

What is a Denture Reline? Soft vs Hard vs Temporary

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| Posted on [July 13, 2019](#)

Just like us humans, sometimes your dentures need to change clothes. And by “change clothes” I mean getting your dentures relined.

If you already have dentures or you’re considering [getting dentures](#), you probably have heard this term “denture reline.” It’s a necessary step in the process of caring for your dentures.

Basically, a denture reline is exactly what it sounds like — putting a new lining in your dentures so they fit properly in your mouth. Relining your replacement is simple and affordable and can make your day-to-day life so much more comfortable.

There are a couple different types of relines and a few different ways to go about relining dentures, all of which we’ll look at shortly. But first, we need to know why relines are needed.

Whenever your tooth is removed from its place, the tissue in that area starts a breakdown on a cellular level. Basically, the tissue is taken back into the body to be used elsewhere. Obviously, this means your gum tissue will change density and shape as it heals.

Hence, the need to reline your dentures to fit your ever-changing mouth.



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Types Of Relines

There are three main types of relines you can get depending on the severity of tissue change and type of denture. They're called hard, soft, and temporary relines.

Hard Reline

If you have full dentures, you should be getting hard relines every two years. It's the best way to make your dentures fit comfortably without needing to do a whole new fitting.

When getting a hard reline, your dentist will remove some of the plastic from the inside of your dentures and place putty wherever the denture makes contact with tissue. The dentist will make an impression in the putty by placing the denture back into your mouth.

Then they take out the denture and let the putty harden with your mouth's impression in it. The putty turns to a rubbery consistency. Then the lab will replace the putty by adding acrylic to the tissue side of the current denture (usually the same day). Then the denture should fit your mouth perfectly.

Soft Reline

Some denture patients realize they can't wear their dentures because their gums are just too tender, leading to sore spots in the mouth. In this case, those patients will have their dentist do a soft reline.

If you need a soft reline, your dentist can reline your dentures with a pliable material — anything from a waxy material to a more rubbery material — that will last for a year or two. This is a good alternative to the standard acrylic material that many dentures are made of.

Most professionals consider a soft reline the best type of reline you can get because it's longer lasting and more comfortable for the patient. The biggest difference from the hard reline is that a soft reline uses a more comfortable material and will need more adjustments than a hard reline.

However, by the time someone considers a soft reline, sore spots are only the tip of the iceberg. Usually, resorting to a soft reline means the denture's original build was not as good as it could've been. It can be corrected, but it may require a simple surgery or using implant-supported dentures.

Temporary Reline

If you were to go for a very long time without having a dentist service your dentures, this could lead to very red and sore gums. That's when you'll need a temporary reline.

Simply doing either a hard or soft reline wouldn't fix the problem to the point where the discomfort would go away completely. Doing either of those relines would not get to the root of the problem.

But with a temporary reline, a dentist can, in a few steps, fix what should have been fixed with a hard or soft reline at an earlier time.

A temporary reline involves relining the denture with a medicated material that helps reduce the inflammation in the gums. This is a temporary reline because after a few weeks, the patient will

return to the dentist — hopefully with gums that are no longer sore — for a new denture or a hard reline.

Temporary relines are short-lasting and are meant to heal sores, hard relines last about two years, and soft relines last even longer.

Laboratory Reline

We briefly mentioned the lab before, so now a little more info on this process. Basically, when the dentist sends your denture impression to a lab for them to create a new lining for your dentures.

Chairside Reline

The biggest difference between laboratory and chairside relines are:

- **Lab reline:** process takes longer (usually next day) but the material used is very durable and long-lasting
- **Chairside reline:** process takes very little time (usually one office visit) but the material is not as durable or lasting

Can You Reline Dentures Yourself?

Obviously, it's best to have your dentist do your denture reline. But, if it's too inconvenient or too expensive to go that route, it is possible to reline your dentures at home.

The benefits of doing a reline yourself are obvious — cheaper and more convenient. But the downsides are that if you don't do it just right, it could really mess up the denture fit. Plus, the reline kits available are only for full dentures, not partial. Also, they won't last as long as the dentist's reline.

But if you do decide to go with a do-it-yourself denture reline kit, you can find decent ones at your local WalMart or Walgreens. Then you can simply follow the instructions that come with the kit.

It's possible to reline dentures yourself, but only on a temporary basis. One example of this is [DenSureFit](#), a temporary reline kit that uses soft silicone material.

But the best thing to do is see your dentist.

The Goal: Get Comfy

So, that's all you need to know about denture relines.

Remember, once you're ready for your next reline, contact your insurance company to see if it's covered. And if the procedure ends up being too expensive or too inconvenient and you want to reline your dentures yourself, just make sure you know the exact steps. One false move could make an uncomfortable situation worse.

Either way, the goal is to get your replacement chompers relined and feeling so comfortable that you'll forget you're wearing them.