



## TESTIMONIAL: TRANSITIONING FROM LOUPES TO A DENTAL MICROSCOPE FOR IMPROVED ERGONOMICS

Exploring the learning curve, clinical benefits & key aspects dental professionals should know about when transitioning from loupes to a dental microscope.

### AT A GLANCE

Dr. Shane Smith, a general practitioner located in Jonesboro, AR, has been using a Global microscope for over 2 years. Upon starting his own practice, Dr. Smith decided to make an investment in his long-term health and comfort by transitioning from loupes to a dental microscope.

“One of my biggest motivating factors for changing from loupes to a microscope was the inevitable back problems associated with poor posture and my growing workload.

I have experience with both basic and top-of-the-line loupes but, when I began using a Global scope, it quickly became a fundamental upgrade in my practice.”



**DR. SHANE SMITH, DDS  
JONESBORO, AR**

### BACKGROUND

I started out practicing dentistry utilizing the 2.5x magnification loupes that I purchased in dental school, eventually upgrading to some of the high-end panoramic loupes that were supposed to be awesome. They were awesome, except for how heavy they were . . . they became quite the strain on my neck.

I am a tall dentist with a long torso. Ergonomic positioning is critical for me to prevent early retirement and I wanted to make sure I'm not headed toward back surgery. I've seen several dentists I've worked with develop back issues throughout their careers.

Towards the end of my associateship, I noticed that if I wasn't postured correctly, my back muscles would fatigue easily and my hands would start to get shaky. This was very scary to experience - especially when my quality of care depends on my ability to maintain a full clinical schedule, in addition to having a direct impact on my livelihood as a dentist. Then, I got the Global scope and my life changed for the better

I used to see a massage therapist monthly to combat muscle soreness and fatigue. Now my ability to maintain proper ergonomics with a Global scope means don't have to utilize physical therapy. I'm also not as fatigued at the end of a long day of treatment.

My posture is near perfect now. I can sit and do molar endo on an upper second molar completely relaxed.

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## THE "LEARNING CURVE"

For me, it took about 2 to 3 weeks of use to acclimate to the microscope. I was slower during that time and it was interesting having to keep track of my hands outside of the field of view.

Luckily, I was working with a dentist who has used a scope for decades. This really sped things up for me. If it weren't for him coaching me, I would have sought some dedicated continuing education and hands-on coursework for it (especially to ensure I'm positioned as ergonomically as possible).

I did a lot of practice on extracted teeth during that time too. Plenty of root canals and just anything to get used to it.

I made sure to follow the basics and focused on good posture. This meant setting up as straight as possible and orienting the patient to my position (instead of the opposite method utilized with loupes).

I made sure that when I was in position to treat the patient, I was relaxed. I focused on a relaxed but stable core and kept bodily movement to a minimum.

It got easier every day. I worked at the lowest magnification so that I could have the widest field of view. Even that was light-years ahead of loupes. I even began doing examinations with the microscope.

## ADDITIONAL LEARNINGS

I also found a few additional tips helpful, especially for those transitioning from loupes. First, there was an interesting change when using the scope. Maxillary teeth are so much easier to prep compared to mandibular with the scope. In the beginning, you may find it easier to start viewing upper-direct, because you're already used to indirect vision with mirror observation.

Another thing to keep in mind is there is also a the learning curve for your assistant(s). It's more difficult for them to see around the scope, but it comes with practice for each to position themselves to see better. Having the assistant handing instruments efficiently so you can continue looking in the scope is a big help with maintaining focus. My assistant really enjoys having the scope's image displayed on a screen to be able to see the treatment also. They get way more involved when they can see up close like you do.



## COMPARING LOUPES TO MICROSCOPES: KEY BENEFITS

- Long-term health & ergonomics
- Visual clarity & higher magnification
- Shadow-free direct light
- Improved quality of treatment & patient care
- Impressive & comfortable for patients & staff
- In-office display for chairside visualization