

Aloha friends! Will with OraWellness here.

Is it possible to straighten your teeth without braces? What do you think?

In this video tutorial, let's explore a simple, natural way to address the following two questions:

- Question #1: *"My teeth are already crooked. What can I do to straighten them?"*
- Question #2: *"My teeth are pretty straight, but I feel them shifting. What can I do to keep them straight?"*

We all want a radiant smile. And while much of the radiance of a smile comes from within and depends on whether or not we are letting our "Light" shine, many of us still want to have a physically nice smile, too.

### **First off, full disclosure...**

We're not medical or dental professionals, and this video is not intended to be used to replace orthodontic treatment.

We draw from over 30 (coming on 35) years of practicing the Chinese Longevity Arts like Tai Chi, and from creating a global holistic oral health brand helping hundreds of thousands of people navigate to greater oral health through videos just like this one. So we share this information for educational purposes only.

To start, let's set down an important foundation.

Then we'll explain some simple strategies anyone can apply to support a healthy dental arch and naturally straight teeth.

### **The core foundation is simply that teeth shift.**

Our teeth are anchored into the jaw bones, but they are not cemented into one spot. So, they can and do shift over time.

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Traditional orthodontics and braces can shift the teeth with slow, steady pressure over time.

Sometimes teeth can shift in ways that don't compromise the health of the mouth, but other times the shifting is clearly unhealthy.

**Unhealthy shifting of teeth would be like any abrupt or repeated pressure that causes damage over time.**

So examples would be: being struck in the face or falling and hitting your face on something hard.

Through the years of having OraWellness, Susan and I have found that many concerned parents have reached out to us saying that their child just knocked in their teeth by falling off their bike, skateboard, or a trampoline accident. Clearly, abrupt pressure isn't good for our teeth.

Another unhealthy way teeth can shift is through repeated pressure.

An unfortunate and common example of excessive, unhealthy pressure is teeth grinding, which is called "bruxism" in dentistry.

Unlike the natural pressures of chewing food, grinding teeth causes so much repeated lateral pressure that it weakens the way our molars are anchored into our jaw bones.

Another super common way we misalign our teeth is by applying steady pressure to our lower face.

Take a look at this skull model. Notice how the teeth really do stick out farther than the rest of the bony portions of the face. Obviously the nose isn't there [on this skull model], but the teeth come way out further.

Well, habits like sleeping on our belly with an arm under our head or leaning onto our face with our hand when we're tired during a long day create pressure on the jaw and teeth that can contribute to misalignment over time.

So the first thing we want to do is stop the insult that may be causing our teeth to misalign. Let's find and correct any habits where we unknowingly might be contributing to misalignment through the years (and we can try, hopefully, to avoid any knocks to the face, too :).

**Now let's examine some healthy ways that teeth can shift.**

Not all teeth shifting is unhealthy. Through controlled, steady, gentle pressure over a long period of time, teeth can shift without becoming compromised or weakening the jaw bone.

So, let's jump into strategies anyone can apply right here from home to help straighten crooked teeth without the need for braces.

The cool thing is, even if your teeth are pretty straight or you've already had braces, you can still benefit from these simple techniques to help maintain straighter teeth throughout your life.

**Aligning the top teeth**

The first step to naturally straightening crooked teeth is to get the upper palate into alignment. We accomplish this by providing structural support to our upper teeth.

Once we've aligned the upper teeth, step two is to get the lower teeth to align to our straightened upper teeth.

What's really cool is that all of the tools that are necessary to align our upper teeth are already right here in our mouths! All we need is the knowledge of how to use them, which you'll gain in this video tutorial.

We really appreciate and like to pay attention when there is common ground between ancient wisdom and modern science.

In this case, both traditional Chinese Qi Gong (chi kung) and the modern science of myofascial restructuring say that the following guidance is supportive for straight teeth as well as greater mental clarity and a calmer, more peaceful personality.

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The key to straightening your teeth naturally is to understand the dental arch.

In order to create and maintain an aligned dental arch, we need to support the surfaces of our teeth on both the *cheek* side (which, in this video, we'll sometimes refer to as the "outside") as well as the *tongue* side (which we'll refer to as the "inside").

We need the support from both surfaces.

### **Providing support from the outside**

Our lips can be used to apply gentle pressure to the teeth to hold them in place or even to guide them more inward.

The most common example of the need for this type of support is the child who sucks their thumb (or a pacifier) for years and causes their front teeth to protrude.

To readjust the front teeth, it's critical for this child to 1) break the thumb or pacifier habit and 2) learn the habit of closing their lips over their front teeth.

Children whose upper palates have been pulled forward and narrowed by thumb or pacifier sucking often develop the habit of breathing through their mouth rather than their nose.

These kids can also wind up developing the habit of tongue thrusting, which is pushing the tongue forward against the tongue-side of the front teeth as they swallow, and over the years this habit can push front teeth outward even more.

So, establishing the habit of closing the lips over the teeth will allow the lips to put gentle pressure on the front teeth, which will slowly shift them back to a more functional placement over time.

Closing the mouth will also teach the child to breathe through the nose, which provides much more support for optimal oral, airway, and whole-being health.

To check if you have this habit in place, simply pay attention right now to whether you habitually breathe through your nose or mouth. If you breathe through your nose, your lips are covering [your teeth] and they're providing the gentle, steady pressure on your upper teeth (which is what we want).

**Providing support for the upper arch from the inside – finding "home" for your tongue.**

Now, providing support for the upper arch from the inside is really critically important. And the way we do this is that we find [the] "home place" for our tongue.

By a long margin, most of us deal with teeth that are angled inward, into the mouth, rather than teeth that are protruding outward like we just previously discussed.

In fact, Weston Price found this to be the prevailing pattern of tooth crowding in native peoples who were *not* eating their traditional diets. It's as if the dental arch is collapsing and the teeth are falling into the mouth.

As a side note, for more information on how nutrition can affect dental arch formation, feel free to check out our expert interview with Dr. Steven Lin, author of [The Dental Diet](#). The interview is titled, "[The Role Diet Plays in the Mouth/Body Connection](#)".

Or, if you really want a deeper dive into how to nutritionally support your oral health, we invite you to go download our free ebook. The title is, "[How to Stop Tooth Decay and Remineralize Your Teeth](#)". The ebook is loaded with helpful, science-based strategies [for] how anyone can optimize their oral health through nutrition.

You can find links to both the expert interview and free ebook below this video.

So, back to our discussion: in order to support our teeth from the tongue side, we need healthy, gentle, steady pressure against our teeth from *inside* the mouth.

The strategy to provide this slow, gentle pressure to support our teeth and encourage them to be straight is to simply rest the tongue in its "home" position, where it belongs.

Now, at this point, you might be saying, “*What the heck is this guy talking about?!? What’s the home position for my tongue? My tongue has no home!*”

So, let’s walk through how to easily find the spot where our tongues actually were designed to spend most of the day.

**First, some basic tongue anatomy.**

So, the front edge of the tongue is known as the "blade", right, this whole front edge. And the very middle of the blade is what we would call the "tip of the tongue".

So, right now as you’re watching this video, gently place the tip of your tongue on the back of your upper front teeth.

Now, while paying attention to what you feel, begin to slowly drag the tip of your tongue along your upper palate, away from the upper front teeth and towards the back of your mouth.

You’ll feel a number of bumpy ridges on your way to the upper palate--what we would call the "roof of the mouth".

Now, go back to the front teeth and go through this again. This time, feel for the biggest ridge in your upper front palate.

This largest ridge, called the "alveolar ridge" or more simply put, the "gum ridge", easily spans at least the four front teeth.

This alveolar ridge is where the tongue touches to make the sounds "T", "D" or "N" in English.

Now, just beyond the gum ridge is a long, thin ditch (for lack of a better word). This ditch is where the blade of your tongue is meant to sit. This ditch is "home" for the blade of the tongue.

So, right now, try placing the tip of your tongue into this main ditch, and then let the rest of the blade of your tongue (that front edge) fill in the rest of the ditch.

Now that you have your tongue blade in place, the next step is to use gentle suction and allow the rest of your tongue to curve upward and fill in the upper palate.

If you feel it, you'll notice that the roof of your mouth is like a dome that curves both front-to-back and side-to-side.

The majority of the tongue rests in this dome-shaped space of the upper palate. The sides of the tongue gently then press outward against the roots of our molars.

Meanwhile, in this position, even though the tongue is not directly touching the front teeth, through the contact and gentle pressure on the gum ridge, the tongue blade and tip provide the gentle forward support for the front teeth.

Ideally, we want to have the tongue fill the dome in the top of our mouth from front-to-back and side-to-side.

With practice, your tongue can act like a gentle balloon and rest against your upper palate.

Your tongue will provide the slow, steady outward pressure on your upper teeth to straighten them over time. This is exactly what we need to do.

In the Chinese Longevity Arts, placing the tongue like this is one of what are called, "The 3 Upthrusts".

Classic texts read, "*Upthrust the tongue to the roof of the mouth.*"

This tongue position is one of the Chinese Longevity Arts' many "secret postural principles" for supporting long-term health and vitality.

In fact, like we mentioned earlier, there's a lot more going on here than just straightening our teeth by placing the tongue like this.

This exercise of resting your tongue in the "home" position may sound familiar if you've heard of something called "Mewing".

Mewing is a term that was created to describe the techniques that the British orthodontist Dr. Mike Mew detailed in his work.

To detail the similarities and differences between Mewing and this technique we teach here is beyond the scope of this video. However, suffice it to say that this is very similar to the Mewing technique.

**So to review, here's a recap of how to place the tongue to align the upper teeth.**

- Step 1: Find the biggest ridge in the front upper palate by saying "N". You know you've gone too far feeling for it if you get to the smooth upper palate.
- Step 2: Place the tip of the tongue in the middle of the ditch just behind this gum ridge.
- Step 3: Allow the rest of the blade of the tongue to fill in the rest of this main "ditch".
- Step 4: Using gentle suction, curve the remainder of the tongue into the domed upper palate. Let the tongue rest on the roof of the mouth.

**Here's a pro tip: it's important to get your tongue to fit into this space.**

At first, many people find it difficult to get their whole tongue to just fill the upper palate and not spill over to rest between the upper and lower teeth.

You may need to tone the tongue to fit into this space. This can be achieved by practicing this "home" tongue position daily and training it/exercising it, in a way, to fit into the space. And again, by doing so, the edges of our tongue provide the gentle outward pressure against our upper molars.

Making this place "home" for your tongue when you're not eating or talking will provide the long, slow, gentle outward pressure to normalize the alignment of the upper teeth by straightening any misalignment as well as helping to maintain straight teeth.

And remember, you don't have to push with your tongue once it's home. Just resting your tongue in the upper palate will provide the gentle, long-term support that we're looking for to give that slow, steady pressure.

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Now this completes the complicated part of this strategy (getting the upper palate in place).

Next, let's discuss how to get the bottom teeth into alignment.

## **Aligning the bottom teeth**

Aligning the bottom teeth is really very natural as we support our upper teeth in their ideal alignment.

We accomplish straightening bottom teeth simply by using them against our upper teeth that are getting more and more into alignment [thanks to] the "home" position of our tongue.

A dentist friend of ours put it this way, *"To keep teeth in alignment, we must use them."*

In other words, eating food that requires some work to chew is a great way to help "exercise" our teeth, keeping them well anchored in the jaw and aligned with one another.

Foods that provide lots of resistance to chewing (like fresh veggies and jerky) provide plenty of demand for our teeth, getting them to do the workout that's really required and necessary to help straighten out misaligned lower teeth.

To be clear, we're talking about foods that have lots of fiber to give us something to chew against, like raw celery sticks. My favorite is a mouthful of parsley (including leaves and stems). [It] gives a great--lots of fiber there to really push your teeth against.

We want to avoid foods that are sticky (like tough caramels) or really hard things (like ice).

We're just looking for gentle resistance to chew against, which will challenge our lower teeth to align them to our upper teeth (which we're keeping in place through the healthy practices we've covered already).

**To recap how to straighten your teeth naturally, just remember these simple steps:**

1. We first want to stop the insult(s) that may be causing any misalignment. Common causes of crooked teeth can be thumb sucking for children, accidental trauma, as well as leaning on the face repeatedly or falling asleep on your arm and pushing the teeth inward.
2. Breathe through your nose. This closes your lips over your teeth, which provides a gentle cheek-side pressure to support our teeth and prevent them from protruding outward.
3. Align your upper teeth by finding the "home" position for your tongue. Place the blade of your tongue at the big ridge and let the rest of the tongue fill in the dome of your mouth. This provides a gentle, tongue-side pressure to help establish or maintain upper teeth alignment over time.
4. Eat fibrous foods that give your teeth and jaw a little bit of a workout. Working your lower teeth by chewing foods that provide some resistance (like celery, parsley, and jerky) helps our lower teeth to line up with our upper teeth.

And, if you are a parent or grandparent of young kids, please, please teach them this simple strategy. The health benefits they will gain over their lives will go well beyond simply creating straighter teeth.

We hope you find this information helpful.

If you like learning strategies like this from our 35 years of studying the Chinese Longevity Arts, please let us know in the comments below this video.

We love sharing the insights that continue to serve us on our path to optimal health and vitality.

Until the next video, thank you and Aloha! :)

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