

# TECHNIQUE CLINIC

## Esthetic Modification of a Hawley Retainer Using a Translucent Labial Bow

In a few years, the Hawley retainer will be 100 years old. Although it has served the profession well, in the current era of “invisible” orthodontics, some patients find its labial metal bow to be esthetically unacceptable. This problem can now be solved by replacing the anterior section of the bow with a translucent retainer wire. The Astics Translucent Retainer\* (the name is derived from the word “aesthetics”) is both efficient and unobtrusive, meeting the needs of both clinician and patient.

### Clinical Example

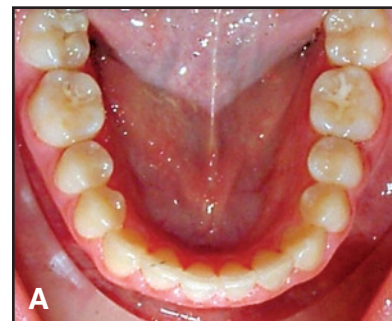
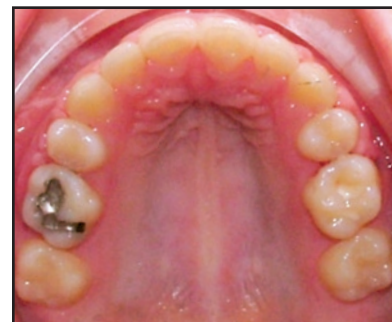
A 14-year-old female presented with a Class II malocclusion, a blocked-out maxillary canine, a deviated maxillary midline, an acceptable overbite and overjet, and a good mandibular archform. After extraction of the maxillary first premolars, orthodontic treatment resulted in satisfactory Class II molar and Class I canine relationships (A). The planned retention regimen called for conventional Hawley retainers in both arches, worn full-time for three months and then only at night. When the patient was shown examples of the retainer, however, she objected, complaining that the metal bows were even more obtru-

sive than the fixed appliances that had just been removed (B).

To address her concerns, we ordered Astics retainers for both arches. The patient was happy with their appearance. After a year of supervised retention, following the original plan, the plastic bows showed no discoloration or distortion (C), and the appliances retained their full functional integrity, preserving the stability of the treatment results (D).

### Discussion

A disadvantage of using Astics retainers is that they must be fabricated and repaired by a manufacturer-approved laboratory, at a slightly higher cost than that of standard Hawley retainers. Moreover, unlike the metal bow of a Hawley retainer, the Astics plastic bow cannot be modified after fabrication to change the forces exerted on individual teeth, although the bow can be tightened using the metal vertical adjustment loops. In newer versions of the appliance, the adjustment loops are placed more distally than in previous versions, making them invisible in all patients except those with extremely large buccal segments, and even then only at the corners of the mouth in full smiling.



\*Trademark of BioMers Products, Suite 459, 2314 Pine Ridge Road, Naples, FL 34109; www.biomersbraces.com.

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