

Natalie Bickham

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

Date

The Three Things I Hate about Being an Orthodontic Lab Tech

I went to school in Buffalo, New York, about three years ago to obtain my orthodontic lab tech license. I thought that I would enjoy making retainers and other mouth appliances because I could be creative and make several designs in the appliances. However, I was wrong; I hate this job. The three things that I hate the most about being an orthodontic lab tech are sore hands, acrylic fumes, and a gritty working environment.

First of all, I hate being an orthodontic lab tech because my hands become very sore. I have to bend wire around a model of a patient's teeth with the use of pliers. This work is very precise and requires a lot of small bends with my fingers and turns of my wrist. This constant use of pliers causes the skin on my fingers to become callused and my hands to become achy.

Besides the fact that I hate having sore hands, I also hate being an orthodontic lab tech because of the acrylic fumes. The acrylic that is used in making an appliance is a liquid monomer and a powder polymer. When combined and cured, this mixture becomes a hard plastic. But the fumes from the acrylic can cause headaches, lightheadedness, and nosebleeds. Working around this material everyday is at times unbearable.

This job is a bad one because not only do I hate acrylic fumes, but I also hate the gritty working environment. In the construction of an appliance, I have to trim down the acrylic so that it fits in the roof of the patient's mouth. I trim the acrylic by using a hand piece with a sharp bur on it. This causes small sand-like pieces of acrylic to fly into my eyes and onto my hair and

clothing, resulting in a very gritty feeling.

I hate being an orthodontic lab tech because of sore hands, acrylic fumes, and a gritty working environment. My hands hurt from bending the wire, the acrylic fumes give me terrible headaches, and the gritty environment of acrylic particles flying around everywhere makes it hard to go to work everyday.