

Orthopaedic Instruments Survival Guide

20 Instruments Every MBBS Student Should Recognize

Introduction

Walking into an Orthopaedic Operation Theatre for the first time can be intimidating. This guide introduces the instruments every MBBS student and intern should recognize before assisting in surgery.

1. Periosteal Elevator

Used to elevate periosteum and expose bone.

2. Hohmann Retractor

The workhorse retractor of Orthopaedics. Used for deep exposure around bone.

3. Langenbeck Retractor

Common soft tissue retractor used during surgical exposure.

4. Bone Holding Forceps

Used to grasp and stabilize fracture fragments during reduction.

5. Reduction Clamp

Provides temporary fixation and maintains reduction.

6. K-Wire (Kirschner Wire)

Used for temporary or definitive fixation in many fractures.

7. Schanz Pin

Used in external fixation systems and damage control orthopaedics.

8. Gigli Saw

Flexible wire saw used for osteotomies and amputations.

9. Bone Nibbler (Rongeur)

Used to remove small pieces of bone.

10. Bone Curette

Used to scrape pathological tissue or clean bony cavities.

11. Orthopaedic Drill

Used to create holes for screw insertion.

12. Depth Gauge

Measures drilled hole depth and determines screw length.

13. Tap

Creates threads before screw insertion.

14. Screwdriver

Used for cortical, cancellous, locking, and cannulated screws.

15. DHS Instrument Set

Specialized instruments for Dynamic Hip Screw fixation.

16. IM Nail Instruments

Includes awls, reamers, guidewires, targeting devices, and extraction tools.

17. Oscillating Saw

Commonly used in arthroplasty and osteotomy procedures.

18. Bone Lever

Helps manipulate fracture fragments during reduction.

19. Suction Tip

Maintains a clear operative field.

20. Tourniquet System

Provides a bloodless surgical field during extremity procedures.

OT Survival Tips

- Learn instrument names before entering the theatre.
- Watch how consultants handle instruments.
- Anticipate the next instrument when assisting.
- Respect sterility at all times.
- Hold retractors like your consultant's happiness depends on it.

High-Yield Viva Questions

1. What is a Hohmann retractor used for?
2. What is the function of a depth gauge?
3. Difference between K-wire and Schanz pin?
4. What is a Gigli saw?
5. Why is a tap used before screw insertion?

Life in Orthopaedics Take Home Message

Recognizing instruments builds confidence in the OT. A student who knows the names, functions, and sequence of instruments learns faster and contributes more effectively during surgery.

Dr Arnav Kadian | Life in Orthopaedics | Where Healing Meets Movement