

What's in my surgery

Anna Middleton reveals the products important to her as a dental hygienist

1. Loupes – fed up of always having a tense and sore neck, I invested in some loupes, and now I can't work without them. My posture has improved and surprisingly my bank balance has too, thanks to fewer visits to my osteopath! The enhanced vision has given me a new-found control over my instruments – one that has been noted by patients in their compliments of how gentle I am. I recently tried a clip-on light and it was amazing. I'll definitely be purchasing one soon. I wear Orascope RDH Elite.

2. Epitex – my second favourite Japanese export after sushi is this extremely thin and flexible finishing tape. It's my secret weapon for polishing interproximal spaces. It comes on a reel so you only tear off what you need, and is thin and tear-resistant, so no contact is too tight for this little wonder. I use it mainly for the anteriors when there is crowding or overlapping and when I can't remove any tiny stains or flecks of deposit fully with my instruments. Whilst it's a great tool, I use it minimally to ensure there is no unnecessary damage to the enamel.

3. Nurpro prophylaxis paste – this product lasts forever because it never dries out and you only need to use a tiny amount. The paste doesn't become too watery when it comes in contact with saliva and I use a rubber prophyl cup when polishing to help retain the paste and reduce splatter. It's also gentle on the soft tissues unlike bristle brushes, and it can be used slightly subgingivally. I like the cups with the exterior cross spiral ridges as this enhances interproximal and surface cleaning. My secret tip is to keep a cotton wool roll with some Vaseline on it to help get rid of any residual polish off the lips. It's a nice finishing touch.

4. LM Ergomax hand scalers – I always use the Mini Sickle Scaler: 311-

312 XSI and the Micro Sickle Scaler: 301-302 XSI as standard. I quite often hand-scale but even after using the ultrasonic scaler, I do a full mouth hand debridement. I like to keep a Gracey 1/2, 11/12 and 13/14 to hand for any subgingival deposits. I find these hand scalers lightweight, ergonomic and comfortable to handle as they are non-slip in their grip and the different colours help to identify them easily. I keep mine in an instrument cassette;

not only does this double up as an instrument tray but it also keeps them in order and in one place, particularly handy during the sterilisation process.

5. Visual aids – they say a picture is worth a thousand words and it couldn't be truer. I often use pictures to show patients their current periodontal health and to explain the various stages of periodontal disease. I find



After qualifying as a dental nurse in 2011, Anna 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, England.