

The switch in psychology that transforms handpiece repair bills

By Julian Hodges,

Manager of Handpiece Hotline



Julian Hodges

It's well known: some patients take more care of their cars than their teeth. What is not so well known is that some practices are taking exactly the same approach with handpieces. This is remarkable, because handpieces generate income, lots of it, and cars rarely do.

Maybe it's not realized that of the 18 reasons a handpiece may break down, one is a manufacturing fault and 17 are caused in practices when a handpiece is in use, being maintained or during infection control procedures. KaVo states that 70% of handpieces break-down prematurely due to poor maintenance.

And how about this? Handpieces in some practices have a service life four times greater than others, even with new handpieces. How on earth does this happen when all the handpieces were dispatched from the factory in the same pristine condition?

There are huge potential savings. If the service life of your handpieces was extended six months, have you ever contemplated what you could do with the funds securely deposited in your bank account? For some, six more months of additional handpiece service life, with a holiday as a bonus, is not an unreasonable expectation.

The focus of this article therefore, is to make you aware and provide sensible, understandable advice that can be implemented immediately. Now you are aware, we'll turn to the advice.

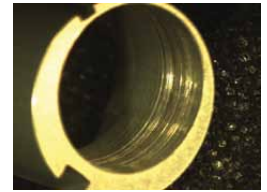
It's 80% attitude

Long, high performance handpiece service life is simple, and dependent on two factors

20% is technique and 80% is attitude

Can you believe that? I assure you it is true. We coach hundreds of people a year in maintenance procedures but this does not guarantee success. Far from it! Change the attitude, increase awareness and care for a handpiece and the effect on reducing your repair costs could be startling.

Lack of care and lack of oil caused this air motor rotor housing to become scored, requiring a complete overhaul. With a caring attitude, this would not have occurred.



Eliminate the need for technical understanding

Whilst we are on the car theme, let's eliminate the need for technical understanding. If something was not right with your car, would you get it checked out at a repairer or continue to drive doing more damage until it broke down?

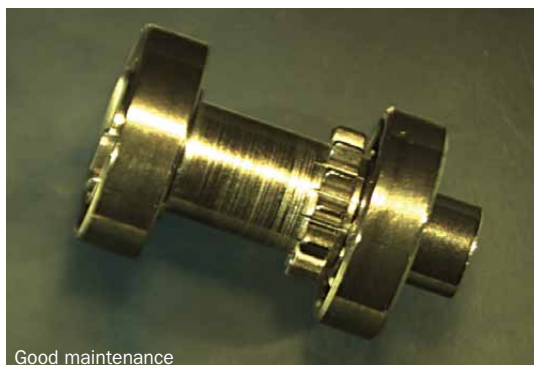
Ask this question when you are not sure how well a handpiece or motor is working:

What would I do if this were to happen to my car?

Even if you are new to dentistry and your knowledge of handpieces is limited, you will become a star when you take these actions

Your Assessment	Your Solution
Down on power	Have it checked out
Vibrating **	Have it checked out
Noisy or rattles	Have it checked out
Running hot	Have it checked out
Out of oil or has not been serviced	Have it checked out
Has been in an accident (handpiece dropped)	Have it checked out
Burning smell	Have it checked out

** Not sure how to check for vibration? Place the handpiece head on a hard surface and run it - you will feel the vibration



Good maintenance



Poor maintenance

Julian Hodges is Manager of Handpiece Hotline, Australia's only certified ISO 13485 Handpiece Repair Centre. The company repairs all handpieces with double, 12 month or manufacturers' warranties.

The 20% technical stuff

Maintenance

Do you know how colossal the difference can be between good and poor handpiece maintenance? These are similar parts from low speed handpieces. It's staggering.

There are four basic steps to handpiece maintenance.

This is the order – every time, if a handpiece can be autoclaved:
Clean – Lubricate – Purge or Run – Autoclave

Maintenance units help. They reduce risk and apply control to the lubricating and purging cycles. But, if you are not completely certain about maintenance, and want to expand your knowledge, phone us at any time. We will coach you and your team there and then.

How a \$6 O-ring can cause a \$600 repair bill

O-rings are small, black and look unimportant. They may only cost a few dollars but, handpieces and maintenance units cannot function without them.

The job of an O-ring is to act as a shock absorber, seal, or to separate air and water. A worn O-ring may allow air and water to mix. With water in the air lines, components rust. It may travel down the exhaust causing the unit to break down. The repair and loss of earnings costs will make \$600 seem like small change.

This is how to reduce the risk and have a more predictable outcome:

1. Schedule a regular check of all coupling and maintenance unit O-rings
2. Include the check as part of the standard surgery preparation procedure



The coupling was not checked for this high speed handpiece; part of an O-ring has broken off, travelled down the drive air and damaged the turbine – expensive.

3. Do not wait until an O-ring fails, keep a spare set of O-rings for all couplings and maintenance unit adaptors

Finally, don't forget this principle of handpiece care. Again, it is all about attitude.

If you own or are using a Formula 1 handpiece, don't treat it like a truck!

Enough said. ◆

Julian and his team can be contacted on 1800 30 80 30 or service@handpiecehotline.com.au

World Class Handpiece Repairs from the Southern Hemisphere's ONLY ISO 13485 Certified Repair Centre



Why Handpiece Hotline is best for you

- ✓ 24 – 48 hour turnaround times, secured with the Southern Hemisphere's largest stock of spare parts
- ✓ FREE 'Check, Clean and Lube Service' is a planned maintenance and vacation service to extend handpiece life
- ✓ FREE courier pick up and delivery of Express Post satchels to and from the Repair Centre for all handpieces
- ✓ No obligation quotations and estimates
- ✓ 12 months or manufacturers' warranties
- ✓ FREE 1 on 1 practice support, skilled maintenance training and technical advice
- ✓ FREE micron accurate spindle concentricity tests avoid unnecessary high cost turbine replacements
- ✓ View repairs, download outstanding invoices and approve quotes on line
- ✓ FREE 'Line Pressure Test Kits' lift 'Over The Phone' problem solving to an unparalleled level

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