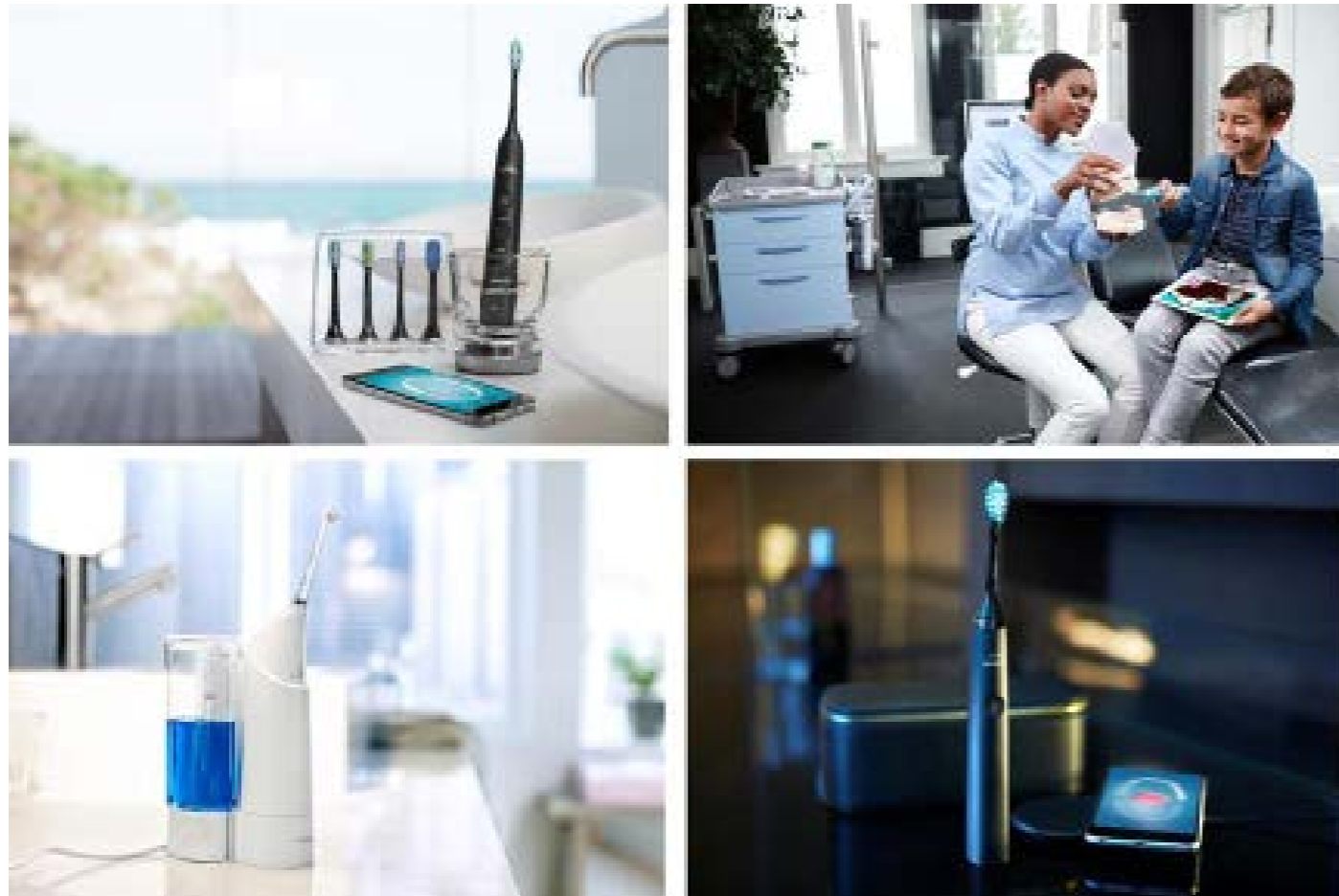


# A 'pocket version of me'

London hygienist **Anna Middleton** believes dental care should be accessible to all. Here, she explains why a power toothbrush is more than just a lifestyle brand



**Anna Middleton** qualified as a dental nurse in 2011, she decided to pursue dental hygiene and moved to London to study at The Eastman Dental Hospital. She graduated in 2015 from the Faculty of Royal College of Surgeons of England. You can follow her work on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @LondonHygienist or visit [www.LondonHygienist.com](http://www.LondonHygienist.com)

With an estimated 3.5 billion electric toothbrushes sold worldwide last year, the market is continuously growing with plenty of choices at a variety of prices. With that in mind, I regularly scan the dental aisles in various shops to keep up to date with what's on the market. It's also where I usually meet a poor soul scratching their head trying to work out which electric toothbrush they should buy. I take mercy on them and step in to offer my expert opinion.

Who is it aimed at? I would say it is definitely one for the gear junkies but also anyone who is very oral hygiene conscious or for those who are struggling with effective brushing.

## Gadgets

There are several different mechanisms but to keep it simple the two leading types are rotary/oscillating heads and sonic vibration heads.

Rotary/oscillating heads are small and round, rotating in one direction and then the other, one tooth at a time to sweep plaque away. Often these heads pulsate too. Sonic heads vibrate at certain high speeds and frequencies to break down plaque as well as agitate the toothpaste and fluid in the mouth to clean between teeth and along the gumline. Power brushes are not just 'gadgets'; they can improve our patients' health, open up the communication pathway

between dental professional and patient and, ultimately, help them to help us maintain their oral health. So, why go electric?

You get a far more superior clean and effective plaque removal because you get more brush strokes per minute than you could ever generate yourself with a manual brush. Using an electric toothbrush with the correct technique will prevent over-brushing, which causes irreversible and permanent recession.

Electric toothbrushes have much smaller heads and are designed specifically to ensure each tooth is cleaned individually, helping patients get to all the hard-to-reach areas and achieve maximum oral health. Here, is my review of the latest electric brush on the market – the Philips Sonicare DiamondClean smart brush .

## How easy is it to use?

It is pretty straightforward. Just connect and go. In fact, it even displayed my brush's model number. From there, it was all self-explanatory – hit brush and follow the onscreen instructions.

## How effective is it?

Impressively effective! I missed a quarter of my mouth in my first attempt. This is most likely because I didn't look at the tutorial or instructions... keen bean, I know. You brush each arch in the thirds and need to brush each aspect of the tooth and follow the highlighted areas of the mouth on the app for the sensors to work e.g. if the lower anteriors are highlighted, but you are brushing the upper right posteriors, it will show up that you've missed that area. Fear not – at the end of the timed session you are given 'TouchUp' time to go back over the missed areas.

## Your opinion as a user?

The app is easy to use and navigate with clear guidance and not too many features.

## Your opinion as a dental professional?

Very clever, I think it really can help patients maximise their oral hygiene on several levels.

## Would you recommend to patients?

Yes, definitely the brush, but I don't think everyone will use the app to track their brushing long term, although it serves as a great educational tool – especially for those

who need the extra help or guidance. Other handy features include the brush head replacement, appointment scheduling and 'Shop for Products', which I would use.

## Cost?

The RRP for Sonicare DiamondClean Smart is £360 and believe a special 'Midnight Blue' model will be exclusive to Harrods.

## Pros?

My teeth felt amazing afterwards! It really is the best clean ever, my teeth feel so smooth – I can't stop running my tongue along them.

I love that the brush comes with a brush head to match each mode and it knows which mode to use depending on the head attached. It's also able to track and let you know when it is time to change the head.

The app lets you set goals, which I really think could help some users especially at the beginning of a new oral hygiene routine – it even nudges you at the end and asks if you've cleaned interdentally. It's like a computerised pocket version of me in the palm of your hand at home guiding you to effective teeth cleaning!

I love the tongue cleaner and Breath RX spray – this is a cute little finish to your clean and something I never used to do until now. The brush even cleverly drops to the lowest intensity setting so it isn't too intense or 'ticky' on your tongue.

Still on the topic of intensity – this brush comes with three levels. The first time I used a Sonicare, I remembered how intense the vibrations felt on my lips and palatal. Patients have told me this has put them off in the past. Now, you can gently work your way up to full power and actually, after just a few uses, my mouth was soon used to the vibrations.

The app allows you to collaborate with us, the dental professionals. Patients can create progress reports, which track over 30, 60 or 180 days (not sure why 90 is missing) and these can be reviewed at their appointment. This would be great for those patients who are coming back for review appointments. The app also allows you to create dental appointments and reminders – no more excuses of how time has flown by! It cleverly tells you if you are using too much pressure or motion – a handy feature for the aggressive brushers out there.

## Cons?

There is a feature where you can have highlighted focus areas e.g. plaque/bleeding. However, you can only highlight three areas, even though six are shown on the app. It would be better if the number of highlighted areas was not limited and you could highlight teeth individually. This is something I would use to show my patients and then review in a follow-up appointment so they could see if they have improved.

I mentioned earlier that the sensor only picks up your brushing when you follow the highlighted areas on the app (you can change where you start in the settings). It isn't able to show you if you are effectively brushing along the gingival margin but there is coaching content in the app to help.

## Is it worth the price?

Some will claim the brush to be expensive but you get so much from it. My view is that dentistry isn't expensive, neglect is! I worked out that if you divide the cost by two brushes a day for a year, it is 68p a day – a small investment that could save a fortune in the long run.

## Is it nice looking?

It is stunning, very sleek and lightweight. I love the USB travel case, too. I never used to take my electric toothbrush away with me, but now I have no reason not to.

## Is it easy to clean?

Very easy; the brush head pulls off and you just rinse them under water. I've had other models of electric toothbrush and found the charging base always gets dirty and collects residual toothpaste, which is 'yucky', but nothing with this one.

## Any tips re: how best to use it?

Don't brush and drive – just kidding! If it is your first time, probably best to familiarise yourself with the features and how to use the brush effectively e.g. positioning.

## What are the results – short term and long term?

Short term – your mouth feels beyond fresh and amazing.

Long term – a strong and effective oral hygiene routine can be formed that could, in turn, save your patients from a variety of dental problems in the future.