

WHEN A FEW MINUTES TURN INTO AN HOUR

Minor but powerful workflow changes that save more
time than you think

You do not become more efficient by rushing through the dentistry.

You become more efficient by reducing unnecessary interruptions, transitions,
waiting, and repeated decisions surrounding it.



THE MINUTES BETWEEN THE STEPS MATTER

Time disappears in small places:

- leaving the room unnecessarily
- reaching repeatedly for instruments
- changing your sequence mid-procedure
- completing the same step multiple times
- waiting when you could already be moving the appointment forward

None of these feels dramatic individually. Repeated all day, they add up fast.

DR. K PRINCIPLE

Don't ask: **"How can I do this faster?"**

Instead: **"What is unnecessarily disrupting my workflow?"**

The goal is not faster hands. The goal is fewer unnecessary transitions.

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LET TOPICAL JELLY TIME DO DOUBLE DUTY

Seat the patient. Topical anesthesia does not have to begin only after every last setup detail is complete.

Place topical. Let it "kick in." Use those "waiting" minutes for remaining preparation and setup.

Train your assistant to casually explain while placing the topical: **"We are going to let the topical jelly marinate for a few minutes so YOU can be more comfortable."**

The patient experiences intentional care while your assistant finishes setting up and recovers time that otherwise would have been spent waiting.

Do not drown your appointment in "waiting" for things simply because that is the sequence you inherited.

Whenever possible, overlap compatible steps instead of stacking them one after another.

TREATING A LOWER VITAL MOLAR?

Anesthetize as early as possible. Use the onset time for remaining setup.

USE THE ONSET TIME TO:

- finish your setup
- answer the patient's questions
- review what is about to happen
- have your assistant take any additional images you need

You already have to wait for anesthesia to take effect.

Use the time instead of adding it to the appointment.

AVOID THIS PATTERN

Anesthetize.

Leave.

Start something
unrelated.

Come back.

Every transition has a cost and, in a way, restarts the appointment with the same patient.

Your best clinical judgment still determines what sequence is most appropriate for the patient and procedure.

SIMPLIFY WHAT YOU REPEAT

3 YOU DO NOT NEED 10 BURS TO PREP A CROWN

More instruments ≠ better dentistry.

For procedures you perform repeatedly, answer:

“What is the minimum setup I need to deliver the outcome?”

Build a predictable sequence around what you actually use.

Every unnecessary instrument adds another setback.

4 PREPPING TWO OR MORE ADJACENT TEETH?

Start with **occlusal reduction**.

Complete the **same step on all teeth** before moving to the next one.

Same dentistry. Fewer transitions.

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Standardize the repeatable parts so your attention stays available for the parts that are not predictable.

If you repeatedly have to stop and decide what comes next, the sequence itself may need work.

CHANGE ONE RECURRING PATTERN

Efficiency is often less about learning to work faster and more about identifying what breaks your flow repeatedly.

Identify the pattern.

Then change **one recurring pattern at a time.**

You do not need to overhaul the entire appointment.

Stop giving unnecessary minutes away.

TRY THIS TOMORROW

At the end of one clinical appointment, ask yourself:

Where did I lose unnecessary minutes?

Was it the dentistry, or was it the workflow around it?

What ONE recurring pattern could I change on the next patient?

A short guide can give you language and a place to start. It cannot see your schedule, hear your conversations, or weigh the trade-offs in your position. Without context, even good advice stays generic.

For a deeper dive, explore the New DDS Unfiltered Digital Library or work directly with Dr. K.

NewDDSUnfiltered.com

Professional note: This guide is for general education and workflow reflection. It does not replace individualized clinical, ergonomic, employment, safety, or practice-management guidance.