

# Technical Section [ TECHNICAL NOTES AND TIPS

## Tape to view: novel technique to improve axillary access

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Access to the axilla for sentinel node biopsy can be difficult in larger-breasted ladies. We present a simple, inexpensive solution to aid access to the axilla. After standard positioning and preparation a Medline adhesive OP tape (Medline Industrial Ltd, Warrington) is used to retract the breast medially. The tape comes as standard in our draping set, but individually costs £0.50. Figures below demonstrate improved visibility with tape. Our technique avoids use of a metal retractor, which is a problem for the Senti-mag® (Endomagnetics, Cambridge) method of sentinel node biopsy localisation. Removal of the tape is atraumatic with no complications to date.



**Figure 1** Obscured axillary access.



**Figure 2** Unobstructed axillary access with tape retraction.

## Ergonomic handling of electric pen drill for passing K-wires

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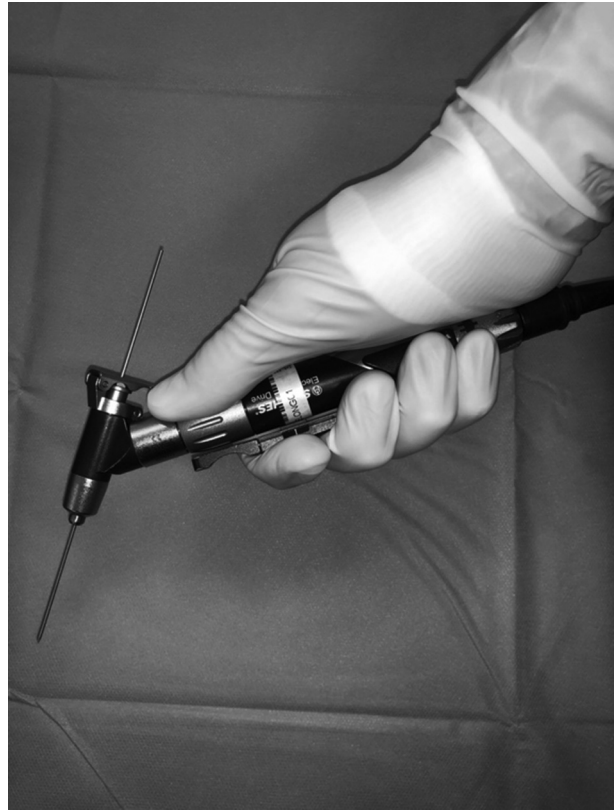
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The electric pen (e-pen) is popular for bony surgery. Although the e-pen is held like a pen for drilling, when passing Kirschner wires an oblique head is used and the trigger is often configured for thumb activation (Fig 1). This configuration is not ergonomic and unplanned activation may occur while loading and unloading wires. Controlling drill speed is also difficult.

If the e-pen is set up with the trigger away from the surgeon, the index finger can prevent unplanned activation without needing to use



**Figure 1** Non-ergonomic thumb activation setup.



**Figure 3** Ergonomic finger activation setup, with dextrous speed control.



**Figure 2** Ergonomic finger activation setup, with trigger control.

the safety lock (Fig 2). Additionally, the four fingers deliver better dexterity for controlling the e-pen speed (Fig 3).

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#### Double-ended K-wires: watch out for the sting in the tail

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Kirschner wires are widely used among plastic and orthopaedic hand surgeons for a variety of procedures. Double-ended K-wires pose a potential needlestick hazard. K-wire (Ortho Solutions) ends can be protected using a needle sheath containing sterile foam