



From Good to Great

Advanced Understanding and Care of Kerrison Rongeurs



BY RICK SCHULTZ

One of the most common instruments used in neurological/spinal surgery is the Kerrison rongeur. Spinal surgery is very complex, as is the Kerrison rongeur. The Kerrison is difficult to clean and needs to be sharpened every three to four months or as required by the surgeon. There are two basic types of Kerrison rongeurs: standard and take-apart designs. The advantage of a take-apart Kerrison is its ability to visualize and clean the track/shaft. In addition, the repair vendor has an extreme advantage of sharpening the distal cutting action of this instrument. *Note: Despite the advantages of using a take-apart Kerrison rongeur, a surgeon may still prefer the standard design.*

Read the following and then answer the five-question quiz to test your comprehension of the content and be entered for a chance to win a set of the author's Instrument Coaching Cards™. To submit your answers, see the instructions and QR code at the end of the quiz.

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 rongeur set be sharpened?

A: A good benchmark is every three to four months, but the most important factors are the number of uses and surgeon satisfaction. Asking a knowledgeable repair company can help determine the sharpening frequency.

Q: Can a Kerrison rongeur 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. Check the instructions for use (IFU).

Q: How is a Kerrison rongeur measured?

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

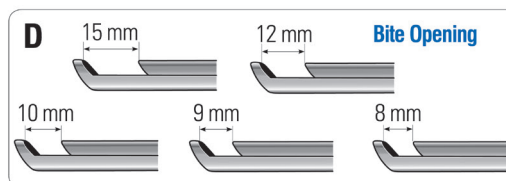
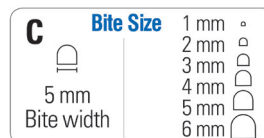
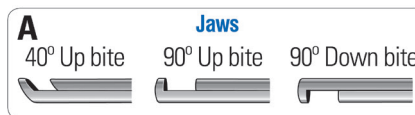
Q: Is a take-apart Kerrison rongeur better than a non-take-apart design?

A: Yes. Just as with laparoscopic instruments, a take-apart Kerrison design allows the instrument to be completely disassembled and cleaned more effectively. However, it is up to the surgeon to state their preference and approval.

Q: What is the bite opening on a Kerrison rongeur?

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

Kerrison Rongeur



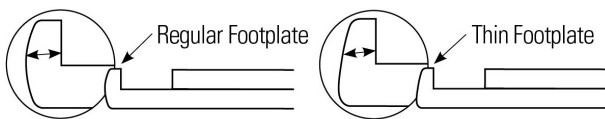


Q: What are the different bite sizes on a Kerrison rongeur?

A: Common bite sizes are 1 mm to 5 mm. Bite size is the width, as measured across the tip of the instrument from the inside.

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

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

Quiz

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Please answer the five true-and-false (T/F) questions.

1. There is only one type of footplate on all Kerrison rongeurs. T/F
2. The advantage of the take-apart Kerrison rongeur is that the instrument can be disassembled and cleaned more effectively. T/F
3. New technicians should learn to identify bite angles and bite size of all Kerrison rongeurs. T/F
4. Kerrison rongeurs should be sharpened three to four times a month.
5. A Kerrison rongeur cannot go into an ultrasonic cleaner.

Scan this QR code to submit your answers online. The deadline to submit is October 9, 2024. All participants' names will be entered into a drawing to win a set of Instrument Coaching Cards™. Good luck!



New Technician Training for Kerrison Rongeurs

When training new technicians about proper care and handling of Kerrison rongeurs, managers and supervisors should focus on:

1. Learning how to identify standard and take-apart Kerrison rongeurs
2. Learning how to take apart and reassemble take-apart Kerrison rongeurs
3. Teaching inspection points on a Kerrison rongeur
4. Learning how to measure the length of a Kerrison rongeur
5. Learning how to identify bite angles
6. Learning how to identify bite size
7. Learning how to test the sharpness of a Kerrison rongeur with an index card



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