



# 2025

## DENTAL HYGIENIST

### Salary Survey Report

HIRING

WAGES

TURNOVER

ENDEAVOR BUSINESS  
**INTELLIGENCE**<sup>TM</sup>  
DENTAL ECONOMICS<sup>®</sup> DE RDH Dentistry iQ<sup>®</sup>

# RDH Report

## SUMMARY & HIGHLIGHTS

Between October and November 2024, DentalPost conducted its annual dental professional salary survey, drumming up participation from 2,230 registered dental hygienists — a 23.8% increase compared to the prior year's pool.

### Key Highlights & Takeaways

- Compensation is on the upswing. The mean (average) total income of responding RDHs rose for the third year running, hitting an all-time high of **\$81,627 in 2024**.
- While satisfaction with compensation trails behind 2022 levels, we saw a slight rebound in 2024 compared to the year prior, and **negative sentiment dipped even more notably**.
- One in five RDHs (20.5%) have changed jobs** within the past 12 months, up just slightly from the 19.4% who did the same in the previous period. Chief among desires in making the jump were a better work environment, higher pay, and a more appreciative employer; 78.3% of job changers say they accomplished such goals in the switch.
- As for those looking to leap soon, **12.5% of responding hygienists** say they're currently applying for new jobs or plan to do so before 2026, up just slightly from the 11.8% on the hunt this time last year. Additionally, nearly a third (31.2%) say they plan to retire within six years.
- Despite these impending staffing changes, **66.3% of RDHs** have no plans to pursue a new job, representing a 13.3% increase in statis compared to the previous year.

# Total Annual Income

## National Mean & Median

**1,254** full-time RDHs reported total annual income from their hygiene practice ranging from \$37,000 to \$170,000.

- ◆ The median full-time income of responding RDHs was **\$80,000**.
- ◆ The mean (average) was **\$81,267, a 2.9% increase** compared to the 2023 mean of \$79,340 and a 10% bump compared to the 2022 mean of \$73,745.

## Mean & Median by Region

Full-Time Income by Region	Range	Median	Mean
East South Central (AL, KY, MS, TN)	\$40,000 - \$128,000	\$60,000	\$65,319
East North Central (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)	\$40,000 - \$150,000	\$75,000	\$75,007
South Atlantic (DC, DE, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV)	\$37,400 - \$160,000	\$75,000	\$78,791
West North Central (IA, KS, MN, MO, ND, NE, SD)	\$40,000 - \$140,000	\$76,500	\$79,592
Mid-Atlantic (NJ, NY, PA)	\$37,000 - \$140,000	\$80,000	\$80,929
West South Central (AR, LA, OK, TX)	\$40,000 - \$150,000	\$80,000	\$81,227
Northeast (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)	\$55,000 - \$125,000	\$80,000	\$82,233
Mountain (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY)	\$44,000 - \$135,000	\$85,000	\$83,235
Pacific (AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)	\$55,000 - \$170,000	\$95,500	\$98,910

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# Hourly Wage

## National Mean & Median

**1,948** responding full-time and part-time RDHs reported hourly rates ranging from \$17 to \$90 per hour.

- ◆ The average hourly rate of full-time responding RDHs rose notably to **\$48.85** per hour, compared to \$45.75 in 2023.
- ◆ The median hourly wage was **\$47.00 per hour**.

## All Respondents: Hourly Wage Levels

Hourly Wage by Region	Range	Median	Mean
East South Central (AL, KY, MS, TN)	\$25,000 - \$62,000	\$38,000	\$38,690
East North Central (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)	\$30,000 - \$70,000	\$45,000	\$44,980
West North Central (IA, KS, MN, MO, ND, NE, SD)	\$30,000 - \$65,000	\$45,000	\$46,376
South Atlantic (DC, DE, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV)	\$22,000 - \$160,000	\$45,000	\$53,982
Mid-Atlantic (NJ, NY, PA)	\$29,000 - \$75,000	\$45,500	\$46,897
Northeast (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)	\$34,000 - \$65,000	\$48,000	\$48,911
West South Central (AR, LA, OK, TX)	\$32,000 - \$350,000	\$48,000	\$50,053
Mountain (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY)	\$34,000 - \$70,000	\$50,000	\$50,731
Pacific (AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)	\$39,000 - \$87,000	\$60,500	\$59,990

**"I love the culture of our office. We all work well together and help each other out. Collaborate and learn together. The hours are amazing I work 7-3. Great work life balance. My office is progressive with technology and my boss collaborates with other dentists to make our office efficient and progressive. And all my doctors are wonderful, sweet human beings that care about all the employees and their patients."**

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## Average Hourly Wage Level by Years of Experience

Among this year's respondents, the average hourly rates in all experience levels vary by a range of \$73 per hour.



## Mean & Median by Region

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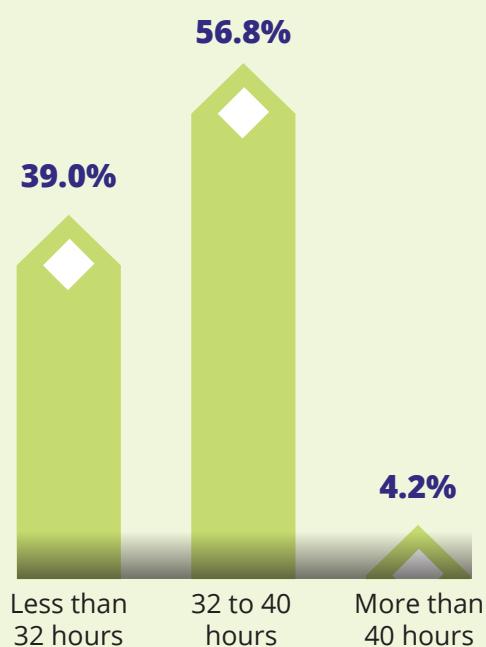
**“Lack of autonomy, no bonuses, no commission, lack of respect for my job and professional status, no voice as an oral care provider”**

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## Average Workweek Hours

**61%**

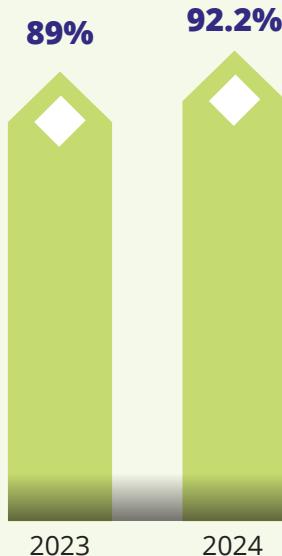
Nearly two thirds (61%) of responding dental hygienists work **32 or more hours per week**, a number that's up just slightly compared to 58.7% who reported this level of work last year.



# Benefits

## Year-Over-Year Comparison of the % Who Receive Benefits

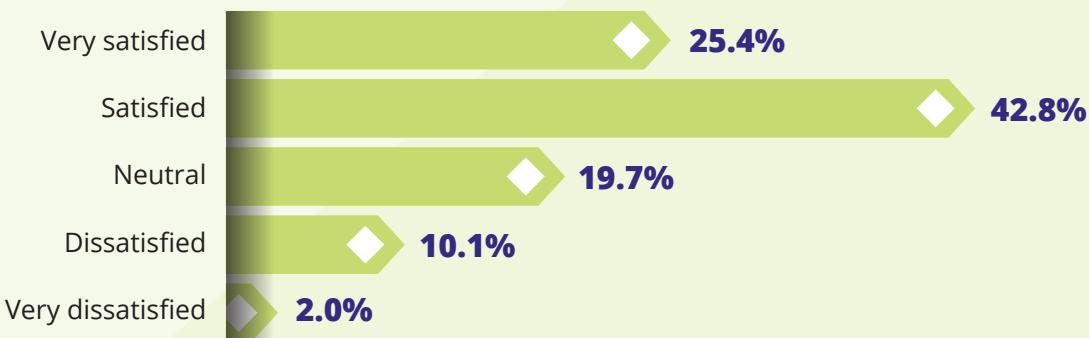
In 2024, **92.2%** of RDHs received benefits of some kind, showing a promising year-over-year upswing compared to **89%** who received benefits in 2023 and 70% in 2022.



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## The Benefits RDHs Received

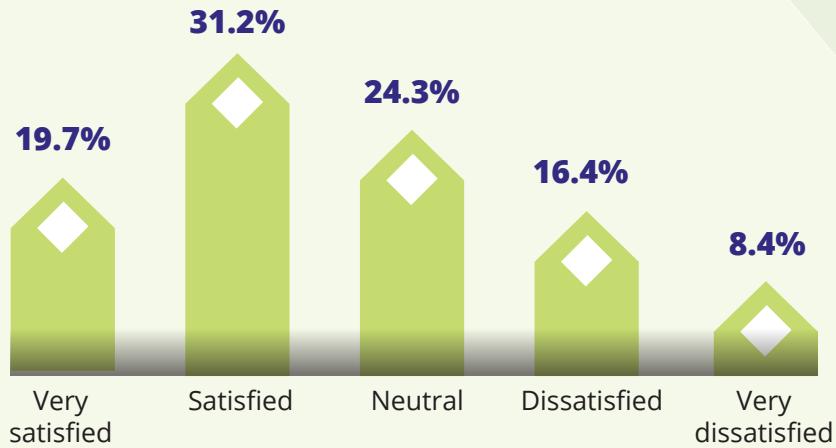
Just as in the last report, the top benefits RDHs received in 2024 were paid holidays and vacation, retirement, and dental.



While medical coverage remains the most coveted benefit among RDHs who don't already have it, retirement replaces paid time off as #2 on the wish list.

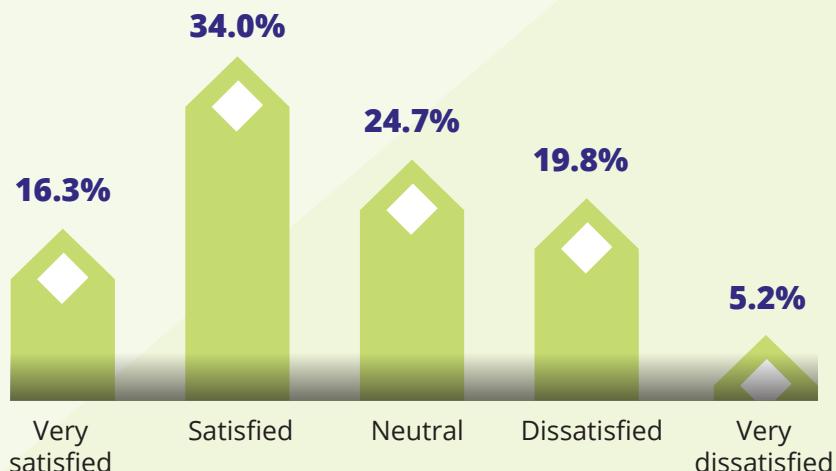
## Satisfaction with Benefits

As access to benefits has improved, so too has sentiment about them: More than half of RDHs (50.9%) say they're satisfied or very satisfied with their 2024 package (6.8% better compared to the last report's level), while **24.8%** are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (a 9% improvement).



## Satisfaction with Total Compensation

Half of registered hygienists (50.3%) are satisfied or very satisfied with their total 2024 compensation (including primary wages or salary, bonuses, commissions, and benefits), a nominal bump compared to 2023's level of **49.6%**. The proportion of respondents who are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied has dropped to 25%, compared to **27.3%** in 2023.



All told, although satisfaction hasn't yet rebounded to levels seen in 2022 (when 61.5% of RDHs reported a positive view of their compensation), it seems to be heading in the right direction.

## Job Turnover

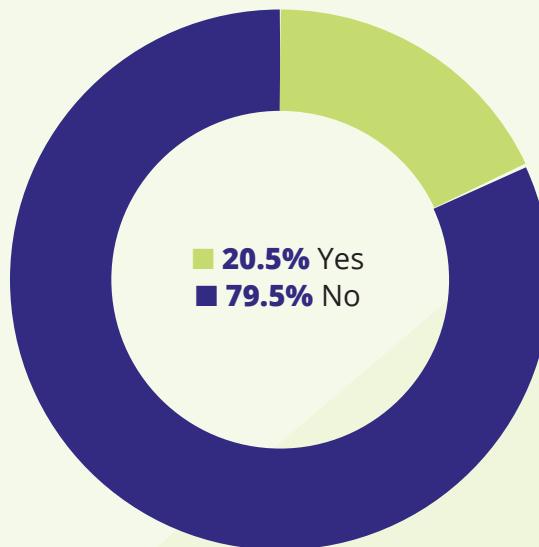
### Changed Employers in the Previous 12 Months

# 20.5%

**20.5%** of responding RDHs changed employers within the past 12 months, up marginally from the **19.35%** who did so in the previous period.

### Motivations for Changing Jobs in 2024

More than three-quarters (**78.3%**) of registered hygienists who found new employment in the past year say they achieved their goals in doing so. As was the case in 2023, higher pay and a better work environment were among the top motivations for making the jump. Whereas the desire for a new location was also a key driver for those who changed jobs in 2023, it's been usurped in the latest report by the search for a more appreciative employer.



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### 66.3% Do Not Plan to Apply for New Jobs

# 33.7%

One third (**33.7%**) are job hunting or considering hunting, a 7.7% decrease compared to one year ago when 41.4% were hunting or thought they might. Two thirds (**66.3%**) of RDHs are planning to stay in their current job for the foreseeable future.

## When Job Searchers Plan to Apply to New Jobs

As for those exploring their options, **12.5%** are currently applying for new jobs or planning to do so before 2026, up just slightly from the **11.84%** who were on the hunt this time last year. Another **17.7%** are toying with the idea.

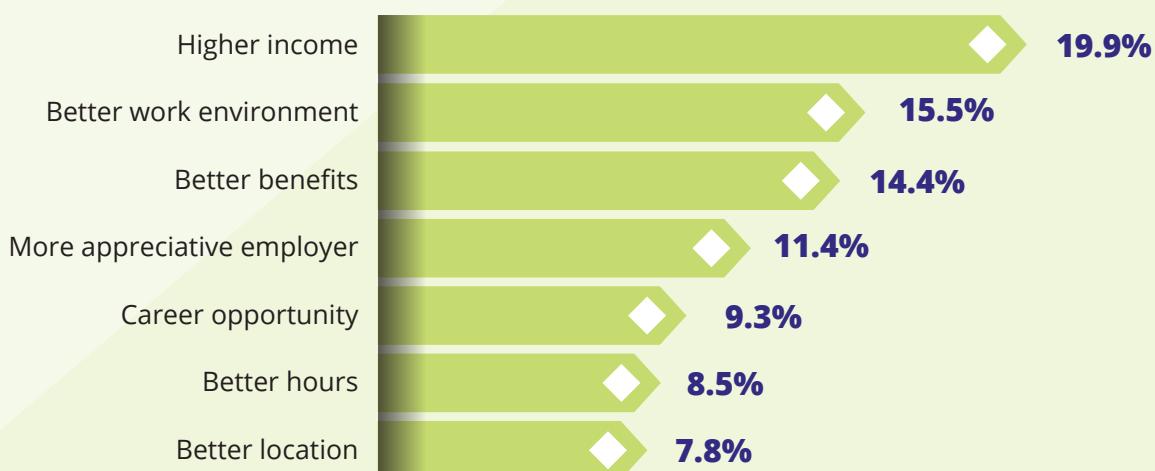


**"Helping others to achieve good hygiene for both oral and physical health. Performing a thorough and gentle prophylaxis. Helping patients to overcome their dental fears and to feel comfortable during dental procedures. I enjoy the people I work with and the patients I see."**

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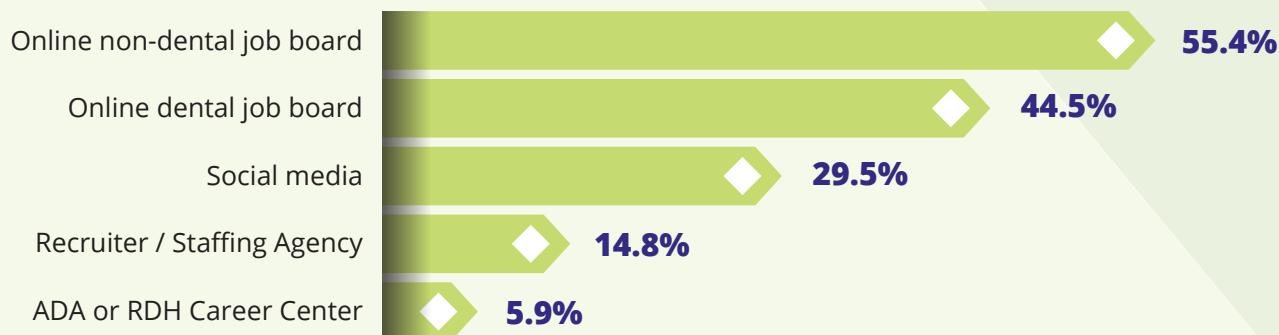
## Motivations for Changing Jobs in 2024

Going into 2025, RDHs on the move are most motivated by higher pay and a better work environment — the same drivers cited by those in a similar position the year prior.



## Where RDHs Look for New Jobs

As was the case last year, RDHs primarily look for new opportunities via online job boards like DentalPost and social media.



## Planned Years to Retirement

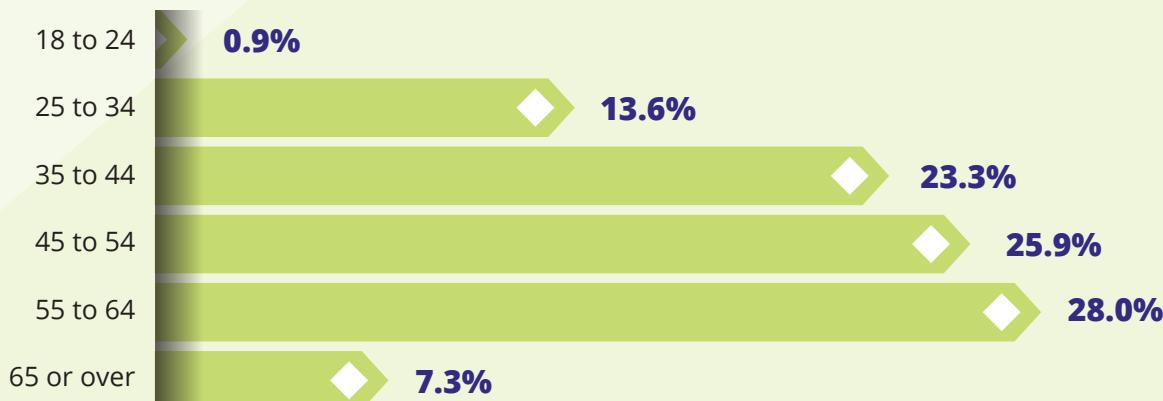
Nearly a third (31.2%) of RDHs plan to retire within the next six years, a **9.7%** dip compared to the proportion who had these plans in 2023.



## Age & Experience

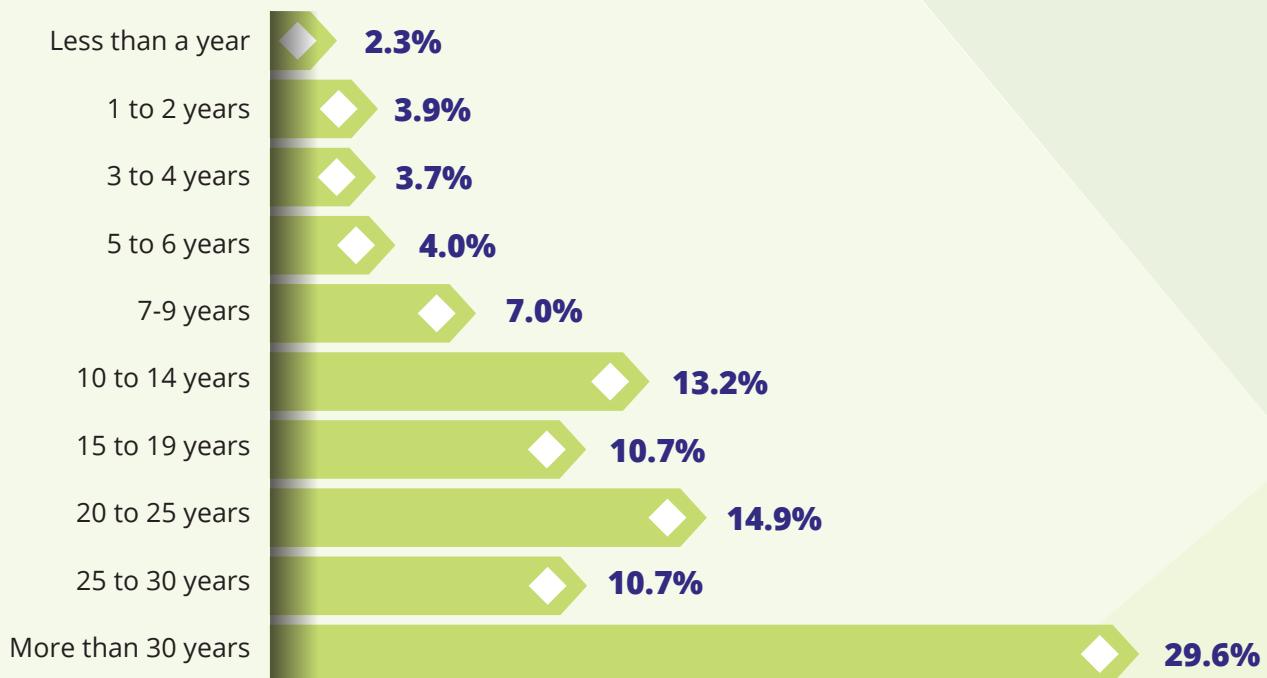
### Age

Like last year, more than half of responding RDHs (53.9%) are between the ages of 45 and 64.



## Years of Experience as a Dental Hygienist

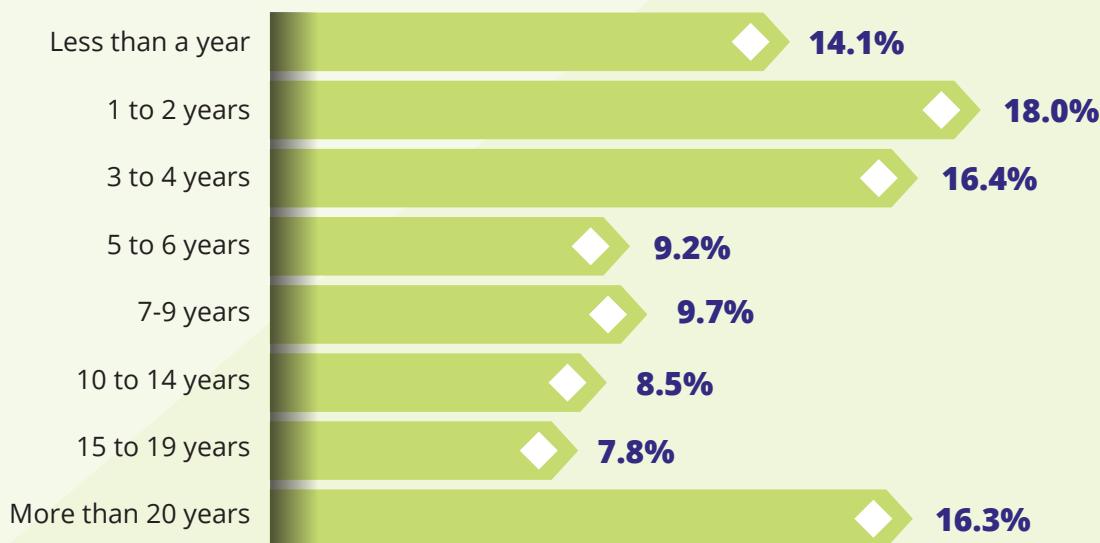
Tenures are also holding steady: Nearly a third (29.6%) of registered hygienists have more than 30 years' experience in the field. **6.2%** have two or fewer years of experience.



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## Longevity with Current Employer

There's strong representation on both poles: Just under half of responding RDHs (48.5%) have been with their current employer for 4 or fewer years, while nearly a quarter (24.1%) have tenures of 15+ years.



## Top Career Wins and Washes

Time and again, RDHs say these are the best parts of their job: autonomy, respect for their expertise, short commutes and flexible schedules, relaxed environments, commitment to and compensation for continuing education, ethical and caring practices, and the ability to improve patients' lives through education and service. Many also value the technical aspects of their job, noting scaling and rootplanning as favorite procedures.

Conversely, hygienists without these experiences consistently note their absence as their least favorite aspect of their work, citing top stressors like challenging patient and office dynamics, long commutes, lack of appreciation and autonomy, repetitiveness of routine, and packed schedules, along with care-compromising insurance practices, convoluted or inconsistent corporate policies, poor compensation, prevalent turnover, and proliferating paperwork. Several specify that sharpening instruments is their least favorite core task.

*The following responses have been lightly edited for length and clarity.*

### Challenges

**“That it’s corporate-owned and everything we try to order is either approved, denied, or subject to change before the order is placed by someone not even working in this office”**

**“Not having a union that can help us acquire pay raises and secure medical benefits”**

**“Management and corporate that dictates the amount of time that each patient has per appointment.**

**Insurance rejecting insurance claims for scaling and rootplanning; not covering fluoride and other services that dentists submit for treatment. Insurance rejecting claims is not only stressful for the patient but stressful for the clinician who is recommending necessary procedures.”**

**“I wish we had more of group effort to learn more. I love when an office goes to ce courses together or brings back info from a ce course to share with the rest of the team.”**

**“How it’s always rush, rush, rush. It’s set up, see a patient, clean up, and then back to set up, see a patient, and then clean up. No break except for lunch break. Lack of flexibility. It’s a hard job. Feel like I am always ‘on.’”**

**“Emotionally, physically, mentally demanding. It’s difficult to meet the needs of every single patient. My body hurts after 8 hours, burnout is super prevalent with me.”**

**“Feeling undervalued in the majority of the dental and healthcare community. Preventing disease and infection is our primary role, I just wish other professionals would see that we are far more important than they realize.”**

## **Wins**

**“Friendly environment, ample time to complete patient care, employer’s love for learning and using new things”**

**“I enjoy the environment of the office I work at. The pace is ideal. I feel like I am provided everything I need to provide the best care to my patients. The dentist I work for is understanding and flexible if I need time off. I trust the care he provides to his patients.”**

**“I feel very supported by my doctor and the rest of the staff. They all make me feel like I am a valuable part of the team. We all respect each other and get along very well.”**

**“I love educating my patients on the link of oral health and systemic health and building a relationship with them that will make their dental visits fun and exciting.”**

**“I work for an ethical dentist, not production focused. No micromanaging.”**

**“Pay is incredibly generous for the area. Owner dentist is flexible, kind and great to work for. Entire team works well together.”**

**“Excellent quality, wonderful employer, many great coworkers, many great patients. A boss who totally respects me and my work and supports me. When I wanted to shorten my days, he told me I could do anything I wanted as long as I don’t quit. I am seventy-five years old. It doesn’t get better than that.”**