

PATIENT GUIDE

Starting aligners: your first week

What the first set feels like, the four habits that make aligners work, and what is normal. · 30 Aug 2026

Every aligner moves your teeth a fraction of a millimetre, and the next one is built expecting that move to be done. Wear time plus the change schedule is the whole game. The first set feels tight for a day or two, your speech settles within days, and the habits below become automatic within a fortnight.

22+ hours a day

In around the clock, sleep included. Out for meals and anything that is not plain water.

7 days per set

Change weekly, unless your orthodontist says otherwise. Swap at bedtime so the new set settles while you sleep.

1 set kept as backup

Always keep the set you just finished. If a tray cracks or goes missing, wear that one and message us.

0 skipping ahead

Each set needs its full week, even once it feels loose. Jumping ahead means trays that do not fit and a plan that stalls.

Putting them in and taking them out

Seat the aligner over the front teeth first, then press it down over the back teeth on both sides with your fingertips. Never bite it into place; that cracks trays. To remove, start at the back on one side, lift the edge with a fingernail, and work forward. It gets quicker with practice. If we have given you a small removal tool, use it the same way.

The first set, and the first day of every new set, feels tight. That is the aligner doing its work. Use the chewing cushions if we gave you some: a few minutes of gentle biting seats the tray fully.

Completely normal

- Tight, achy trays for the first day or two of each new set.
- A slight lisp at the start. It fades with practice, usually within a few days.
- Trays feeling loose by the end of their week. That means the move is done.
- Dry lips and a little extra saliva in the first days.

Message us if

- A tray cracks or goes missing. Wear the previous set meanwhile.
- A new tray still will not seat fully after a few days.
- You are unsure about the change schedule.
- An attachment (the small tooth-coloured bump) comes off.

Call us on (09)520 1880 or email hello@milkkorthodontics.co.nz.

More hours in means fewer months in aligners. Your call.