

A Big No-No!

DIY Orthodontics

by Dr. Brad Edgren

The internet is filled with do-it-yourself (DIY) fixes from home and smartphone repairs to healthcare. Home repairs such as fixing a leaky faucet can be straight forward and simple to perform without serious consequences. Other home repairs are more complicated and require professional help.

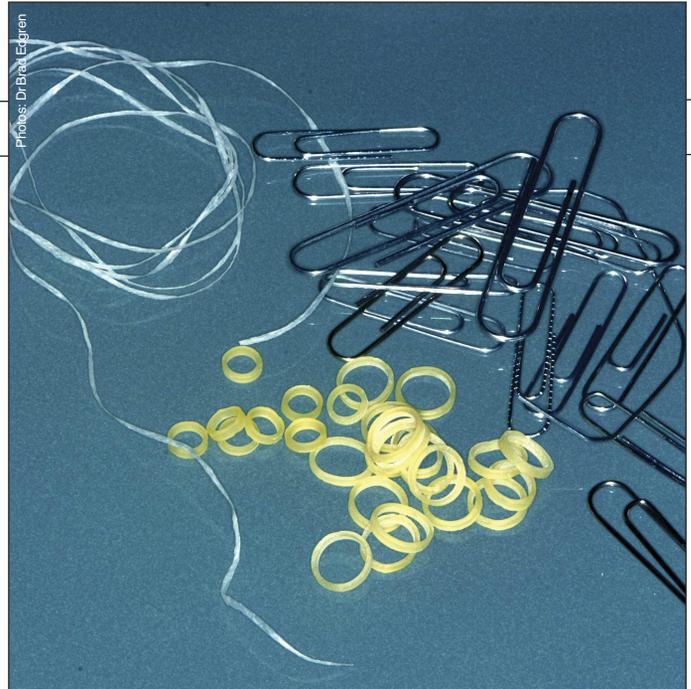
Remember the DIY smartphone hack for the iPhone 7's, that don't have a headphone jack, recommending that a headphone jack could be made by drilling a 3.5 mm hole in the bottom of the phone? Many of those individuals that tried this only ruined a phone. However, DIY orthodontics can cost more than just having to replace a \$800 phone.

DIY orthodontics can result in the loss of teeth, costing thousands of dollars to replace and treat over a lifetime. Just a single tooth implant can range up to over several thousand dollars, much more than the cost of orthodontic care by a qualified orthodontist.

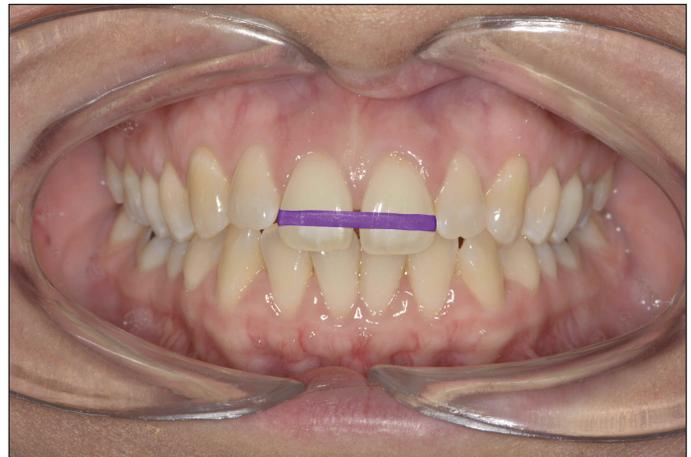
Tutorials found on YouTube and Facebook are by teenagers espousing their "expertise" on straightening teeth. They instruct unsuspecting individuals in the use of rubber bands, earring backs, paperclips, dental floss, et cetera to correct spacing and bad bites.

For example, certain tutorials demonstrate the use of placing a small rubber band around the upper central incisors to close a gap, called a "gap band." **DO NOT DO THIS!** These "gap bands" can and will work their way up underneath the gum tissue, resulting in damage to the gums and the bone that supports the teeth. These "gap bands" are a great way to extract teeth. Because of the conical shape of the tooth root, rubber bands will gradually work their way towards the tip of the root resulting in tooth loss. This treatment has been used professionally by dentists to remove teeth in individuals with bleeding disorders and heart problems. It only takes a few weeks for a tooth to fall out when placing a rubber band around it.

Orthodontists are dentists first before becoming a specialist in orthodontics. To become an orthodontist it requires four years of college with a bachelor's degree,



Patients have started using potentially dangerous, common household objects such as paperclips, dental floss and small rubber bands in an effort to straighten their teeth without an orthodontist's supervision.



This is referred to as a "gap band." DO NOT TRY THIS! You could severely damage or worse yet, loose your teeth!

another four years of dental school graduating with a DDS or DMD, and then an additional two to three years in an orthodontic residency program receiving a certificate in orthodontics and often a master's degree. These young kids who are producing these DIY orthodontic YouTube videos have none of the expertise of a qualified orthodontist with 10 - 11 years of training after high school.

Orthodontics is healthcare! It's not just the appliances that you are paying for, it's the expertise of the orthodontist. 

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