

## Effective Use of Articulating Media

**Gordon's Clinical Observations:** How effective is your current articulating media (*paper, ribbon, wax, etc.*) or other technique? Occlusion is a confusing area, and how to measure the various aspects of occlusion is often more of a mystery. There are many ways to detect occlusal contacts and discrepancies. *CR clinicians and scientists offer suggestions and guidance in this report.*

Effective use of articulating media and proper occlusal adjustment can prevent the following challenges: tooth wear and restoration failure; extrusion leading to non-working interferences; tooth mobility, pain, and possible root canal therapy; headaches; TMJ pain; etc. **This report examines popular brands of articulating media and provides selection advice and clinical tips.**



Articulating paper which over marks teeth makes interpretation difficult

### Survey Data (n=810)

• **Articulating media used (listed by manufacturer):**

- Parkell .....39%
- Bausch.....28%
- Mynol.....7%
- Troll Dental.....5%
- Almore .....4%
- Others .....18%

• **Thickness of articulating media:**

- Don't know.....42%
- Less than 40 microns .....16%
- 40–80 microns .....15%
- 80–120 microns .....20%
- Greater than 120 microns .....7%

• **Most important characteristics (multiple responses possible)**

- Marks clearly .....94%
- Marks in a wet field .....57%
- Ease of use .....56%
- Thin .....52%
- Not messy.....29%
- Low cost .....22%

### Chart of Popular Thin Articulating Media

Five popular products were tested according to the characteristics deemed most important to clinicians. (*Listed by popularity on CR survey.*) Numerous additional brands, thicknesses, and colors are available.

Brand Company	Cost/Use	Photos	Thickness	Marks in Wet Field	Ease of Use	Ease of Removal
AccuFilm II Parkell	\$0.07		25 microns	No	Good	Good–Fair
Arti-Check Bausch	\$0.09		45 microns	Good	Good	Good
Mynol (XX-Thin) Ada Products Co.	\$0.14		35 microns	No	Good	Good
TrollFoil TrollDental	\$0.18		30 microns	Good	Excellent–Good	Good
Madame Butterfly Silk, Almore	\$0.11		70 microns	Good	Good–Fair	Good–Fair

8 microns without frame

### Suggested Technique: Occlusal evaluation and adjustment of dentulous patients

1. Gently tap teeth together in centric relation (CR) while guiding the patient's relaxed mandible.
2. Find location of first contact (*identified by patient*)
3. Maintain a dry field (*see clinical tip*)
  - Dry Tips on parotid, cotton rolls, etc.
  - Dry occlusal surfaces (6" cotton rolls, 2"x2" cotton sponge, etc.)
4. Immediately place articulating media and have patient again gently tap teeth together in CR on side of first contact.
5. Adjust initial contacts (*repeat steps 2–5 until contacts are equal on both sides*)
6. Dry both sides of mouth (*see step 3*) and place articulating media
7. Gently tap teeth together in maximum intercuspation (MI)
8. Adjust until there is equal contact on all teeth
9. Remove non-working interferences
10. Evaluate working interferences and adjust if necessary

### CR Conclusions:

Many clinicians continue to use thick articulating media with heavy marking capability, hoping for clear marks that will make occlusion easier to interpret. However, proper techniques and thinner media can actually provide more precise and accurate marks for better occlusal adjustment. Occlusion should be evaluated regularly for long-term patient satisfaction, function, and restoration performance.

❖ *This is only a portion of the original report.* ❖