

Orthodontic relapse is the tendency of teeth to move back toward their original position after orthodontic treatment. Even after successful alignment with braces or aligners, surrounding tissues such as gums, periodontal fibers, lips, cheeks, and tongue continue to exert forces on the teeth. In addition, growth changes, improper occlusion, oral habits like tongue thrusting or mouth breathing, and inadequate retainer wear can contribute to relapse. Certain tooth movements, especially rotations, arch expansion, and open bite correction, are more prone to instability. This is why retention is considered one of the most important phases of orthodontic treatment. Long-term use of retainers, proper occlusal settling, and maintaining functional balance are essential to preserve a stable and healthy smile.

