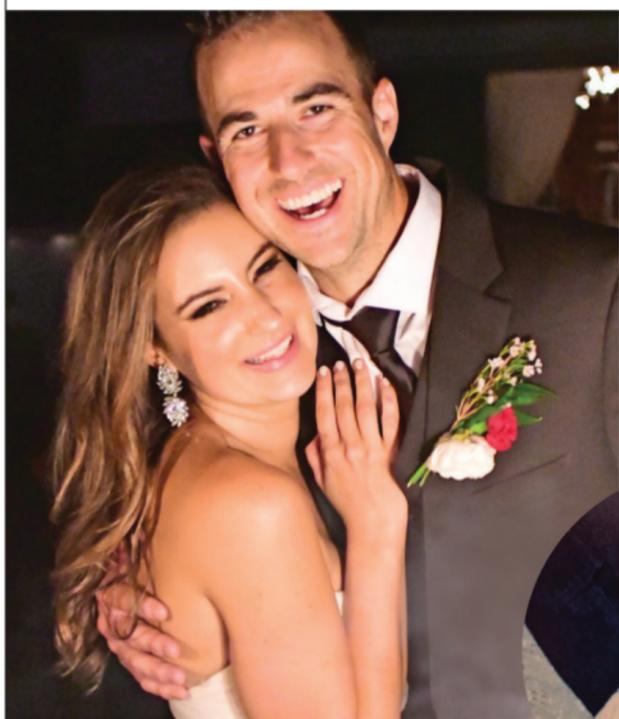


# Big Smiles

My teeth journey started when I was young. I was an avid thumb-sucker and ended up with bucked, gapped teeth. In elementary school, I got the works from Dr. Dudas: top and bottom braces; an expander (my only memory from a Disney vacation was lying on the hotel bed and wincing as my mom turned it); and a Herbst, a metal contraption that connects the top and bottom teeth. After a few years, the braces came off—oh, boy, did I flash a big smile in all my high school pics. In college, I got lazy about wearing my retainers and my bottom teeth shifted. Now, at 36, I'm embarking on yet another treatment. Along with whitening services and pre-wedding lip filler, I've put a lot of effort into my mouth. But it seems like a good place to invest, right? If you aren't confident with yours, here is what's helping me fall back in love with my smile.



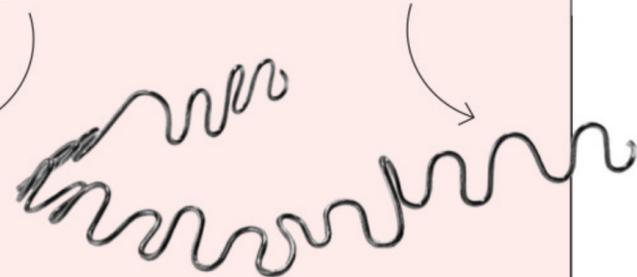
Heather

BEAUTY DIRECTOR



Rockin' my gapped-tooth grin

This wire moves teeth into place



After debating straightening options, I landed on InBrace ([inbrace.com](http://inbrace.com)), a treatment where a customized Smartwire (shown above)—made from computer modeling and AI technology—is adhered to superslim brackets and placed behind your teeth; the hidden wire gently moves your teeth into place. The installation was a piece of cake (thank you, Dr. Zeifman!) and took less than 30 minutes. I'm a month in, and so far I have six brackets on my bottom teeth to correct my crowding. Dr. Z. said we'll add more as we go, though follow-up appointments are minimal, which works with my busy schedule. The initial two weeks were an adjustment. Because your tongue rests against the brackets, I had to work on talking (I had a subtle lisp that is almost gone) and eating, and I battled some canker sores. But your tongue *does* adjust, and now I'm more comfortable. I love that they're behind my teeth so no one can see them. And I'm starting to see a difference—talk about motivation! How long you wear them is different for every person (the average is 8 to 18 months), but I'm hoping to wear mine for less than a year. The cost varies per orthodontist but is typically around \$6,000. Here are some tools that have made the process easier for me.

**Waterpik Sonic-Fusion 2.0 Professional Flossing Toothbrush** (\$200; [waterpik.com](http://waterpik.com))

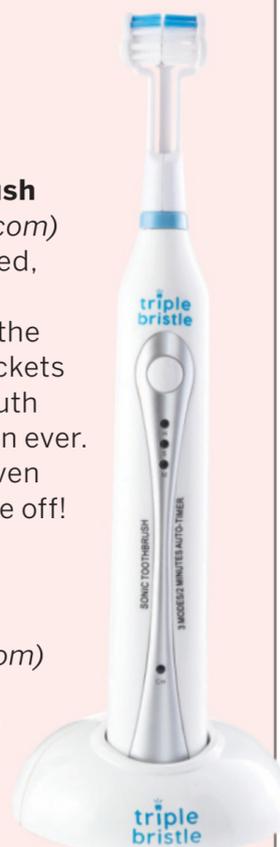
Regular flossing is tough with any kind of braces; this brushing-flossing hybrid tool gets into the places that are hard to reach, like deep between teeth and below the gumline. You choose between three cleaning modes: brush, floss, or both.

My cute-turned-costly habit



**Triple Bristle Original Sonic Electric Toothbrush**

(\$70; [triplebristle.com](http://triplebristle.com)) This dentist-created, three-sided sonic brush gets out all the gunk from the brackets and leaves my mouth feeling cleaner than ever. I plan on using it even after my braces are off!



**CVS Orthodontic Wax** (\$3.20; [cvs.com](http://cvs.com))

I pop it onto any sharp spots to give my tongue some relief, especially overnight.

