TECHNICAL TIPS

Spreading the feet for bilateral surgery

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Bilateral hallux valgus surgery presents difficulties when using a standard operating table. Using a vein board for the feet, we constructed a wider operating field. This enhanced space also allows simultaneous operating by two surgeons or closure of the first foot by an assistant while the surgeon starts the second foot operation, thus decreasing anaesthetic and theatre time. The vein board is compatible with all types of operating tables. The board is positioned at the foot end following patient transfer. No disadvantages of this technique were encountered and the only contra-indication is a stiff hip. We recommend this technique for simultaneous bilateral foot surgery.

Cleaner, dryer and more comfortable: the use of collar-and-cuff foam in neighbour strapping

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Neighbour strapping is used for minor fractures and dislocations of the hand; the injured digit is splinted to its neighbour, with padding between the fingers to ensure alignment and comfort. Surgical gauze is customarily used for padding, but leads to skin maceration when wet. Removal is painful and allows the fracture to move. Collar-and-cuff foam (Fig. 1) provides the ideal solution; cheap, clean, comfortable, and quick-drying, it ensures that personal hygiene will not compromise comfort or fracture stability. We

Figure 1 Collar-and-cuff foam and its application.

found 1 cm² cut from the roll to be the ideal size. We recommend collar-and-cuff is used in the first instance.

Abduction pillow technique

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Psoas and adductor releases are common surgical procedures in the treatment of cerebral palsy. Postoperatively, the patient is positioned in abduction. A number of abduction pillows are avail-

Figure 1 Use of normal pillow in patient abduction.