

TIPS FROM OUR READERS

A cost-effective and straightforward technique to fabricate an intraoral photographic contraster



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Dental photography is a routine procedure in contemporary dental practice.¹ A photographic black contraster is a tool for dental photography that provides a black background to isolate the teeth of interest. The black color neutralizes the background, making it easier to visualize color matches or mismatches.² Digital photographs aid in transferring information about shade, enamel staining, characterization, and incisal edge translucency between the dentist and the dental laboratory technician.³ High-quality images can impress patients and can be used for professional instruction and publications.⁴

Rigid contrasters can be made of anodized aluminum or aluminum steel alloy and soft contrasters of malleable stainless steel or copper sheet covered with medical grade plastic silicone rubber, which is latex-free, safe, and hypoallergenic. Contrasters are sterilized in an autoclave up to 135 °C and available in different shapes to allow anterior, lateral, and occlusal photographs, as well as of different sizes including large, medium, or small adult arches and for pediatric use.

Contrasters are available from dental suppliers. However, they are relatively expensive, and usually multiple contrasters are needed for different intraoral photographs. The following article describes a cost-effective and straightforward technique to fabricate an intraoral photographic contraster by using a kitchen solid nylon turner or spatula. A nylon turner is inexpensive, heat-resistant, stain-resistant, safe to use, and autoclavable. In addition, it has a long

contra-angled handle for improved convenience and accessibility.

PROCEDURE

1. Purchase a black solid nylon turner (Trueliving Solid Nylon Turner; Robinson Home Products Inc) from a department store (Fig. 1). Select one that is heat-resistant to 135 °C or more (Fig. 2).
2. Draw the outline on the nylon turner. The outline can replicate an occlusal or buccal intraoral mirror or the design can be modified to allow it to fit comfortably in different areas of the oral cavity (Fig. 3).



Figure 1. Black heat-resistant nylon turner.

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Figure 2. Nylon turner is heat resistant.



Figure 4. Intraoral picture made with contrastor in place.



Figure 3. Outline drawn on nylon turner.

3. Trim the edges of the contrastor by using a heatless stone (Mizzy Heatless Wheels; Keystone Industries) at 20 000 rpm, following the outline.
4. Polish the edges with polishing rubber wheels (WH6; Shofu Dental Corp). Smooth the edges with 320-grit abrasive paper (LECO Corp).

5. Use the contrastor to make intraoral pictures. Autoclave after each use (Fig. 4).

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