

INFORMATION ON OCCLUSAL EQUILIBRATION

Occlusal Equilibration is a term used in dentistry to discuss the balancing of the bite relationship. The lower jaw is a “u-shaped” bone, which has two joints at each end. When the jaw system is functioning properly, the lower jaw is able to freely hinge at the joints and close together with the lower teeth contacting the upper teeth very evenly all the way around the arch. This creates a “solid bite”.

When there is a discrepancy in the bite relationship to the fully seated joints, then problems can develop. If any teeth interfere with a healthy jaw relationship during closure, the jaw will have to shift in order to fully close the teeth all the way together. This shifting of the jaw creates stress on the whole system. We will see manifestations of this shifting as muscle tenderness, headaches, clenching and grinding of teeth. Other consequences of not correcting the bite are joint discomfort, wearing of the teeth, looseness, chipping, gum recession and breakage of the teeth.

If these signs of instability are found as we examine your mouth, we then consider occlusal equilibration as a possible remedy. We study the bite relationship by way of mounted-diagnostic study cast of your mouth. In this way we can determine if adjustment of the biting surfaces to balance your bite will correct the problem. Once studied, we can proceed with adjusting your bite relationship to re-establish harmony in the biting system. We do this carefully by reshaping the biting surfaces of individual teeth, which may be interfering with the proper joint/bite relationship. By making these corrective changes, we are able to establish a harmonious and stable system, which eliminates the destructive forces previously present.

Establishing this stability in the system can prevent or reduce many problems that are serious in nature. These include:

1. Temporomandibular joint dysfunction (TMD)
2. Muscle-tension headaches
3. Severe wear of your natural teeth, as well as loose teeth
4. Chipping/breaking of teeth
5. Gum recession and other associated problems
6. Grooves forming on exposed root surfaces

Dr. Elliott will discuss with you in detail his findings of your individual needs and why he is recommending Occlusal Equilibration.