

# ORTHOPRACTICE RUBRIC

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## Occlusodontics: How to find contact points more easily

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Orthodontists usually locate contact points by using articulating paper whose thickness varies from 10  $\mu$  to 300  $\mu$  and is a kind of blotting paper with a soft, textured finish impregnated with a mixture of wax, oil, colorants and adhesive agents specially formulated with a sensitive coating to provide a sharp, clean mark on all surfaces. Thin plastic, metallic, or silk sheets can also carry these marking elements. Articulating

paper is sold in pre-cut rectangular strips, rolls, sheets, and horseshoe shaped paper that dentists can place over entire arches without recourse to pliers.

Some types of articulating papers contain progressive coloration that objectifies the intensity of contact forces by imprinting a nuanced depiction of the pressure received by varying the number of micro beads of ink that burst on a tooth's surface.



*Figure 1*  
*Bag containing horseshoe shaped segment of articulating paper.*

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*Figure 2*

*Marks obtained using paper that was left in its container.*



*Figure 3*

*When the articulating paper is removed from its container it produces contact marks that are much sharper.*

For orthodontists to obtain an excellent visualization of occlusal contacts, two prerequisites must be in place:

- dental surfaces must have been cleaned, rinsed, and dried and then rubbed with tissue paper or gauze;
- the ink should have been as freshly applied to the articulating paper as possible.

Even though manufacturers claim that a box of articulating paper kept in a cabinet drawer maintains its effectiveness for a long period of time, our experience has shown us that when we use articulating paper from a newly opened box we get much clearer markings than we do from paper that has been stored in a drawer for weeks or months. In our well-heated offices the exposure of articulating paper to the air is not without a deleterious effect on its ink and additives. The seal of the boxes or cassettes in which it is contained is

never perfect, which is why the articulating paper dries out progressively.

After many decades of practice we have learned to protect articulating paper from the ravages of the atmosphere by storing it in hermetically sealed packets. After having opened a new supply of articulating paper from its original wrapping, our assistant places the segments in lots of two in zip-lock bags or in plastic heat-sealed sleeves that are then stored in the refrigerator. Then, when we use these protected papers we are pleased by the permanence of the ink quality and we find visualization of contacts has been facilitated by the density of the ink particles for whom age had not withered the highest level of effectiveness. Before actually using them we are careful to dry occlusal surfaces scrupulously to enhance the adhesion and the permanence of the marks obtained.

Here is an unsolicited endorsement from one of our former students, "A while ago I was struggling to get visible marks on a ceramic surface with a sheet of articulating paper that I took out of my drawer. Then I remembered how you recommended keeping bags of articulating paper in the fridge when I took your occluso course. I thought this was the raving of obsessive old fogies. But I opened a new box of articulating paper in spite of my prejudice and was delighted to see it left perfect markings on the ceramic surface. Since then I've been putting all open sheets of articulating paper in sealed bags and I can tell you it's worked like magic."

*Articulating paper to use: Bausch Ref. BK 03 Blue. 50 horseshoe sheets of 200 µ.*

## WORK TO CONSULT

- Rozencweig D, Rozencweig G. Algies et dysfonctionnements de l'appareil manducateur, Paris : CdP, 1994, p. 340.