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NOT SO EXTREME Makeover

It's not a nip or a tuck, it's a whole new way to see yourself! Find out how FIT's editor-in-chief turned back the clock with the help of some new technology and a little common sense...

By Rita Trieger

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FIT

TEETH

Now that my skin was glowing I began to notice that my teeth had adopted an odd yellowish tinge. I'm sure my addiction to coffee, love of red wine and, of course my age had a lot to do with it but I was equally sure that toothpaste with "extra whitening power" wasn't going to do much to get rid of the stains.

So my next stop was to renowned cosmetic dentist **Dr. Clifford Williams**. His Rockefeller Center office was bustling when I arrived for my consultation and I couldn't help getting jittery as I anticipated the dentist's chair. But as soon as **Dr. Williams** entered the examining room my nerves began to settle down. Here was the friendliest, most easy-going dentist I had ever met. "In today's world," he informed me, "there's no reason to live with a less-than-perfect smile." He showed me a wall of before and after pictures and frankly some of the 'afters' were nothing short of miraculous. "Modern dentistry," **Dr. Williams** continued "has made so many advances that it is totally unnecessary to be unhappy about the way your teeth look."

I asked him about over-the-counter tooth whiteners and he explained that the solutions were simply not strong enough to dissolve years of stains. He suggested I do laser whitening and then follow up at home with a week or two of bleaching. Dental bleaching can be used to correct discoloration due to staining, aging or chemical damage. The method is safe and once you achieve the right brightness you'll only need an occasional treatment to maintain your new smile. During the process your teeth could become more sensitive than usual but they would go back to normal when the bleaching was completed.

He began my laser whitening procedure and I must say I never saw a more efficient staff. Within minutes my mouth was ready for action. They placed some sort of vise-like device inside my mouth to keep it propped open, outlined my gums with a gooey mixture to protect them from the bleach and laser, covered my eyes with strange looking glasses then told me to relax. Oddly enough I did. **Dr. Williams** applied a bleaching agent and then passed over my teeth with the laser. He explained that the maximum recommended passes was six but since I was to be following up with at home bleaching he stopped at three. It was painless and aside from my jaw getting a little weary, it wasn't uncomfortable at all.

Next, impressions were taken of my teeth, clear custom trays were made from the impressions and I was given a special bleaching agent to place into the trays. The doctor explained that with just a few hours of wear per day, I could achieve the right level of brightness without altering my tooth structure or existing dental work.

While I was waiting for my trays I rinsed out and took a look at my new smile. Wow! I never realized the difference brighter teeth could make — my whole face was sparkling. For the first time in my life, I had actually enjoyed a visit to the dentist!

I continue to follow **Dr. Williams'** advice and brush often, especially after coffee or wine. And I smile a lot more which has the natural effect of making me feel - and look - better than ever.