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The role of vertical dimension in facial aesthetics

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Introduction: Excessive wear on teeth can lead to not only loss of tooth tissue but also a loss in facial height with accompanying reduction of facial aesthetics. After a review of the literature and the use of occlusal splints, several case studies will be given to show improvements in the occlusion and facial aesthetics by increasing vertical dimension. These will range from the use of Dahl Appliances to full dentures to partial and full mouth reconstruction. By performing a partial or full mouth reconstruction at an increased vertical dimension using gnathologic principles facial aesthetics can be re-established and improved, the occlusion stabilised and wear reduced.

Aim: This paper will address loss of Vertical Dimension due to wear and treatment options to improve facial aesthetics and occlusion, with a step by step guide to assess the correct vertical dimension to work to. Occlusal wear is one of the biggest problems facing restorative dentists worldwide. Wear often leads to loss of vertical dimension. This paper aims to review the different treatment options and then show case studies to support increasing vertical dimension and improving facial aesthetics. Occlusal considerations will be paramount during the presentation.

Learning objectives:

- To assess whether tooth wear has led to loss of vertical dimension
- Assessing how to achieve the correct vertical dimension
- To learn how to handle the increase in Vertical Dimension from an occlusal point of view
- Understanding the technicians role in the technique
- To determine the type of occlusion to use

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