

Attaching and Removing a Scalpel Blade



Disclaimer

A series of booklets has been developed by the Clinical Skills Lab team (staff, recent graduates and students) from the School of Veterinary Sciences, University of Bristol, UK. Please note:

- Each booklet illustrates one way to perform a skill and it is acknowledged that there are often other approaches. Before using the booklets students should check with their university or college whether the approach illustrated is acceptable in their context or whether an alternative method should be used.
- The booklets are made available in good faith and may be subject to changes.
- In using these booklets you must adopt safe working procedures and take your own risk assessments, checked by your university, college etc. The University of Bristol will not be liable for any loss or damage resulting from failure to adhere to such practices.

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Year Group: All



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Equipment list: Scalpel Blade

Equipment for this station:

- Scalpel blade
- Scalpel handle (holder)
- Forceps
- Sharps bin

Considerations for this station:

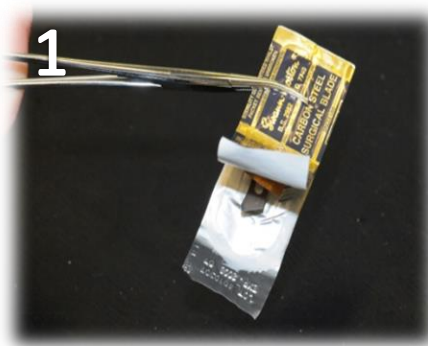
- Be careful when handling sharps; never direct the blade towards yourself or others
- Ensure sharps are disposed of in a sharps bin
- For more information please refer to General risk assessment form 'Scalpel blades CSL_R02' (in the CSL)

Anyone working in the Clinical Skills Lab must read the 'CSL_I01 Induction' and agree to abide by the 'CSL_I00 House Rules' & 'CSL_I02 Lab Area Rules'

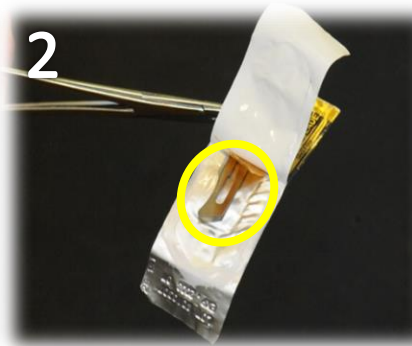
Please inform a member of staff if equipment is damaged or about to run out.



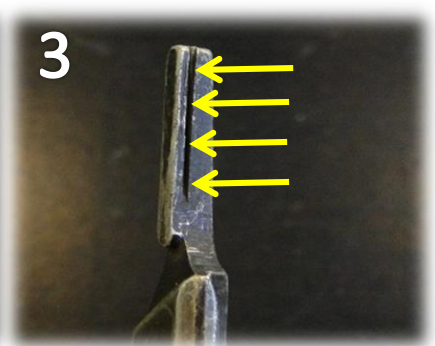
Clinical Skills: Attaching a Scalpel Blade



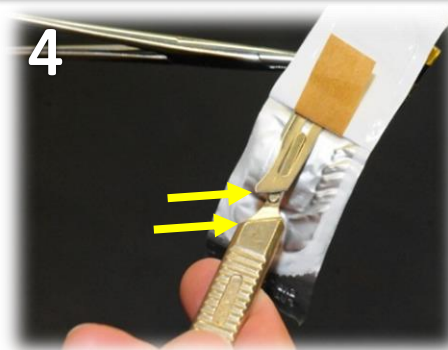
1
Open the scalpel packet by peeling the flaps apart. Hold the blade within the packet (as shown) with forceps (use artery or tissue forceps, do not use rat-toothed forceps). If working aseptically, the blade may have been emptied from the packet (e.g. onto a sterile drape); in this case use forceps to grasp the blade directly.



2
Ensure the packet is open enough so that the slot to attach the handle is visible (circled in yellow).

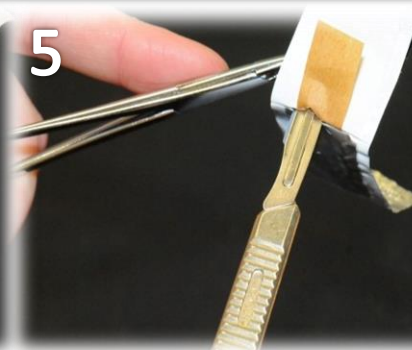


3
There is a groove around the tip of the scalpel handle, in which the blade sits.



4
Ensure that the blade and scalpel holder are the correct way round by checking that the diagonal lines (on the handle and the end of blade, yellow arrows) are parallel.

Push the tip of the handle into the hole in the blade, then slide the handle forward to fit the blade into the groove.



5
The blade should be firmly and neatly attached to the handle – do not check this with your fingers!

Remove the blade from the package.

TIP: Make sure that the size of the scalpel blade and handle are the same – particularly important if going on a visit as there may not be a spare one to hand!



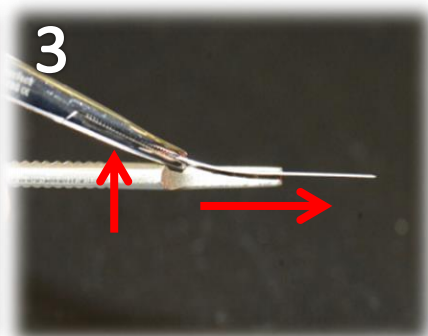
Clinical Skills: Removing a Scalpel Blade



1
Use artery forceps or needle holders to grasp the end of the blade nearest the handle on the blunt edge.



2
Lift up the blade, bending it slightly (while being careful not to snap the blade) and slide it forward and off the handle, always pointing away from you *and* others.



3
This is an enlarged image with arrows illustrating the movements in step 2.



4
The blade is moved forward and free from (off) the handle.



5
Dispose of the blade in a sharps bin.

Do not leave the blade lying around in a surgical pack or anywhere else; it is your responsibility to dispose of the blade safely.



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Resetting the station: Scalpel Blade

1. Remove the blade from the scalpel handle
2. Dispose of blade in a sharps bin
3. Leave all instruments tidily in a tray

Station ready for the next person:



Please inform a member of staff if equipment is damaged or about to run out.