



SMILES!

L. Alan Jones, DMD PC  
ORTHODONTIST

## HEADGEAR



The general term, “headgear” is a reference to the way forces can be delivered to improve the alignment of the teeth from outside the mouth region. The use of headgear as an adjunct in providing movement for teeth dates back to the very beginning of orthodontics as a specialty by Pierre Fauchard in the 1800’s.

There are generally four directions a headgear can be used to produce movement of teeth in the mouth. While some orthodontists approve of the use of headgear as a force on the upper front teeth, I particularly do not approve of this approach and do not use headgear to the front part of the mouth.

With most of the force applied to the upper molar region, headgear can be used to track the teeth in the direction in an upward angle toward the ears (called high pull headgear) or straight back (called combination headgear) or even backward and downward as if toward the back of the neck (called cervical headgear). Another option is to use a headgear that protracts or brings forward the upper molars toward the front part of the mouth (called protraction headgear or reverse pull headgear).

### How Long do I have to Wear the Headgear?

The numbers of hours a patient is to wear their headgear is generally unique to the direction of pull the headgear and the goals to be achieved. However, a general rule of thumb is that you will start off wearing the headgear one hour the first day. The second day would be two hours, and the third day for three hours, and so forth until you’ve built up to the appropriate number of hours. Almost everyone is eight hours or greater and therefore sleep time is needed to accomplish this goal of getting eight hours of wear while at home.

Rarely will a student be asked to wear a headgear to school. There’s absolutely nothing wrong with wearing it more hours, but there are certain risks that you should understand.

### The Safety of Wearing a Headgear

A headgear delivers the forces it carries to the mouth through the use of springs or rubber bands. Unfortunately, it is possible another person could play a prank on you and pull on the headgear or rubber bands. When they let it go, where it lands is bound to be hurtful.

To help minimize the risks, there are safety releases built into the design of the headgear. Be certain you understand how those releases work and how to reset them so as to avoid injury. If the safety releases become too easily activated and the headgear comes apart, please return to the office so that Dr. Jones can adjust them for you.