



Getting It Straight

by Dr. Kirk Christensen,
Woodstock's Orthodontic Specialist

Q: *My daughter wears her rubber bands at night, but I suspect not much in the day time when I am not around. Is this adequate?*

A: If the goal of her rubber band wear is to MOVE teeth, then no, night time wear is not enough. Constant and consistent forces are the keys to tooth movement. Partial, or half time elastic (rubber band) wear is useful for holding teeth in a location, but not for actual movement. !Remember that there are ligaments surrounding the roots of our teeth. They actually hold the tooth suspended in the bony tooth socket. These ligaments are elastic by design to allow for shock absorption when we chew food or experience minor trauma. They stretch as a tooth is pushed or pulled in a given direction. If the ligaments are allowed to use their elasticity during orthodontic treatment (which occurs when the directional force is removed, such as: removing rubber bands, an unattached bracket, or an undone ligature tie) they will retrace the path of the desired movement in reverse. The result is a “break even” on the day, and that is not how to get the job done. Constant directional force keeps the elastic ligaments from recoiling while the bone is remodeled along the path of movement. !Over time, the entire tooth socket relocates via bone remodeling with the tooth root and ligaments housed within it. At that point, the tooth and bony socket are in a new location where the ligaments will be unable to move the tooth back to its original location. This bone remodeling must occur, otherwise non movement and relapse are inevitable. If you want your daughters teeth to move to a better location and correct bite, then she must wear the rubber bands full time exactly as prescribed. !Dr. Christensen's column appears weekly in the Northwest Herald. Questions to be answered and treatment inquiries may be directed to: **Woodstock Orthodontics c/o Kirk H. Christensen, DDS, 226 West Judd Street, Woodstock, IL 60098, Phone: 815-337-5522**