

The Secret to Clean, Healthy Teeth

Some people say that the hardest part about waking up is getting out of bed, but what about everything after that? For some, brushing your teeth is just as hard as getting out of bed. These instructions will go in depth about the teeth brushing process and are intended for everyone, since brushing teeth is an essential step in everyone's morning routine. Brushing your teeth will not only give you bright white teeth and a fresh breath, but also prevent gum disease and tooth decay. By the end of this, you'll not only know how to brush your teeth correctly, but also how to maintain clean and healthy teeth.

Supplies

The first step to brushing your teeth is to have the right supplies.

- Toothbrush
- Cup
- Toothpaste
- Bathroom sink

There aren't many required supplies, but it's important to have the right kind of toothbrush and toothpaste. Although there are many brands of toothbrushes and toothpaste, any brand that you find in the store will work, as long as you make sure that it follows these two guidelines:

1. Look for toothpaste brands with an ADA (American Dental Association) seal and fluoride, the main component in preventing teeth decay and strengthening teeth enamel.
2. The brush on the head of the toothbrush are the bristles of a toothbrush. Look for a toothbrush with soft bristles, as hard bristles can cause more hurt than harm.

Setting Up

The first step of brushing your teeth is setting up your cup for rinsing and your toothbrush for brushing.

1. To set up your cup for rinsing, we first need to fill it up with water. Not all bathroom sinks have the same knobs or handles, but they will all have ways to adjust the water temperature. Begin by either moving the handle to a position somewhere in the middle or by turning the hot and cold water knobs by an equal amount. Check to make sure that the water isn't too hot or too cold. Adjust the temperature until it's warm or cool to the touch, depending on your preference.
2. Place your cup underneath the running water and wait until the cup is filled around $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way from the top. Filling the cup up too much will make it harder to handle and increase your chances of spilling water. Now that your cup is filled with water, you can put it down and start getting your toothbrush ready.
3. Begin by unscrewing or popping the cap off your toothpaste. Hold your toothbrush in one hand and your now opened toothpaste in the other hand. Bring the opening of your tube of toothpaste close to the bristles of the toothbrush and gently squeeze the tube until a pea-sized amount of toothpaste is on the toothbrush. Put the cap back onto the tube of toothpaste.

Preparing to Brush

Before putting the toothbrush into your mouth, take a moment to plan out how you're going to brush your teeth. Excluding wisdom teeth, an adult has 28 teeth in their mouth. While brushing your teeth, it's easier to think of your teeth as surfaces, rather than individual teeth.

Mentally divide your mouth into three sections: the front, top, and back surfaces.

- The front surface is what everyone sees when you smile; it's the surface of your teeth facing outwards.
- The top surface is the surface that makes contact when your top teeth and your bottom teeth meet. The larger teeth in the back of your mouth, or your molars, have the most surface area and will usually be in contact when you clench your teeth.
- The back surface is the surface that your tongue can feel with your teeth clenched

Now that you have the layout of your teeth in your mind, you are now ready to start brushing your teeth.

1. Without swallowing, take a sip from your cup or water and then spit out the water into the sink to moisten your mouth.
2. Dip your toothbrush into your cup to wet the bristles.

Brushing Your Teeth

You are now ready to being brushing your teeth. This part of the process is mainly about technique and the sooner you get these techniques down, the easier it'll be in the future.

1. Hold your toothbrush firmly in one hand and place it in your mouth.
2. Now that the toothbrush is in your mouth, begin brushing by moving your toothbrush horizontally back and forth. Make sure that your toothbrush is in contact with the surfaces of your teeth while brushing so that toothpaste and remove stains and polish your teeth.

The ADA recommends brushing your teeth for 2 minutes, or 120 seconds. To brush your teeth effectively, it's wise to make the most use out of your time. You have two sets of teeth, your top and bottom teeth. Both of these sets of teeth have three sections: front, top, and back surfaces. This sums up to a total of 6 surfaces. That means that you should spend approximately 20 seconds on each surface brushing.

3. Keep count of the seconds in your head. Every 20 seconds, move your toothbrush to another surface that you haven't brushed yet and continue scrubbing your teeth.

A common mistake that people make is to spend too much time on a certain part of your mouth. By keeping a timer in your head, you can avoid this. Another common mistake is to apply too much pressure while brushing. Apply the same amount of medium pressure throughout the whole procedure. Applying too much pressure can cause harm to your gums.

4. After you've visited all 6 surfaces, you can now rinse out the toothpaste in your mouth.
5. Set your toothbrush down and take a sip of water from your cup without swallowing the water.

6. Rinse your mouth by closing your mouth and swishing the water in your mouth around. Repeatedly bring the water from the front of your mouth to the back of your mouth so that the water can thoroughly loosen the debris and wash the toothpaste from the surfaces of your mouth.
7. Spit out the water into the faucet and repeat rinsing if you feel like there is still toothpaste in your mouth.

Now that your teeth are clean and your mouth is rinsed, it's a good idea to also brush your tongue. Even though you've brushed your teeth thoroughly, a lot of bacteria is still on your tongue preventing fresh breath.

8. Turn on the faucet and set it to a warm or cool temperature. Bring your toothbrush under the running water to remove the toothpaste. Some toothbrushes come with tongue scrapers, but even if yours doesn't come with it, you can still brush your tongue.
9. Bring your toothbrush into your mouth and gently scrub the surface of your tongue with the bristles of your toothbrush in a circular motion. You just want to loosen the grime on your tongue so that you can rinse it out afterwards.
10. After gently scrubbing your tongue, pick up your cup of water and take a sip of water without swallowing it.
11. Rinse your mouth and spit out the water into the sink.

Cleaning Up

You've just brushed your teeth and your breath is smelling fresh! Now, the only thing left to do is to clean up.

1. Turn on the faucet and bring your toothbrush underneath the running water to clean out the toothpaste and debris on it. Give the toothbrush a quick shake to remove the excess water.
2. Leave your toothbrush on a rack or a surface where your toothbrush can air dry. You want to make sure that your toothbrush is dry for the next time you brush your teeth, since bacteria and other microorganisms grow in moist environments.
3. Pour out the water from your cup, clean it out, and like your toothbrush, make sure it's air dried by the time you brush your teeth again.

Conclusion

If you've followed these instructions, your mouth should be feeling a lot fresher and cleaner. However, the process of brushing your teeth isn't a one-time thing. It's important to brush your teeth at least twice a day, once in the morning, and once at night before going to bed. The key to maintaining a clean mouth and white teeth is consistency.

Another important thing is to replace toothbrush every 3 to 4 months, or when the bristles on your toothbrush gets frayed, whichever one comes first.

Although it seems like there are a lot of steps involved in brushing your teeth, you'll get used to it in no time, especially if you're brushing your teeth twice a day, as recommended.