

Brace yourself for a new way to a better smile

Gaby Soutar experiences Invisalign braces at Edinburgh's New Town clinic The Row Dental

Before visiting private practice The Row Dental, I knew virtually nothing about Invisalign braces. I wasn't even much of a flosser, so the world of cosmetic dentistry was a mystery to me.

Then I met founder and cosmetic dentist Dr Slaine Ker. At my appointment, she showed me a before and after picture of what could be done with my squint, beige and crowded gnashers, and it was a done deal.

Although I was excited about the results, I'm a bit of an odontophobe, so I tried not to overthink it on the run up to my fitting appointment.

Thankfully, the process is easy. They do it by computer here, so there are no actual moulds. I had been warned that if teeth are very close together the enamel may need to be filed – a process called proximal reduction. Thankfully, I didn't need that, though they reassured me that it's painless and quick.

Mine had plenty of space to move,

so fluoride "buttons", which allowed the retainers to grip, were blobbed onto my teeth, then the clear and virtually invisible trays were clipped over the top.

They have to be in for as close to 22 hours a day as possible, and the first week was slightly tricky. They ached a bit and gave me flashbacks to having metal braces aged 14.

Also, they created a couple of tender ulcers on the inside of my mouth.

Then there's getting familiar with taking them out to eat or drink anything other than water, and brushing before putting them in again.

My jeans feel a bit slacker at the waist, because of the unintentional weight loss.

They say it takes about ten weeks to create a habit. Invisalign courses vary, with some lasting for about a year or so.

However, mine is for 20 weeks (with an additional ten, if tweaks are needed) and I'm onto my sixth set of retainers, which are swapped for a new set every week.

They don't feel like such a big deal anymore and I'm motoring through it. I've had my first follow-up appointment, which confirmed that my teeth are obediently slotting into place.

The pain has gone, apart from a vague ache when I put a new set



Dr Slaine Ker outside The Row Dental, Edinburgh

of retainers in, and I'm used to popping them in and out.

I'm also now a champion tooth flosser and expert in inter-dental brushing.

My smile is gradually looking straighter, and broader, as they

slowly correct my bite. Only 14 weeks to go, and I'm counting down.

Invisalign ranges from £2,500 to £4,000 at The Row Dental, 31 Albany Street, Edinburgh (0131-210 0103, www.therowdental.com)

MUM'S THE WORD

A world of 'Old ladies' and Young Fathers



Janet Christie

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Friday lunchtime and I'm on a powerwalk to grab some daylight exposure when a couple of kids, recently released from school, belt past me, one deliberately tapping me as he goes. All good, I had three feral kids myself so I smile indulgently.

Throw in strikes and Covid, and I sympathise with those who bear the brunt – usually women. It's a pity as the Covid enquiry has revealed that those who make the decisions were wilfully oblivious to a female viewpoint, especially given the preponderance of women working in the health service, care sector, schools and doing the brunt of caring. If women were listened to more, maybe lives might have been saved.

Back on the path, reaching their mums

ahead, the child who 'tapped' me announces that the other had 'just hit an old lady'.

"What? No!" say the mothers in unison and turn, immediately surmising that the offence here may be caused by the 'old lady' reference, not the 'hitting' or blaming his mate.

"Did he just call you an old lady?" says one. "Well yes," I say, "but to him I am, don't worry about it."

"If it's any consolation, he calls a 21-year-old we know old. Very sorry," she says.

Old, young, it's all the same to me and I find things just get better as the years pile up. I like the same things I did when I was younger but there's an added pleasure endowed by experience, for example watching Young Fathers with Dundee Woman at The Barrowland and appreciating how the decor

hasn't changed since I saw The Ramones.

We'd vowed during lockdown if we ever got out again we'd see more gigs, and we have, kicking off with The Stranglers, which coincided with me catching Covid but never mind (it could have been on the train or in the pub), and I'd wanted to revisit The Barrowland and its bouncy floor.

"You were at Young Fathers?" says Youngest on her return to the homestead, proving she never listens. "My friend saw them in Edinburgh, went backstage, met the band..."

"And the funny thing was, when he said Young Fathers, three of us went, 'Young Fathers, my mum LOVES them!'"

"And?"

"What? And nothing."

Wow.