

# Practice Management for Denturists – Denturist Software - DOMx

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## **Irritable Desk Syndrome**

We are always on the lookout for anything that will make office life for the denturist a little easier. A couple weeks ago I came across something that I found a little humorous. As if North America needed any more psychiatric disorders, a new syndrome has been found to be plaguing millions of receptionists and office workers around the world! It's been defined as "Irritable Desk Syndrome" or IDS for short. Yes, it's true, researchers at NEC-Mitsubishi, a maker of computer monitors, questioned 2,000 office workers and found many to be suffering from this "Irritable Desk Syndrome" (IDS). The study reports that 40 percent of the surveyed workers said they were "infuriated by too much clutter and paper on their desks, but could not be bothered to do anything about it."

North Americans love their syndromes and a quick search on the internet will bring up all kinds of articles describing the shocking new "illness". The study's lead author, Nigel Robertson, says "What most individuals fail to realize is that desk symptoms typically escalate very quickly". Nigel is described as a "deskologist", which begs the question of where one might get a degree in "deskology"?! Kinda makes me want to go 'back to school' and get a degree in Funology. As a Funologist I could study the benefits of fun and exercise. After completing a 30,000 person survey I might discover a new syndrome as well – that people who exercise and have fun suffer from "Healthy Enriched Life Phenomena Syndrome" or HELPS for short.

Despite the ridiculousness of over defining the obvious, the message is well worth investigating. The image your office projects is important for many reasons, not the least of which are the level of stress you and staff operate in, and the impressions that stick with your clients. There is an intangible air of comfortable confidence in a well organized, clean denturist office.

Here are a few ideas to get you started on reducing the ill effects of IDS!

### **Sit in your Waiting Room.**

When was the last time you actually sat in your waiting room and evaluated your office from a patient's perspective? I guarantee you will notice everything from spots on the wall, bad furniture, and out dated magazines. Go further still and visualize their whole experience. Is everything clean and tidy? Are treatment plans printed out and professionally presented? Does your front desk function like a clean, well oiled machine, right up to the way insurance claims are printed and invoices are presented and collected? Is there a comfortable air of confidence in the experience that will enable the patient to trust that you are the very best specialist for their denture needs?

### **Easy on the eyes = easy on the mind**

A large part of interior design is focused on giving spaces a specific atmosphere. The atmosphere influences people kind of like a mirror. A peaceful space creates a peaceful atmosphere where people feel at ease. A colorful and dynamic space creates a vivid atmosphere and sparks creativity in people. A clean and tidy space creates an atmosphere without distractions and stress and supports people being focused.

### **Audit your Access to Information**

It is always a more comfortable working environment when you have instant access to your patient records, outstanding claims, treatment plans, examinations, and schedules. Do you know what your total Accounts Receivable is right now? How much of that Accounts Receivable value is over 90 days old? How much money do you have outstanding with insurance claims right now? How many outstanding pre-authorizations do you have right now? How much money do you have on deposit for future work?

**Measure everything of significance.**

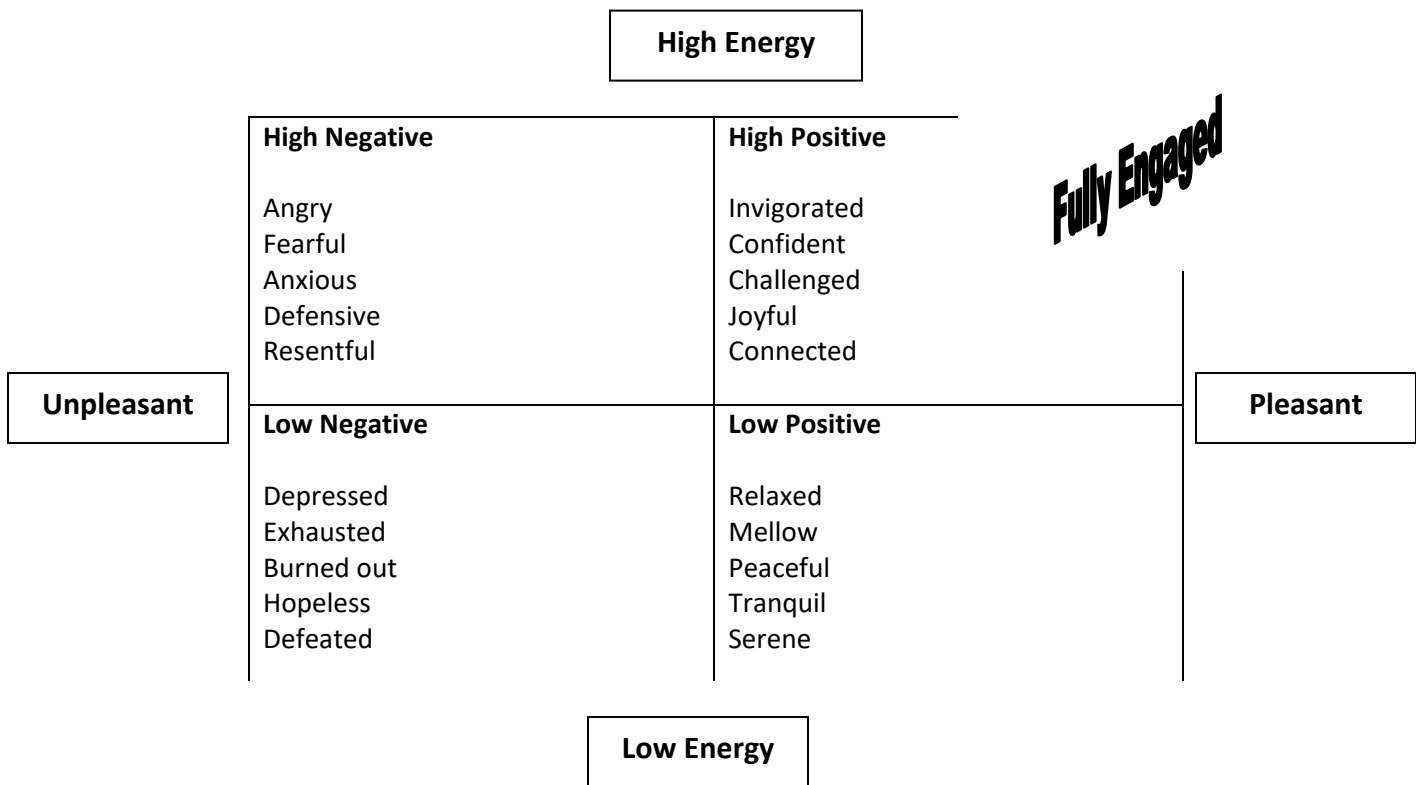
I swear this is true. Anything that is measured and watched, improves. Anything that is not managed will deteriorate.

**Rituals**

Join every elite athlete and corporate guru out there and develop some rituals to add balance to your office. Try the clean desk ritual -- nobody leaves until their work space is clean. Studies have shown that the person working with a messy desk space spends, on average, one and a half hours per day looking for things or being distracted by things. That's seven and a half hours per week!

**The Dynamics of Attitude**

Benjamin Franklin kept a daily diary of his attitude. At the end of each day he had a checklist to measure how many times he got angry, lost control, or felt positively fully engaged. Try tracking your attitude and ask your staff to consider it too.



**Ergonomics of your work space**

Deeply consider how your work space is organized to reduce stress and health risks from repetitive motion injuries. Get rid of that old CRT monitor and get a proper flat screen. Not only are CRT monitors big, old and Ugly, they have a flickering effect caused by refresh rates. These on screen refresh rates contribute towards headaches and lower productivity. Due to differences in technology, the sleek LCD Monitors have no such issues.

If you are moving work spaces around, try not having positions where staff members have their backs to each other. It is a lot more stressful to have to crank your neck around to interact with a fellow worker than simply to look up. Not to mention that turning around interrupts what you are doing and can subconsciously feel like you are getting attacked!

**Never give up.**

Thomas Edison said that “Most people miss opportunity because it’s dressed in overalls and looks like work.” So start to really manage! Set Goals, Take Action, Measure and go full circle again.

**There’s always a Reason to Smile.**

Find your reason to smile. After all, you're really lucky just to be alive. Life is short. And there will always be some Syndrome lurking around the corner.

*Dean Fenwick is the lead software developer for the DOM (Denturist Office Manager) practice management system for denturists. Dean has been helping denturists improve practice management across Canada for the last 8 years. Before his work with denturists, Dean was a computer science and business teacher at both the high school and college level.*