Now that your braces have been removed, you and your orthodontist want you to keep that healthy, beautiful smile. Your orthodontist has determined that the best way for you to do that is by wearing a retainer(s).

While wearing a retainer is simple, it is a very complex and powerful appliance. A retainer is an important part of your orthodontic treatment. A retainer is designed to keep your teeth where your braces moved them. Wearing your retainer as instructed is the key to maintaining the success of your orthodontic treatment.

There are a variety of retainers. Some are removable and some are fixed—that is, they are cemented to your teeth. Your orthodontist will provide the kind of retainer that best maintains the new positions of your teeth.

Orthodontists receive an additional two to three years of specialized education beyond dental school to learn the proper way to align and straighten teeth. Only those who successfully complete this formal education may call themselves “orthodontists,” and only orthodontists can be members of the American Association of Orthodontists.

If you have any questions or concerns throughout your treatment or in the future, please consult your orthodontist or visit mylifemysmile.org.
Make your retainer work for you

Your retainer is specially designed by your orthodontist to help you maintain the results from your treatment. Following these few simple guidelines for wearing and taking care of your retainer will make your treatment last. Your reward will be a lifetime of healthy, beautiful smiles.

Contact your orthodontist immediately if there is a problem with your retainer

If your retainer should break or be lost, contact your orthodontist at once for a replacement. If your retainer is not fitting properly—which may happen if you do not wear your retainer as prescribed by your orthodontist – or if your fixed retainer should become loose, call your orthodontist right away for an appointment.

Follow your orthodontist’s instructions

Your retainer is designed to perform a vital role in your overall orthodontic treatment. It’s very important that you wear your retainer exactly as you have been instructed. Otherwise, your treatment goals may not be maintained. If you’re wearing retainers after braces and you don’t follow your doctor’s instructions, your teeth could move toward their original positions, erasing some of the great results you achieved from treatment.

You may need to wear your retainers quite a while, so be patient. Each person’s case is different. Follow your orthodontist’s instructions for wearing your retainers. In some cases, permanent retention will be necessary. Your orthodontist will determine how long you’ll need to wear retainers.

It’s important to choose an orthodontist

An orthodontist is a specialist in the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of dental and facial irregularities. All orthodontists are dentists, but only about six percent of dentists are orthodontists. Admission to orthodontic programs is extremely competitive and selective.

It takes many years to become an orthodontist and the educational requirements are demanding.