1a. Goldstein Flexi-Thin Composite Instruments
Hu-Friedy

1b. XTS Composite Placement Instruments
Hu-Friedy

2. Composite Placement Instruments
Cosmedent

3. Titanium Nitride Composite Placement Instruments
Brasseler

4. Titanium Nitride Composite Placement Instruments
Bisco

5. Composite Hand Instrument Kit
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6. Flexichange Restorative
Dentsply/Caulk

7. Composite Instruments
Coltene/Whaledent

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<td>Black Anodized Aluminum</td>
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<td>After</td>
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<td>Goldstein Flexi-Thin Composite Instruments</td>
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<td>Composite Manipulation Instruments</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The Ratings 163
Composite Placement and Contouring Instruments

These instruments accomplish one and possibly both of the following tasks:

- Carry composite from a dispensing pad or syringe to the tooth.
- Manipulate the composite once it is in or on the tooth.

Even though highly polished stainless steel used to be the most common type of instrument for these tasks, titanium nitride-coated instruments have jumped to the top of the pack. They come in a variety of shapes, are available in very thin profiles, and definitely resist sticking (but don’t totally prevent it). The quality of the instrument’s polish (except for the anodized aluminum versions) may also play a part in its ability to resist composite sticking to it. We have indicated in each product’s commentary the degree of polish.

In addition, the titanium nitride coating appears to be quite durable and scratch-resistant, unless they are placed with other instruments in the ultrasonic cleaner. We have subjected each of our CHOICES to an ultrasonic cleaning regimen to see what effect this procedure will have on the instrument’s surface finish. Before and after photos of this regimen can be found in each product’s commentary. They are also autoclavable.

The handles of the instruments can also affect their comfort and cleanliness. The trend is toward thicker handles, but you may prefer a more conventional thin handle. We measured the diameters of the instruments to guide you in selecting the ones that you prefer. In addition to the handle’s thickness, the texturing to keep it from slipping affect make it more difficult to clean. Similar to handpieces, the newest trend is to create a satin-like finish instead of distinct serrations. We have indicated how each handle is finished in the product’s commentaries.

Other than the instruments listed in this section, there are also fine, well-designed, individual metal instruments from many companies that are useful, but may not be specifically marketed for composites. Don’t let that stop you from buying one. If a certain shape and size works for you, it doesn’t matter what the instrument is called.

### Goldstein Flexi-Thin Composite Instruments

**Hu-Friedy**

**ENCORE**

Cost for set: $143.00/7 instruments
($20.43/instrument)

Or
$24.00/individual instrument

Note: These are previous prices. Manuf did not supply current prices.

### RAVES & RANTS

- Mainstream set
- Learning curve is minimal
- You may already have some of these
- Mini and regular versions could be redundant

### Description

Double-ended instruments with very high polish and relatively thin ends, similar to an IPC. The thin ends add to their flexibility, which is a positive feature. Handles are round, 6.4mm in diameter, and have a herringbone pattern near the ends for better gripping.

### Composition

Stainless steel.

### Cleaning and Sterilizing

All methods okay.

### Shapes

**Seven**

**CIGFT1** Paddle end in line with handle, larger than IPC and too large for most evaluators. Rounded condenser end good medium size but 135° angle of tip to handle makes it awkward to manipulate composite in limited access proximal boxes. A 90° angle makes it much easier to compress composite in proximal boxes. One evaluator suggested the condenser end be the shape of a flat-tipped cone for better condensation against cavity walls.

**CIGFT2** Similar to CIGFT1, but larger.

**CIGFT3** Similar to an IPC in that it has two paddle ends. However, its ends are significantly larger than those of an IPC.

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CIGFT4 Large, double-paddle ends with blades at offset angles, good for contouring difficult-to-access areas.
CIGFTMIN1 Mini version of CIGFT1. Was found to be especially good at tucking composite under the gingival.
CIGFTMIN3 Mini version of CIGFT3.
CIGFTMIN4 Mini version of CIGFT4.

Packaging
Each instrument is in its own sealed, tamper-proof, plastic pack. One side is white opaque plastic with the instrument’s identification and a perforated area that, if broken, will alert you the instrument has been handled. The other side is clear plastic that gives you immediate view of the instrument.

Directions
There are no specific directions other than the brochure, which has pictures and descriptions of each instrument, including a summary of its suggested uses.

Description
Double-ended instruments with black tips with high polish. The round handle is also unique—larger than normal (9.4mm in diameter), with a satin-like silver finish for better gripping.

Composition
Aluminum Titanium Nitride (AlTiN)-coated steel. Studies presumably indicate this coating is consistently harder, smoother and sticks less when compared with gold-colored titanium coatings.

Cleaning and Sterilizing
All methods are supposed to be acceptable, but our test shows scratches caused by ultrasonic cleaner.

Shapes
TNCIGFT1 (#1 Goldstein Flexi-Thin) Paddle end in line with handle, larger than IPC and too large for most evaluators. Rounded condenser end good medium size but 135º angle of tip to handle makes it awkward to manipulate composite in limited access proximal boxes. A 90º angle makes it much easier to compress composite in proximal boxes. One evaluator suggested the condenser end be the shape of a flat-tipped cone for better condensation against cavity walls.
TNCIGFT2 (#2 Goldstein Flexi-Thin) Similar to CIGFT1, but larger.
TNCIGFT3 (#3 Goldstein Flexi-Thin) Similar to an IPC in that it has two paddle ends. However, its ends are significantly larger than those of an IPC.
TNCIGFT4 (#4 Goldstein Flexi-Thin) Large, double-paddle ends with blades at offset angles, good for contouring difficult-to-access areas.
TNCIGFTMIN1 (#1 Mini Goldstein Flexi-Thin) Mini version of TNCIGFT1.
TNCIGFTMIN3 (#3 Mini Goldstein Flexi-Thin) Mini version of TNCIGFT3.
TNCIGFTMIN4 (#4 Mini Goldstein Flexi-Thin) Mini version of TNCIGFT4.
The Ratings

TNCVIPC Classic IPC with two paddle ends, one aligned with the handle and one facing the handle.

TNCIPCL Medium paddle aligned with the handle and with an almost right-angled bend on one end and a small round burnisher on the other end.

TNCIPCM Mini version of the TNCIPCM.

TNCIPCS Micro version of the TNCIPCM.


TNPFIAB1 (#1 Boghosian Filling Instrument) Angled paddle on one end and long, flat pointed paddle on the other end.

TNPFIAB2 (#2 Boghosian Filling Instrument) Tapered flat-ended plunger with 2mm markings to measure posterior increment thicknesses. Other end is a fine, rounded-end needle for sculpting grooves and fossae.

TNPFIW3 (#WE DE Plastic Filling Instrument) Almost a clone of the #1, but the paddle end is wider and shorter.

TNBB27/29 (#27/29 DE Burnisher) Burnisher with small round and medium full acorn-like ends.

TNPCCI (Duckhead) Burnisher with medium and large full acorn-like ends with extra long points on the acorns.

TNCFIS/M Plunger with small and large oval-shaped ends.

TNCFIM/L Same as the TNCFIS/M, but with larger ends.

TNFCIS Plunger with small and medium rounded and tapered ends.

TNBB21B (#21B DE Burnisher) Burnisher with half acorn-like ends.

TNBBL2 (Ladmore #2) Small and medium rounded condenser ends, but 135º angle of tip to handle makes it awkward to manipulate composite in limited access proximal boxes.

TNBBL3 (Ladmore #3) Small and medium rounded condenser ends, but angles of tip to handle are closer to 90º, giving much better access into proximal boxes.

TNCCIA (Goldfogel #1) Straight and angled large paddles in straight line with handle, except one end has a slight bend.

TNCCIB (Goldfogel #2) Straight and angled large paddles in straight line with handle, except one end has a double bend.

TNCCIC (Goldfogel #3) Two angled large paddles in straight line with handle.

TNCCID (Goldfogel #4) Straight and angled large paddles in straight line with handle.

TNCCIE (Goldfogel #5) Medium and large spoon-like ends in straight line with handle.

TNCCIF (Goldfogel #6) Medium and large elongated and angled spoon-like ends in straight line with handle.

TNPLG5A Plunger with small and medium tapered and flattened ends.

TNPLG0T Plunger with small and medium diamond-shaped and flattened ends.

TNPLGH3 Plunger with medium rectangular-shaped and flattened ends, one aligned with the handle and at right-angle to the handle.

Packaging

Each instrument is in its own sealed, tamper-proof, plastic pack. One side is white opaque plastic with the instrument’s identification and a perforated area that, if broken, will alert you the instrument has been handled. The other side is clear plastic that gives you immediate view of the instrument. The anterior and posterior kits come in sealed plastic trays.

Directions

The anterior and posterior kits have coated paper foldouts that briefly describe the intended purpose of the instruments. There are no specific directions for single instruments other than the brochure, which has pictures and descriptions of each instrument, including a summary of its suggested uses.
**Description**

Double-ended, very high polish, six designed for posterior use while six are for anterior use. Handles are round, 6.6mm in diameter, and have a herringbone pattern near the ends for better gripping.

**Composition**

Stainless steel with titanium-coated tips.

**Cleaning and Sterilizing**

Ultrasonic cleaner is okay if you only put one instrument in at a time, but instrument against instrument contact could damage coating. Our test, however, shows these instruments are quite durable. Autoclavable.

**Shapes**

**Six Anterior Instruments**

- **8A** Conventional shape, short blades.
- **8A-L** Same as 8A, but longer blades.
- **BBA** Similar to 8A, but wider blades.

**Six Posterior Instruments**

- **M-1** Double-ended ball burnisher with small and medium ends.
- **26-30** Double-ended burnisher with large ball and large egg shape.
- **SP1** Double-ended pluggers with small and medium ends. On each end opposite the working face of the pluggers is a ball burnisher and pointed burnisher for grooves.
- **SP2** Similar to SP1 with larger pluggers and burnishers.
- **POCL** Double-ended, both ends pointed to sculpt secondary and tertiary anatomy. One end is slightly convex while the other end is slightly concave to aid in simulating natural contours of incline planes and cusp tips.
- **POCS** Same as POCL, but smaller.

**Two instruments not included in either set**

- **IPC OA-S** Off angle short IPC.
- **IPC OA-L** Off angle long IPC.

**Packaging**

Each instrument comes in a conventional white heavy paper envelope with an identification sticker. There is also a warning sticker on the envelope concerning cleaning them in an ultrasonic cleaner.

**Directions**

No specific directions.
Titanium Nitride Composite Placement Instruments

Brasseler

Cost: $19.99-$28.50/instrument

RAVES & RANTS

- Three different handles to choose from
- Some shapes are unique
- Not as highly polished as others
- Plugger ends are too obtuse for limited access proximal boxes

Description

Double-ended, medium polish. All of the handles are round, but six are 6.5mm in diameter, seven are 7.9mm in diameter, and eight are 9.5mm in diameter. All the round-handled instruments have a herringbone pattern near the ends for better gripping.

Composition

Ends are titanium coated. Handles are stainless steel. One evaluator thought the handles were heavy and thick, while another really liked them.

Cleaning and Sterilizing

Ultrasonic cleaner is acceptable (confirmed by our test). Autoclavable.

Shapes

Eight (with 9.5mm handle)

6.5mm handle

TIN L-R  Looks like an IPC with blades curved left or right. Good for embrasures, since the curves more nearly mimic the contours of proximal surfaces. Learning curve to use it, but can be very useful once you get the hang of it.

TIN ISOS  Similar to the L-R with curved, flat ends. But with this instrument, the ends are at right-angles to the shaft. This means that the face of the blade will be toward you on one end (good for distal embrasures on posterior teeth) and away from you on the other (good for Class V).

TIN IPC  Classic shape with long, thin blades. Best of the group.

TIN DILLY  Rounded cone-shaped plugger for posterior composites. Rather thin for packable composites.

TIN PF 9  Flat blade typical of a PFI plus spatula.

TIN PF 3  Flat blade typical of a PFI plus small, flat-ended plugger.

7.9mm handle

TIN ISOS/4  Same as the thinner handled version.

TIN L-R/4  Same as the thinner handled version.

TIN BRDILLY/4  Same as the thinner handled version.

TIN PF3/4  Same as the thinner handled version.

TIN PF9/4  Same as the thinner handled version.

TIN IPC/4  Same as the thinner handled version.

TIN 20/4  Flat-ended paddle aligned with handle and medium, rounded-end plugger, but angle is quite obtuse, which makes it difficult to get into proximal boxes.

9.5mm handle

TIN PCS/6  Flat blade at right-angle to the shaft on one end and acorn burnisher on the other.

TIN PF9/6  Same as the thinner handled version.

TIN 20/6  Same as the thinner handled version.

TIN PF3/6  Same as the thinner handled version.

TIN ISOS/6  Same as the thinner handled version.

TIN L-R/6  Same as the thinner handled version.

TIN BRDILLY/6  Same as the thinner handled version.

TIN IPC/6  Same as the thinner handled version.

Packaging

The instruments with the 6.5mm handle come in an unsealed vinyl sleeve, white opaque on one side and clear on the other. The instruments with the 7.9mm handle come in a clear plastic tube except one in an unsealed vinyl sleeve, blue opaque on one side and clear on the other. The instruments with the 9.5mm handle come in a sealed clear plastic sleeve with a cardboard insert identifying the instrument.

Directions

None.

Composite Placement and Contouring Instruments

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**Description**
Double-ended, medium polish. Handles are round, 9.4mm in diameter, and have a herringbone pattern near the ends for better gripping.

**Composition**
Ends are titanium nitride coated. Handles are stainless steel.

**Cleaning and Sterilizing**
Ultrasonic cleaner is supposed to be acceptable (our test showed slight deterioration). Autoclavable.

---

**Shapes**

*Nine*
- **Contura**  Looks like an IPC with blades curved left or right. Good for embrasures, since the curves more nearly mimic the contours of proximal surfaces. Learning curve to use it, but can be very useful once you get the hang of it.
- **Interproximal Trimmer IPT**  Similar to Contura, but shafts have a double angle for difficult-to-access areas.
- **Flex Carver H3/H4**  Similar to an IPC.
- **Micro Plugger 0.9/1.3**  Small and very small rounded condenser ends, but 135° angle of tip to handle makes it awkward to manipulate composite in limited access proximal boxes.
- **Maxi Plugger 2.5/3.0**  Large and very large rounded condenser ends, but 135° angle of tip to handle makes it awkward to manipulate composite in limited access proximal boxes.
- **Magnum Plugger 1/2**  Small and medium flat-ended condenser ends, but 135° angle of tip to handle makes it awkward to manipulate composite in limited access proximal boxes.
- **Proxima Plugger**  Small and medium oval flat-ended condenser ends, but 135° angle of tip to handle makes it awkward to manipulate composite in limited access proximal boxes.
- **Fossa**  Burnisher with small and medium full acorn-like ends.
- **Power Carver PFI**  Classic PFI with large blades.

**Packaging**
Clear plastic tube with unsealed red plastic cap.

**Directions**
None.
Composite Hand Instrument Kit
Brasseler

Cost: $185.00
Includes:
• 4 titanium-coated instruments ($19.99 ea)
• 3 black aluminum instruments ($19.99 ea)
• Stainless steel instrument cassette

Shapes
Seven

Titanium
ATIN PCS  Flat blade at right-angle to the shaft on one end and acorn burnisher on the other, which was considered too large for many restorations.
BR DILLY  Rounded cone-shaped plugger for posterior composites. Rather thin for packable composites.
TIN PF 9  Flat blade typical of a PFI plus spatula, which was not utilized very much.
TIN L-R  Looks like an IPC with blades curved left or right. Good for embrasures, since the curves more nearly mimic the contours of proximal surfaces. Learning curve to use it, but can be very useful once you get the hang of it. The favorite of most evaluators.

Aluminum
F1  Flat blade typical of a PFI plus small, flat-ended plugger triangular in cross-section.
F4  Classic PFI.
F5  Flat blade typical of a PFI plus medium plugger.

Packaging
Stainless steel cassette with section in the center that secures instruments during cleaning and sterilizing. Numbers of instruments are etched into the base of the cassette for help in consistently reloading it.

Directions
None.

Description
Double-ended, medium polish. All the handles are round, but the four steel are 6.6mm (3) or 7.9mm (1) in diameter, while the other three aluminum are 6.5mm in diameter. All instruments have a herringbone pattern near the ends for better gripping.

Composition
Titanium coated ends with stainless steel handles or black anodized aluminum.

Cleaning and Sterilizing
Ultrasonic cleaner is supposed to be acceptable, but our tests show some deterioration. Autoclavable.

Before
After
Description
Double-ended with interchangeable tips that screw into a unique handle, which has an elongated hour-glass shape and is covered with a flexible, silicone rubber with raised bumps to make it slip-resistant. A small wrench is necessary to loosen and tighten the ends when they are changed. The rubber covering on the handles comes in 12 colors.

Composition and Specifications
Handle: Medical grade, latex-free silicone coating with a stainless steel core.
Tips: Stainless steel.

Cleaning and Sterilizing
Ultrasonic cleaning is acceptable for no more than 10 minutes, but there is a warning that the tips and handles may be damaged by contact with other instruments. Our test showed ultrasonic cleaning can damage the surface finish of these instruments. Autoclavable.

Shapes and Handle Color
20 (The following combinations of tips and handles are the way the manufacturer packages them. Therefore, this list is for informational purposes only. Since the tips and handles can be ordered a la carte, you can choose any combinations that fit your needs. Besides the pre-assembled instrument numbers, each end has its own alphanumeric code that you need loupes to read. We have listed the codes parenthetically after its description. Most of these codes, however, have inexplicably been changed from our initial evaluation samples to those we received more recently. Therefore, if the codes stamped on your tips do not match those listed below, that’s the reason. The handle colors are supposed to indicate how the instrument would be used. For example, tips for anterior restorations are presumably mounted on dark grey handles, while those for posterior are on dark blue handles.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Ends</th>
<th>Handle Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Flat end (2A-H4), small, rounded-end plugger (2B-H4)</td>
<td>Dark blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W3</td>
<td>Flat end (PFI W3A-C4), small, rounded-end plugger (PFI W3B-C4)</td>
<td>Dark blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Similar but slightly smaller ends than 2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3S</td>
<td>Hollenback on both, one parallel (HOL 35A-B4), one perpendicular to handle (HOL 35B-A4)</td>
<td>Light grey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explorer</td>
<td>Sickle (EXP 23-B4), small hook (EXP 17-B4)</td>
<td>Light grey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirror</td>
<td>#5 (C-SKT-H2), blank</td>
<td>Light blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Flat ends on both, one parallel (COMP-3A-H4), one perpendicular to handle (COMP-3B-F4)</td>
<td>Dark grey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Long, flat, angled ends on both, (COMP 4A-E4 &amp; COMP 4B-E4)</td>
<td>Dark grey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8A</td>
<td>Small flat ends on both, one parallel (PFI 8A-A-C4), one perpendicular to handle (PFI 8A-B-C4)</td>
<td>Dark grey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnisher</td>
<td>Egg (BUR-29-B4), small round (BUR-27-B4)</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnisher</td>
<td>Small acorn (BUR-21BA-B4), medium acorn (BUR-21BB-B4)</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(218)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/3</td>
<td>Cleoid (CLE 6-E4), discoid (DIS 3-E4)</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Small, flat-ended plugger (PLUG 2A-C4), large, flat-ended plugger (PLUG 2B-C4)</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Changing the tips
Using the supplied wrench, unscrew one end, the action of which will also loosen the opposite end. However, these tips are very tight when the instruments come from the manufacturer—loosening them is not easy. Once the tip is loose, the bar that traverses the center of the handle also comes out. The ends of this metal bar are actually threaded and it is onto these threads that the tips are secured.
**Composite Placement and Contouring Instruments**

**Packaging**
Clear molded plastic, pull-apart case sealed for safety. Instruments are identified by a cardboard insert.

**Directions**
Small folded piece of coated paper. Covers attaching tips and cleaning/sterilization. Assumes you will know how to use the instruments. Font used is tiny—you literally need loupes to read them.

---

**Composite Instruments**

Coltene/Whaledent

Cost: $28.92/instrument

**RAVES & RANTS**

- Different handles to choose from
- Plugger allows good access into proximal boxes
- Some are not highly polished
- Sleeves were not sealed

**Description**
Double-ended, medium-high polish. Six of the handles are round, but three are 5.7mm in diameter, while the other three are 8.2mm in diameter. All the round-handled instruments have a herring-bone pattern near the ends for better gripping. Two instruments have a hexagonal cross-section with very fine serrations and a diameter of 5.6mm.

**Composition**
Ends are titanium nitride coated. Handles are stainless steel.

**Cleaning and Sterilizing**
Ultrasonic cleaner is acceptable (confirmed by our test). Autoclavable.

**Shapes**

**Eight**

7932 Similar to an IPC with two paddle ends, one aligned with the handle and one facing the handle, but ends are much shorter than a typical IPC.
7933 Classic IPC.
7934 Both ends are long, flattened, and curved for good access into posterior embrasures.
7935 Small and very small, tapered and rounded-end for defining grooves and fossae. Very small end has a unique double bend resulting in a right-angled configuration.
7936 Small, rounded-end plugger on one end, small round on the other end. Angle on plugger almost 90°, allowing for easy access into proximal boxes.
7937 Small and medium pluggers with flat ends.
7953 Small and medium round ends. Handle is hexagonal instead of round and the titanium coating is dull instead of shiny.
7956 Almost identical to 7935, except the ends are slightly shorter, the handle is hexagonal instead of round, and the titanium coating is dull instead of shiny.

**Packaging**
Unsealed clear plastic sleeves with cardboard insert identifying instrument.

**Directions**
None.
Description
Double-ended. All the handles are round, are 6.5mm in diameter, and have a herringbone pattern near the ends for better gripping.

Composition
Black anodized aluminum.

Cleaning and Sterilizing
Any method is acceptable (confirmed by our test), but do not use phenols, iodophors, or solutions with a pH > 8. Autoclavable.

Shapes
Seven
CMI 21B Medium and large acorn-like burnisher.
CMI BLK 1-2 Small and large flat-ended plugger.
CMI 1 Small PFI-type blade aligned with handle and small round-ended plugger triangular in cross-section.
CMI 2 Classic PFI.
CMI 3 Medium blade aligned with handle and medium, round-ended plugger.
CMI 4 Virtually identical to #3, except blade is slightly thinner.
CMI 5 Virtually identical to #4, except both ends are smaller.

Packaging
Sealed clear plastic case with a cardboard bottom providing the instrument identification.

Directions
None.

If you prefer stainless steel and want to buy a kit with a variety of well-made instruments already selected, the Goldstein Flexi-Thins would be a good choice. They are well-balanced with good finger grips, although one evaluator preferred thicker handles. Within the group, the Mini shapes were preferred over the regular sizes. One evaluator found the Mini #3 and #4 ideal for packing cord. However, the angles of the condenser ends are not ideal and the blades of several instruments are too large.

XTS Composite Placement Instruments, with their thicker, satin-like silver finish handles, and black, titanium-coated tips, certainly look the coolest in this group. While the selection of shapes is the best in this category, there is plenty of redundancy, especially when you compare them to the Flexi-Thins. On the other hand, they do live up to no-stick billing for the most part. With the incorporation of many of the high-rated designs such as Goldfogel into this line-up, you would be hard-pressed not to find instruments to meet your needs.
Composite Placement Instruments, with their excellent variety of shapes, makes this the set of choice. Their high quality is evident with the highest polish in this category. You can do just about any type of restoration with this set.

Titanium Nitride Composite Placement Instruments (Brasseler) offer three different types of handles and an adequate selection. However, their surface does not quite match the higher rated instruments and the angles on the pluggers is too obtuse for limited access proximal boxes.

Titanium Nitride Composite Placement Instruments (Bisco) offer nine different shapes, with the micro-sized versions especially indicated for minimally invasive preps. However, the surface finish only has a medium shine, there is no thin IPC, and the handles only come in the thick profile.

Composite Hand Instrument Kit organizes seven instruments into a concise kit with a cassette that can go directly into the autoclave. The instruments that come with the kit are a somewhat strange mix of titanium-coated and black anodized aluminum. The IPC, for example, is aluminum and is not as thin as a comparable version in stainless steel, coated or not. You will probably not use the aluminum instruments as much as the stainless steel versions (although two evaluator preferred them, with one especially favoring the F4 and paddle end of the F5) and you may want to substitute your own selection of instruments, merely using the cassette for organization. The instrument identification numbers are also very hard to read, especially on the aluminum versions.

The concept behind Flexichange Restorative instruments is sound and logical—provide a comfortable handle that is already color-coded and allow us to attach the tips that are most useful for us. This flexibility should minimize the number of instruments we need to buy and should eliminate having to replace an entire instrument if one end breaks—just order the tip you need, attach it to the handle and you’re back in business.

The silicone rubber-coated handle also makes a lot of sense regarding comfort and increased tactile sensation with a slightly oversized profile along with the slip-resistant nubs on the surface. This design could also decrease the pressure needed for you to hold the instrument and may contribute to a decrease in repetitive use problems. It will be interesting to see the long-term durability of the soft grip after repeated autoclaving.

However, the tips are difficult to remove initially from the handles and they do not have a non-stick coating, although they do resist composite sticking to them reasonably well (about the same as other stainless steel instruments). One evaluator found the raised nubs not necessary and annoying, while making it more difficult to clean the handles, especially if you are using them with a zinc oxide-containing paste or glass ionomer cement. Another thought the handles felt somewhat “sticky”. A third evaluator just preferred a more conventional metal handle.

In addition, the IPC blades are too thick and the mirror is not front surface, causing its images to appear slightly distorted. Most evaluators thought the tip selection was adequate, but not exemplary. More shapes and better angles were requested.

Composite Instruments give you a choice of handles and an adequate selection, including a properly angled plunger for difficult to access proximal boxes. However, some of the instruments do not have a high polish.

Composite Manipulation Instruments have been basic workhorses in treatment rooms for many years. While they won’t dazzle you with high-tech technology, their performance has been well-established. They also have a very smooth surface.