
“Use It or Lose It”:

Readying Your Office for the Post-COVID Influx of Patients

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Every day, headlines report we are nearing the peak of this pandemic; normalcy will return soon. Well, until that happens, your equipment is sitting doing nothing. Since all offices have been shut down and are seeing only emergency cases, the backup of current and existing patient appointments is only building. What you don't want or need to happen is to just start back up and immediately have to stop to make repairs due to inactivity and disuse of the equipment. The old adage, “Use it or lose it,” applies here. Not using your equipment on a daily basis can cause minor problems when you start up again. Be proactive, be prepared, and be ready.

Some simple steps to maintaining your equipment and being ready for the return to work:

Mechanical Room

- If you have a water filter system, it might be a good time to change the filter first.
- Change the vacuum filter basket strainer on the side of the vacuum pump.
- Turn on the water solenoid and vacuum pump, listen for any leaks or open lines, and fix as needed. Turn off the vacuum pump.
- If you have filters on your compressor and have not changed them recently or never, we recommend doing so.
- Turn on the compressor and let it fully cycle and fill up the tank, listen for air leaks, and fix as needed.

Chairs

- First, clean and disinfect the chairs using the recommended CDC products.
- Using warm, soapy water, completely and thoroughly wash all vinyl surfaces; this removes any of the residual chemical build-up.
- Apply a vinyl/leather restorer-protectant (available on Amazon, most auto parts stores, Walmart, Kmart, and other home stores).
- Run the chair completely down and up, both the back and the base, several times. This will keep the gears, bearings, and bushings lubed and oiled.

Units

- First, clean and disinfect the units using the recommended CDC products, with one exception. We have found using products containing peroxide on any metal surfaces may

cause pitting and corrosion. We recommend not using these products on vacuum valves or syringes.

- With the vacuum and compressor off, clean and replace all vacuum strainers and baskets. A typical office has a small basket in the saliva ejector tip and a larger basket in the solids collector. More than likely, it is located inside the unit itself.
- If applicable, remove the high vacuum and saliva ejector tips from the quick disconnect base on each hose. Disassemble each tip and drop it into the ultrasonic cleaner to remove any residual particles and cleaning. Reassemble the tips using a silicone-based lubricant. Operate each tip prior to putting it back in the tubing base.
- Most modern units come with a pneumatic valve setup that shuts off the air and water to each unit. Inside each one of these valves is a small filter. These should be cleaned and/or replaced.
- Turn on the vacuum and air compressor, and turn on each unit one at a time. Listen for any leaks and repair as needed.
- Use each of the air/water syringes, handpieces, and vacuum valves as if you were having a normal day. Repair and replace any sticky valves, tighten any loose connectors, and replace any leaking or worn components.
- This might be a good time to replace old handpiece gaskets as well.
- If your air/water syringe has never been rebuilt, now might be a good time, as the daily use and contaminants from city water can build up and cause the buttons to stick.
- Remove and clean the bottled water system using the recommended CDC guidelines and chemicals.
- After checking each unit, empty the bottled water system bottle, return it to the unit, and pressurize. Flush water from system by using the water in the handpieces and syringe until only air comes out. Remove the bottle.
- Shut off all units and the mechanical systems when finished with maintenance.

We recommend operating each chair and unit at least once per week to keep everything functioning properly.

Refer to your individual equipment manufacturer for specific instructions on maintenance and repairs.

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