

Research Points to Tool Design as a Primary Barrier to Daily Flossing

Studies consistently show that difficulty and inconvenience, not lack of awareness, are the main obstacles to interdental cleaning.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, UNITED STATES, August 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Dentists have recommended daily flossing for decades, and most adults are well aware that cleaning between their teeth matters. Yet surveys continue to show that only around [30% of adults floss daily](#), while roughly a third never floss at all. A growing body of research suggests the gap between knowing and doing is largely a question of the tool itself.



Research finds that effective flossing requires a level of manual dexterity many people struggle to achieve.

Standard string floss demands a surprisingly specific set of physical skills. A [2024 observational study published in Clinical Oral Investigations](#) filmed 94 participants flossing and found that only 2 of the 94 were able to correctly clean their entire dentition at baseline, before any instruction was given. Even after receiving video instruction, fewer than half reached the correct technique. Participants consistently reported that reaching the back teeth was difficult and more time-consuming than they expected.

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The research is clear: people are not skipping interdental cleaning because they don't care. They skip it because the tools make it harder than it needs to be. We design around that.”

*Rachel Zhang, CEO & Founder,
Tonochi*

The physical challenge is well documented. Research published in the [Journal of Dental Hygiene](#) confirmed that effective flossing requires functional bilateral manual

dexterity, and that lower dexterity levels directly limit how well flossing works in practice. For older adults, people with arthritis, and anyone with reduced fine motor control, the technique itself becomes the obstacle.

Timing makes the problem worse. Flossing is typically done at night, at the end of the day, when

mental and physical energy are at their lowest. A task that requires dexterity, concentration, and a willingness to spend extra minutes in the bathroom is precisely the kind of task that tired people skip.

Clinical guidance has shifted in response. Interdental brushes, soft picks, and floss picks are now routinely recommended for people who find string floss difficult to manage, and several studies have found higher rates of consistent use with these alternatives. The broader direction in the field is toward matching the tool to the person rather than expecting the person to adapt to the tool.

Based in San Francisco, Tonochi is an oral care firm dedicated to improving interdental health, focusing on the spaces between teeth where most oral problems begin. The company develops a range of interdental tools including floss, floss picks, and soft picks, combining functional engineering and human-centered design to address the root causes of cavities and periodontal disease. Products are available at tonochi.com and on Amazon.



String floss, floss picks, and soft picks each require different technique and dexterity.



Rachel Zhang, Founder & Designer of Tonochi.

Rachel Zhang

Tonochi press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/935083939>

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