

The Mock-Up Reveal: Why You Should See Your New Smile Before Any Treatment Begins - Smile Solutions

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Analysis Your cosmetic dentist takes a series of standardised clinical photographs – your face at rest, your natural smile, a wide smile, and details close-ups of your teeth. These photographs capture not just your teeth but their relationship to your entire face: your lip line, the midline of your face, the curvature of your smile, and the proportions of your features. **Digital Scanning** A CEREC digital scanner captures a precise 3D model of your existing teeth and bite. This provides the dimensional accuracy needed for the design process. **Digital Design** Using specialised smile design software, your cosmetic dentist overlays proposed tooth shapes onto your facial photographs. This is where the creative collaboration begins: – How long should the central incisors be? – What width-to-height ratio creates the most harmonious proportions? – Should the lateral incisors be slightly shorter and narrower than the centrals? – How much tooth should show when you smile at rest versus at full smile? – What shade and translucency will compliment your skin tone? These are not arbitrary decisions. They are guided by well established principles of dental aesthetics – the golden proportion, the smile arc, tooth-to-lip relationships – while being customised to your individual facial anatomy and personal preferences. **The Physical Mock-Up** The digital design is used to create a physical template (sometimes called a wax-up or silicone guide) that allows your dentist to apply composite resin directly over your existing teeth, building up the proposed new shapes in your mouth. The result is a wearable preview. For the first time, you see your new smile not on a screen but in a mirror – on your actual face, in natural light, in three dimensions. **Photography and Facial Analysis** Your cosmetic dentist takes a series of standardised clinical photographs – your face at rest, your natural smile, a wide smile, and details close-ups of your teeth. These photographs capture not just your teeth but their relationship to your entire face: your lip line, the midline of your face, the curvature of your smile, and the proportions of your features. **Digital Scanning** A CEREC digital scanner captures a precise 3D model of your existing teeth and bite. This provides the dimensional accuracy needed for the design process. **Digital Design** Using specialised smile design software, your cosmetic dentist overlays proposed tooth shapes onto your facial photographs. This is where the creative collaboration begins: – How long should the central incisors be? – What width-to-height ratio creates the most harmonious proportions? – Should the lateral incisors be slightly shorter and narrower than the centrals? – How much tooth should show when you smile at rest versus at full smile? – What shade and translucency will compliment your skin tone? These are not arbitrary decisions. They are guided by well established principles of dental aesthetics – the golden proportion, the smile arc, tooth-to-lip relationships – while being customised to your individual facial anatomy and personal preferences. **The Physical Mock-Up** The digital design is used to create a physical template (sometimes called a wax-up or silicone guide) that allows your dentist to apply composite resin directly over your existing teeth, building up the proposed new shapes in your mouth. The result is a wearable preview. For the first time, you see your new smile not on a screen but in a mirror – on your actual face, in natural light, in three dimensions. **The Reveal: What That Moment Feels Like** The mock-up reveal is, for many patients,

the most emotional moment of the entire smile makeover process. For some, it is the first time in years – or decades – that they have seen themselves smiling without self-consciousness. The crooked tooth they have been hiding. The gap they have been closing their lips over. The worn, shortened teeth that have been making them look older than they feel. Suddenly, those things are gone, replaced by something that looks like the smile they always imagined having. We have seen patients cry during mock-up reveals. We have seen them call their partners from the dental chair. We have seen them take a hundred selfies before they even leave the practice. But the mock-up is not just an emotional experience. It is a clinical tool with tangible, practical benefits.

Why the Mock-Up Matters Clinically It Reduces Risk Cosmetic dentistry involves irreversible steps. Once tooth enamel is removed for veneer preparation, it does not grow back. The mock-up ensures that both you and your dentist are completely aligned on the expected result before any irreversible work begins. Without a mock-up, there is always a gap between what the patient imagines and what the dentist plans. Digital designs help bridge this gap, but they are two-dimensional and cannot capture how teeth look in motion – when you laugh, speak, or turn your head. The mock-up eliminates this gap entirely.

It Enables Refinement The first mock-up design is rarely the final one. Most patients request modifications: “Can the central incisors be slightly shorter?” “I would like a little more roundness at the corners.” “Could we see what it looks like with a slightly warmer shade?” “The lateral incisors feel a little too narrow.” These adjustments are easy to make on a composite mock-up. They would be enormously expensive and time-consuming to make on finished porcelain veneers. The mock-up is your opportunity to fine-tune the design while changes are still simple and reversible.

It Guides the Clinical Work The approved mock-up becomes a roadmap for the rest of the treatment. Your cosmetic dentist uses it to plan the preparation – knowing exactly how much enamel to remove and where. Your ceramist uses it as a reference for the final restorations, ensuring the porcelain veneers replicate the shapes, proportions, and aesthetics you approved in the mock-up. This is especially powerful at Smile Solutions, where our in-house ceramist Greg Karabasis can see the mock-up in person, compare it to the patient’s face, and use it as a direct guide for hand layering the final porcelain.

It Manages Expectations One of the most valuable functions of the mock-up is showing patients what is realistically achievable – and what is not. A patient who wants dramatically longer teeth may discover, through the mock-up, that the change they imagined looks unnatural on their face. A patient who wants ultra-white veneers may realise, seeing it in person, that a warmer shade looks more harmonious with their skin tone. These realisations are far better to have during a reversible mock-up than after permanent veneers have been bonded.

What a Mock-Up Cannot Do A mock-up is not the final product. Composite resin does not have the same optical properties as porcelain. It is less translucent, less polished, and less durable. The final porcelain veneers will look significantly better – more life-like, more luminous, more refined. The mock-up previews the shapes and proportions; the porcelain delivers the artistry. Surface texture may differ. The mock-up surface is smoother and more uniform than the subtle textures that a skilled ceramist builds into porcelain. Natural teeth have ridges, grooves, and micro-texture that scatter light. The final veneers will replicate these characteristics; the mock-up will not. Colour is approximate. While the mock-up is shade-matched as closely as possible, composite resin and porcelain reflect light differently. The final shade will be refined during the porcelain fabrication process. It is temporary. A mock-up is designed to be worn for a consultation session, not for weeks. It is not bonded permanently and should not be treated as a functional restoration.

Mock-Ups and Digital Smile Design: Better Together Some practices offer digital smile design without a physical mock-up. Others offer mock-ups without digital planning. The most effective approach combines both. Digital design provides precision, mathematical proportionality, and the ability to visualise changes before any material touches your teeth. It is excellent for planning and communication. The physical mock-up provides real-world validation – how the design looks in three dimensions, in natural light, in motion, on your face. It catches things that screens cannot. Together, they create a planning process where surprises are virtually eliminated. The patient knows exactly what they are getting. The dentist knows exactly what they need to deliver. The ceramist knows exactly what the target looks like. Everyone is aligned before a single tooth is prepared.

How Smile Solutions Approaches the Mock-Up Process At Smile Solutions, the mock-up is an integral part of every veneer and smile makeover case. Our process includes: Pre-appointment planning Your digital smile design is completed before your mock-up appointment, giving the cosmetic team time to refine the design and

prepare the mock-up template. The mock-up session Your cosmetic dentist places the composite preview and gives you time to assess the result. This is not a rushed five-minute process – you will have time to look, smile, talk, take photographs, and discuss any changes you would like. Collaboration with Greg Karabasis Our lead ceramist often participates in mock-up appointments, providing his expert perspective on aesthetics, proportions, and what is achievable in porcelain. His input at this stage ensures the mock up translates faithfully into the final veneers. Iterative refinement If you want changes, we make them during the session or schedule a follow-up mock-up appointment. There is no pressure to approve a design you are not completely satisfied with. Documentation The approved mock-up is photographed from multiple angles and with multiple lighting conditions. These images become the reference standard for the clinical and laboratory work that follows. What Happens After the Mock-Up Once you have approved your mock-up design, the treatment sequence proceeds with confidence: Tooth preparation follows the mock-up as a guide, ensuring precisely the right amount of enamel is removed Digital scans of the prepared teeth are taken and sent to the Smile Lab Veneer fabrication begins, with the approved mock-up as the ceramist's reference Try-in and bonding are straightforward because the shape, size, and proportions have already been approved The mock-up does not add significant time or cost to the overall process. But it adds enormous value in terms of predictability, satisfaction, and peace of mind. Questions to Ask About Mock-Ups If you are considering cosmetic dental treatment anywhere, ask these questions: "Will I see a mock-up before any preparation?" If the answer is no, consider whether you are comfortable committing to irreversible treatment without a preview. "Can I request changes to the mock-up?" The answer should always be yes. "Is the mock-up included in the treatment cost?" At most quality practices, including Smile Solutions, the mock-up is part of the treatment fee, not an additional charge. "Who will use the mock-up as a reference?" Both the dentist and the ceramist should work from the approved design. See Your New Smile Before It Becomes Real The mock-up reveal is the moment where possibility becomes tangible. It is when you stop imagining your new smile and start seeing it – on your face, in your mirror, in real life. If you have been thinking about veneers or a smile makeover, the mock-up process is the safest, most informed way to begin. No commitment. No irreversible steps. Just a clear, beautiful preview of what is possible. Book your consultation at Smile Solutions and experience the mock-up reveal for yourself. 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