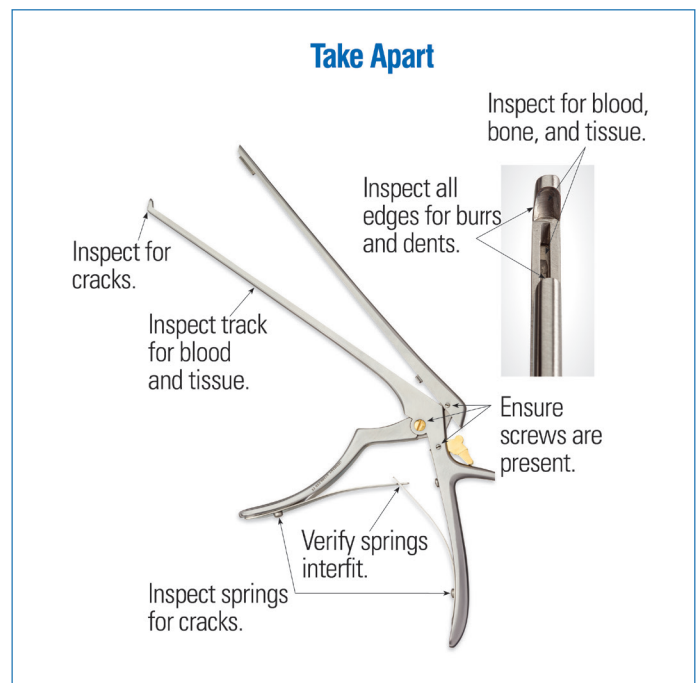
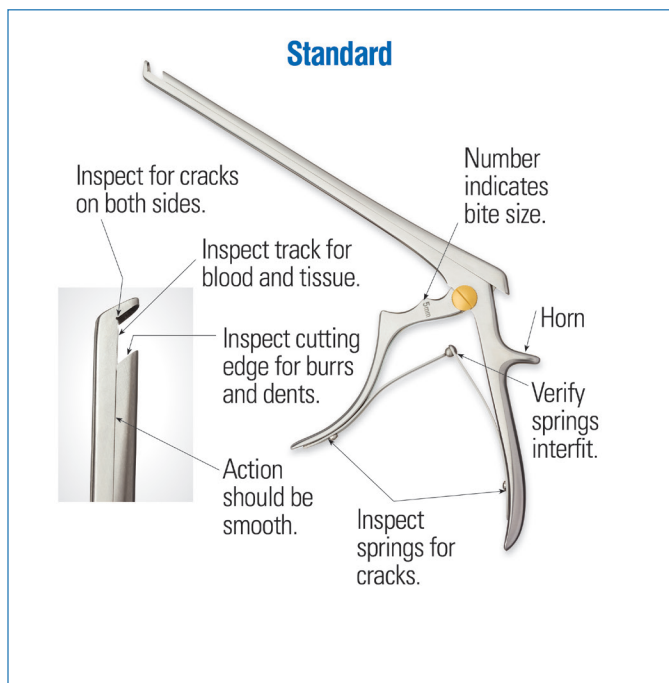




Testing and Sharpening: Kerrison Rongeurs



BY RICK SCHULTZ



Kerrison rongeurs are used in neurological/spinal surgical procedures. The Kerrison rongeur is difficult to clean and must be sharpened every three to four months to keep the cutting action precise. There are two types of Kerrison rongeurs: standard and take apart.

What follows are some of the most frequently asked questions about Kerrison rongeurs:

Q: How is the sharpness of a Kerrison rongeur tested?

A: The Kerrison should take a clean bite out of one thickness of an index card or card stock.

Q: How often should a Kerrison set be sharpened?

A: A good benchmark is every three to four months; however, the most important factors are the number of uses and level of surgeon satisfaction. An instrument tracking system or knowledgeable repair company can help determine sharpening frequency.

Q: How is a Kerrison repaired if it is sticking?

A: A sticking Kerrison indicates that either dried blood is present in the track inside the instrument or the track is bent. Since standard Kerrisons cannot be disassembled in the department, a trained instrument repair vendor should take the instrument

apart and clean/high-speed buff the track, lubricate, sharpen, and reassemble it.

Q: Can a Kerrison go into an ultrasonic cleaner?

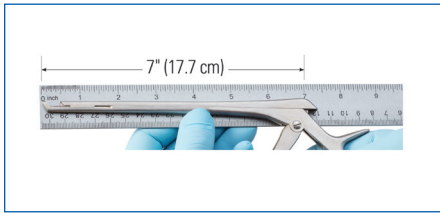
A: Yes. Ultrasonic cleaning can remove hidden blood, tissue and bone that can't be reached with manual cleaning, especially in non-take-apart designs.

Q: Should Kerrisons be kept in a rack?

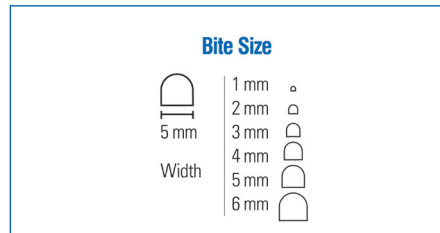
A: Yes. Placing Kerrisons in a sterilization rack/protective case not only organizes them according to size but also helps reduce damage and the need for repairs.

**Q: How is a Kerrison measured?**

A: The length is measured from the tip to the back of the top track. Common lengths are 7", 8" and 9".

**Q: What are the different bite sizes?**

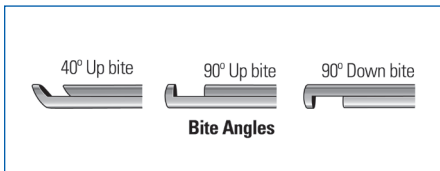
A: The common bite sizes are 1 mm to 6 mm. Bite size is the width, as measured across the tip of the instrument from the inside.

**Q: What is a bone-ejecting Kerrison?**

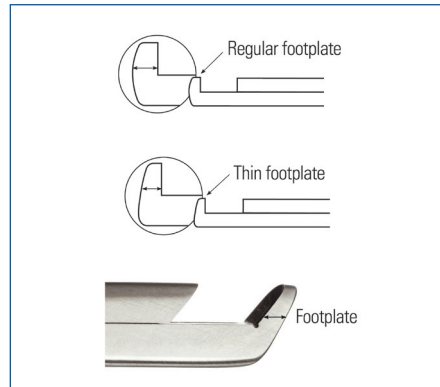
A: A bone-ejecting Kerrison has a pin in the jaw that pushes out/ejects bone to prevent clogging on the cutting edge. 

**Q: What do the angles refer to?**

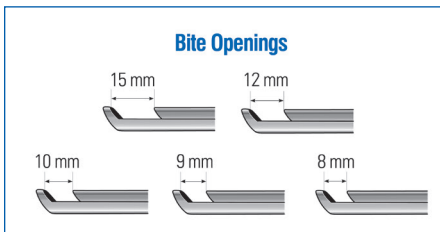
A: The angles refer to the distal tip bite on the jaws. The most common angles are 40° up bite, 90° up bite and 90° down bite.

**Q: What is a Kerrison footplate?**

A: The footplate is the very tip of the instrument. Depending on the procedure, a thin or regular, wider footplate may be required.

**Q: What is a bite opening on a Kerrison?**

A: The bite opening is the distance of the opening when the handle is released. Common openings range from 8 mm to 15 mm.



Q How do I get more accountability and billing accuracy from my repair vendor? I don't feel I'm getting my money's worth because they leave early and I don't see the invoice.

A The first thing is to require a copy of the invoice within three days of the repair service date. Secondly, you need to take control of which trays will be worked on during their onsite day. Finally, at the end of the day, have the repair technician meet with you briefly, giving you a summary (in detailed reports) of what work was done, which later, can be matched to an invoice.



RICK SCHULTZ, the Instrument Whisperer™, is an author, inventor, lecturer, and the retired Chief Executive Officer of Spectrum Surgical Instruments Corp. He served as contributing editor of IAHCMM's *Central Service Technical Manual* (fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth editions). Schultz authored the textbooks *Inspecting Surgical Instruments: An Illustrated Guide* and *The World of Surgical Instruments: The Definitive Inspection Textbook*, which was released in June 2018. In October 2021, Schultz published the veterinary medicine textbook *The World of Surgical Instruments for Animal Health*. Schultz was named IAHCMM's Educator of the Year in 2002 and the American Hospital Association Educator of the Year in 2006. In 2007, he was named by *Healthcare Purchasing News* as one of the 30 Most Influential People in Healthcare Sterile Processing. Schultz currently provides educational lectures to Sterile Processing professionals at IAHCMM's annual conferences and conducts Operating Room personnel lectures across the country.