

How Long Will It Last...?

When I buy something, it makes me feel better to know how long that product will last. Sometimes, it makes sense to pay more up front for something that is sturdier and will last longer. Any time I buy implements for around the house, I buy the upgraded “industrial strength” versions. This is because I have an uncanny knack for breaking poorly made tools and implements. I’d like to say that this is because of my brute strength, but in truth, I usually break things out of brute stupidity. Screwdrivers rarely function as hammers for any length of time, if you know what I mean.

I recently read an interesting article about the length of service of different dental restorations, mainly lab made crowns (caps) and fixed bridges. In other words, “Doc, how long will that crown last me?”

The author, a dentist with forty years worth of experience and patient charts, went back and tried to catalog what worked the best and what lasted the longest in his practice. Most importantly, he tried to figure out what made the longest lasting bridges (some in service as long as thirty-five years) hold up for that amount of time.

After all of his work, this dentist came to a conclusion that we all know to be true in life. The things we own (our own bodies included) will last as long as we take good care of them. In other words, the common thread between all of the longest lasting restorations was great oral hygiene. If I change the oil and filters and maintain my tractor as instructed, it will last me years. If I run it to empty and never perform any preventative maintenance, it’ll probably break sooner than later, costing me more down time and money.

Amazingly, our teeth work the same way. Brush, floss, and apply fluoride regularly and you will get your money’s worth from your restorations. Neglect yourself and things will not work out as well or as long as they should. Common sense applied to health care. If you exercise and eat healthy, you will probably live longer as well. I imagine your primary care physician would agree.

Until next time, keep smiling.

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