two months or less. The hardest part for me was dialing in the occlusion, but I use database almost exclusively.

The onlays are a very different story. If I was completely honest it has only been in the last three to four months that I do not feel anxiety with my onlays wondering if they are going to fit or not. Now, I would say I can get 95% to drop in beautifully, but up until then it was like I had cross my fingers—some would fit and some wouldn't. You really must have a perfect prep and perfect picture for an onlay to drop in. I gave up doing inlays on it—I tried a few times—found they were a real PITA [pain in the @\$\$] and also found that they just didn't fit with my personal restorative philosophy.

One thing I would suggest to any new user is get your basic training, but then don't think you have to spend a year on the machine before taking an advanced course. I took Mark Morin's advanced course and learned a ton and he is also a great motivator. I know many think he is over the top, which he is, but he knows the ins and outs of this machine intimately. I am still booking an hour and a half for all my CERECs, but what can I say is that I am slow and I have done some under an hour, but for the most part from the time the patients sits in the chair to the time they leave, it's an hour and a half.

Brian | Brian Schaefer | Total Posts: 6,168 | Member Since: 4/14/2000 | Location: Green Bay, WI | Posted: 11/9/2005 10:18:19 AM | Post 13 of 58



The learning curve builds up upon itself over time. You learn to recognize potential problems before they occur. Even after six years, I still get an "aha" experience every so often. The best investments that I ever made for CEREC was a diode laser and an oven. Makes life much easier.

socialsam | Total Posts: 11,807 | Member Since: 12/13/2000 | Location: Tarzana, CA | Posted: 11/9/2005 10:24:02 AM | Post 14 of 58



I just had an emergency walk in with a fractured mesial buccal cusp on # 2. A quick application with CareCredit and she was approved for six month financing. She couldn't afford it otherwise, but loved the idea of six months interest-free. We squeezed her in between some exams and other procedures. About 50 minutes later, she is out the door with a MODBL onlay. Polished, not glazed in this instance. Happy patient, and we just added \$900 to the day with no second appointment and no lab bill. Loving my CEREC and congrats to all those that are enjoying their purchase.

Chaim Wexler, DDS | Total Posts: 2,927 | Member Since: 3/21/2002 | Location: NYC | Posted: 11/9/2005 1:41:45 PM | Post 16 of 58



Does everyone love CEREC? Are there some who have had bad experiences and chucked the whole thing? People on this forum seem to be pretty happy nowadays, but we used to have CEREC agnostics too. According to Dr. Pescatore we should have dozens of unhappy fellows and I wish they would chime in one way or another.

Michael Drance | Total Posts: 1,361 | Member Since: 9/7/2000 | Location: Vancouver, Canada | Posted: 11/9/2005 1:48:12 PM | Post 17 of 58



With all the used CERECs available these days, some are from practice sales and retirements, but some are definitely from people for whom it didn't fit in with their practice. My guess is that they were not willing to put in the time to get over the learning curve. Some would not be used to doing posterior bonded restorations, and probably had some early problems. I think these people would have lost some money on their units, and maybe not too keen to tell their story.

ricktds | Rick Todd, DDS | Total Posts: 1,443 | Member Since: 1/21/2004 | Location: Bellingham, WA | Posted: 11/9/2005 2:46:38 PM | Post 24 of 58



Chaim—I just got the Odyssey 2.4 Diode Laser. I used it twice today and was really glad I had it. First patient comes in to seat an implant crown and the tissue has grown up and I can't get it to seat. About one minute with the laser and it slips right in. Couldn't use an electrosurge near the implant and sharps would have created a bloody mess. Second patient broke the lingual cusp of # 18 and had exuberant tissue growth into the defect. Prepped, lasered, and impression—again, with electrosurge, I probably still would have some bleeding and would have had to pack, so in my first day of use, I give it five stars! I can't wait to use it on a CEREC. So far, all the CERECs have had supragingival margins and the optical impression has been easy, especially with rubber dam isolation.

rjfrank | Total Posts: 6 | Member Since: 2/22/2005 | Posted: 11/9/2005 6:49:47 PM | Post 37 of 58

I agree with Andy, mostly, all for except # 10. I'm pretty slow, and I don't really want to work faster. I schedule two hours and enjoy the pace, as I've been in practice almost 30 years—but I should look into Sam's or Armen's course to quicken the pace.

11. I'm just starting cutbacks and stacking for veneers and anterior crowns, this stuff is fun.
12. I'm starting month nine, my collections in nine months from CEREC dentistry alone (money in the bank) is greater than the total cost of: CEREC 3D, Vita Vac 40, all the CEREC supplies (consumed since starting 3D and supplies in stock), Easy Shade, new KaVo electric handpieces (two rooms), Ray Becker's course, and my new Avalanche. My fees are low @ \$600/restoration. So, for all those that are bashing CEREC—keep it up—my patients (and myself) are doing quite well with all the beautiful restorations, and your whining and PFMs leaves my schedule full.
13. I'm thinking of sending Pescatore a box of chocolates, so he and MicroDental exert the greatest influence possible on docs across the country—you know—Forrest Gump style.

Armen | Armen Mirzayan | Total Posts: 3,810 | Member Since: 1/20/2003 | Location: Los Angeles, CA | Posted: 11/9/2005 11:12:55 PM | Post 40 of 58

I have found the biggest ROI [return on investment] and it was relatively cheap to set up. I saw Akihiko's set up and had to catch up. I mounted 32-inch flat screens on the wall facing the

patients last week. It's happened three times now this week, where the staff takes the digital x-rays and the patient sees a 2X2 foot image pop up right in front of them. I'm looking at the x-rays in my office as well, while they are taking the shots...so, I step in, while they are upright, and go over a few things that a really obvious, on the screen, "Do you use see this black spot here? That's a cavity underneath the crown." Every single one of them decided to have the crowns done right then and there. We've had digital for a while, but always thought of them as a great tool for me, but now it's directed at the patient and they flip out.

tiffarooonie | Total Posts: 587 | Member Since: 5/15/2001 | Posted: 11/9/2005 11:39:17 PM | Post 42 of 58



Great post Andy! I'm coming up on my one year anniversary too! I completely agree with you on your list. I can't believe it's been that long, I'm having so much fun and saved so much money. I bought a diode laser and am buying a digital panorex and doing an office remodel with a fraction of the savings.

I must have talked, breathed, and lived CEREC so much that my fiance bought one last month. The only thing that bugs me, is that he got a better deal on his than I did on mine!

I love those emergency walk-ins with broken cusps. Nothing better than walking out with a fixed tooth with no temporary in about an hour.

Find it online

This is just a sample of the Dentaltown.com message boards. To read the whole thread go online to:
<http://www.dentaltown.com/idealbb/view.asp?topicID=58555>

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