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Dr. Scherer is an assistant clinical professor at Loma Linda University, a clinical instructor at University of Nevada – Las Vegas, and maintains a practice limited to prosthodontics and implant dentistry in Sonora, CA. He is a fellow of the American College of Prosthodontists, has published articles, books, and in-person and online courses related to implant dentistry, clinical prosthodontics, and digital technology with a special emphasis on full-arch reconstruction. As an avid technology and computer hobbyist, Dr. Scherer's involvement in digital implant dentistry has led him to develop and pioneer new approaches with 3D printing and CAD/CAM surgical systems, implement interactive CBCT implant planning, and radiographic imaging and digital design concepts. Visit michaelscherermd.com.

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R5 Automated Milling Machine

5-axis, open-system milling unit with automatic changer can process up to 10 discs or 60 blocks nonstop and unattended—day or night



Fast, good, and cheap. Although the well-known maxim states that you can only have two of those qualities, Dr. Michael Scherer—an expert on dental implants, dentures, and digital technology—would have to disagree. In his search for a fast and affordable unit that would mill both wet and dry using virtually any material, he stumbled upon the jackpot. Here, he shares why the R5 from vhf is a no-compromise milling and grinding workhorse has made his practice life easier while saving a precious resource: time.

When I came into practice after my prosthodontics residency, I knew right away that I wanted to integrate a milling workflow in my office. I was worried, however, about being held back by a mill that could only process tiny (and more expensive) ceramic blocks. Ultimately, I wanted a machine that was open and flexible, but that wouldn't break the bank.

I knew vhf had a stellar reputation in dentistry for making high-quality, German-engineered mills that were precise and accurate, yet reasonably priced. Once I mastered milling crowns, full-arch zirconia bridges, polymer frameworks, and basic implant bars with vhf's K5 dry milling unit, I started to feel the itch to do more wet milling so I could make, for example, custom abutments out of titanium for my implant cases or same-day lithium disilicate crowns.

The R5 milling and grinding machine stood out to me right away because not only does it mill both discs and blocks, which is a huge plus in itself, but it does both wet and dry milling and features a 10-disc changer. In the past, if I needed to change materials, I would need to open the lid, unscrew the disc manually, clean out and vacuum the chamber, and switch over—which took about 10 minutes each time. With the disc changer on the R5, I can literally load up 10 different discs, and the mill is intelligent enough to grab the disc and load it into the milling chamber without me needing to screw it down.

The 'X' Factor

This past week, I milled about 30 discs of material. Without the R5, I would have spent nearly 5 hours manually changing those discs, coming into the office after-hours and even over the weekend just to switch out the materials. Now, I program the R5 at the end of the day and run it overnight. Last night, for example, I milled 6 discs total—5 for denture arches and 1 for crown-and-bridge—and when I came in the following morning, the discs were waiting for me in the disc holder.

Milling overnight minimizes electrical expenses as well as the taxing effect on my air compressors. Instead of having to run a handpiece and my mill at the same time on the compressor, it's all done after hours—calmly, easily, and efficiently.

Adopting this milling and grinding unit has been such an incredible change for me. I would have never thought that making the jump toward a serious, top-tier machine like the R5 would make such a difference—but so far, it's made all the difference in the world.

