

# Selecting the Right Intraoral Scanner for a Restorative Workflow

Switching from conventional to digital impressions provides several benefits to the dental practice. In addition to improving the patient experience—thanks to the elimination of messy impression materials and a reduced turnaround time—digital impressions are also faster and improve the accuracy of dental fabrications.

However, choosing the right one for a restorative workflow can be difficult. The chart below was created to help you determine which features to look for, how they benefit your workflow and the questions you should ask during the selection process.

Features	Benefits	Questions to Ask
<b>Image Accuracy</b>	While digital impressions are less prone to inaccuracies than impressions captured with conventional materials, digital impressions with “holes,” such as missing data or improperly marked margin lines, can result in ill-fitting crowns, inlays or onlays.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the finish line accuracy of the scanner?</li> <li>• What is the average or mean precision? (Please note, many manufacturers report on best achievable precision and not the average precision).</li> <li>• Are there any third-party, peer-reviewed studies that demonstrate the accuracy of your scanner?</li> <li>• Does the scanner software provide any feedback about holes present in the dataset?</li> </ul>
<b>Speed</b>	One of the greatest benefits of intraoral scanners is their overall efficiency, as digital models can be generated in minutes and the completed dataset can be either sent to a lab immediately or viewed in restorative software enabling the milling of a same-day crown in-house.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the scanner require powder spray to achieve fast scanning speeds?</li> <li>• What is the average time to scan both arches plus a bite registration?</li> <li>• What is the average time for a quadrant scan plus bite registration?</li> <li>• Is the scanner both fast and accurate, or does the speed impact accuracy?</li> <li>• Can the dataset be easily sent to the lab of the doctor’s choice for the manufacturing of the restoration?</li> </ul>
<b>Integration</b>	An open system that easily integrates with third-party software and labs allows you flexibility when it comes to your design and treatment options; ultimately allowing you to provide the best care to your patients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this scanner part of a closed or open system?</li> <li>• What are the file formats that scans can be saved in?</li> <li>• Which third-parties accept your scans?</li> <li>• Do you have a portal that allows me to send scans and data to the dental lab of my choice?</li> <li>• Can I easily import the scans into my practice management software?</li> </ul>

<b>Ergonomic Design</b>	<p>A scanner that is designed with both patient and the user in mind improves the overall scanning experience; thereby improving the quality of the digital impression. Patients often experience pain or soreness in their temporalis, masseter and pterygoid muscles or their temporomandibular joint from holding their mouth open for extended periods of time during restorative procedures, so it is important to find a scanner with versatile tips for different clinical situations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the scanner come with different tip styles and sizes to accommodate patients with smaller mouths or scans in the posterior region?</li> <li>• Is the scanner easy to maneuver in tight areas, like the distal region of the molar?</li> </ul>
<b>Ease of use</b>	<p>A scanner that allows users to scan in a way that feels natural—and not with a fixed protocol—improves the impression acquisition process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the scanner require a fixed distance, or can users choose whether to hover above or rest the scanner on a tooth?</li> <li>• Does the scanner provide real-time feedback, so users can easily go back and capture any missing information?</li> <li>• Do I have to use a specific scan protocol for the best results?</li> </ul>
<b>Price</b>	<p>When you consider that making the switch to digital impressions can eliminate the costs of conventional impression materials—and reduce the risk of remakes—you may find that your scanner will pay for itself over time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many uses will it take for the scanner to pay for itself?</li> <li>• Are there any additional costs that I should know about?</li> </ul>
<b>Warranty</b>	<p>If you're like many clinicians, you may find the intraoral scanner to be an important part of your practice. A good warranty will ensure that your technology investment is protected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does your basic warranty cover?</li> <li>• Are extended warranties available? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ If so, what does the extended warranty include?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Training</b>	<p>Learning how to effectively use your scanner at implementation allows you and your staff to get the most out of your purchase.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What types of training programs are available? Are they online? In-person?</li> <li>• Do you offer any feedback from CAD/CAM specialists to ensure scans are being performed correctly?</li> </ul>
<b>Support</b>	<p>When you have access to a good support team, it reduces the risk of downtime caused by a malfunctioning or broken scanner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What types of support services are offered? Are they over the phone? Online?</li> <li>• What are your support team's hours of operation?</li> </ul>
<b>Portability</b>	<p>When an intraoral scanner can be quickly moved from one operatory to another, without the need to push around a cumbersome trolley, it's much easier for staff and eliminates the need to buy a scanner for each room.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the scanner require a trolley or proprietary computer?</li> <li>• How does the scanner connect with my laptop or desktop?</li> </ul>

Digital impressions offer a number of benefits for dental professionals and patients alike but selecting one that will meet your practice's needs is important. We hope this checklist makes the decision-making process easier.