

A young woman with blonde hair is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text 'FOUR PILLARS' is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters on the right side of the image.

FOUR PILLARS

— of a —

BEAUTIFUL SMILE



by Dr. Terry Giangreco



Beauty is in the eye of your Orthodontist: The Four Pillars of a Beautiful Smile

There is a common misconception that having orthodontic treatment, whether it be with braces or clear aligners, is a simple, straightforward procedure. The reality is, having an exceptional smile is anything but simple or straightforward.

When choosing an orthodontist, it is important to remember that the specialty of orthodontics is as much an art as it is a science. Your first step is to find an actual orthodontist. Remember that all orthodontists are dentists, but not all dentists are orthodontists. To be an orthodontist a dentist must do a two to three year residency in orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics. How do you know if your doctor is a trained orthodontist? It's easy, just ask! As for being treated to the most beautiful outcome possible, think of beautiful smile design as having four pillars.



Pillar One

Show those pearly whites!

Many times the upper lip can hide your beautiful teeth. An orthodontist's job is to help you capitalize on those pearly whites, so be sure to ask your orthodontist if they are going to do everything possible to enhance the relationship between the upper teeth and the upper lip. Any time the upper incisors are intruded the teeth disappear behind the upper lip and this prematurely ages the appearance of your face.

A broad, beautiful smile!

If you look at any popular personality magazine, notice the smiles that catch your eye. Instead of narrow upper and lower jaws, they almost always have broad smiles with teeth that go from corner to corner of their smile. We're not talking about a Cheshire cat, we're just talking about a healthy and youthful display of your gorgeous teeth.





Pillar Three

Curve it like you own it!

One of the most common complaints that patients have after orthodontic is that their teeth look “manufactured”, almost like dentures. This happens because of where the brackets were placed on the teeth. It’s the “art” part of orthodontics. Upper incisors should follow the gentle curve of the lower lip. Orthodontists that are aware of this subtle but critical element of smile design refer to this as the “smile arc”. Ask for it by name.

It's all in the angle

Often, in an attempt to avoid extracting permanent teeth, orthodontist will inadvertently flare the upper and lower incisors. The flaring of the front teeth not only looks unattractive, it serves to make the front teeth appear dull. Think about what happens when light hits the front teeth. If they are at an angle (proclined) the light will bounce either up or down upon smiling. When the front teeth are at the proper angulation, the light reflects off the teeth directly into the observer's eyes, making the teeth appear whiter, giving them the “pop” that gets noticed.





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