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The Joystick Technique for Lateral Sesamoidectomy: Technique Tip

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INTRODUCTION

Once sesamoidectomy is indicated due to arthrosis, sesamoiditis, pseudarthrosis, or any other reason, the most adequate approach must be decided. The plantar approach is undoubtedly the most direct; however, the risk of scarring, with residual pain, restricts its wide use. The medial approach (the same used for hallux valgus correction) requires a large incision, with wide joint exposure.

The dorsal approach carries a low risk of scarring and, usually requires a small incision. However, the access to the lateral sesamoid bone is difficult because of its depth within the surgical field, especially in patients whose sesamoid is not subluxed; that is, in the absence of hallux valgus.¹ In those patients, the technique described here makes the lateral sesamoid exposure and removal, and closing the gap left by sesamoidectomy, easier.

OPERATIVE TECHNIQUE

A 1.5-cm long incision is dorsally placed on the first intermetatarsal space. Through blunt dissection, and protecting the terminal branches of the deep peroneal nerve, the lateral joint capsule is longitudinally incised, and the lateral sesamoid is exposed. A 3-mm diameter Kirschner wire is introduced through the incision, transfixing the lateral sesamoid (Figure 1). The use of a bone spreader retractor further facilitates the exposure. The Kirschner wire works as a joystick and facilitates control of the lateral sesamoid, which is pulled laterally so that an absorbable suture (#1 vicryl) can be passed around the wire. The lateral sesamoid is then carefully dissected and, after its removal, the vicryl ends are tied, promoting the gap closure.

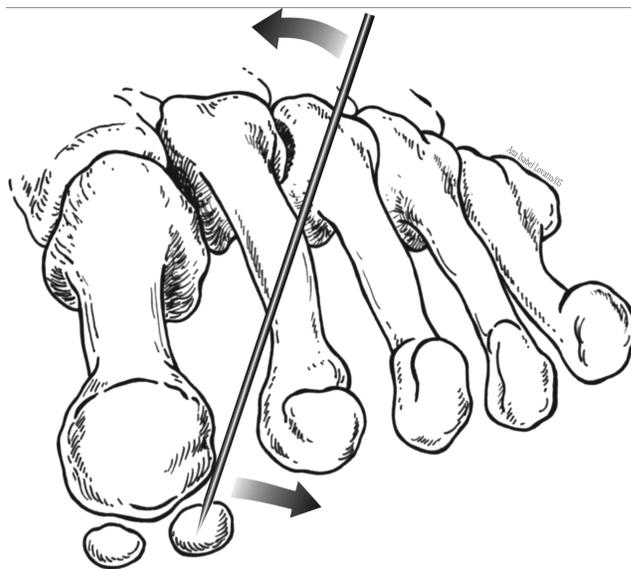


Fig. 1: Kirschner wire is used as a joystick for removal of the lateral sesamoid.

The subcutaneous tissue and skin are closed. Excessive sesamoid fragmentation often complicates fixation and other alternatives should be considered.

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1. **Trevino, SG:** Disorders of the Hallucal Sesamoids. In *Foot and Ankle Disorders*, 1st edition, Myerson (ed.), W B Saunders Co, Baltimore, pp. 391–392, 2000.

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