Retractor Hook

Retractor hook (also known as a surgical hook retractor) is a handheld or self-retaining surgical instrument used to hold back soft tissue, muscle, skin, or organs to provide better exposure of the surgical field.

Purpose and Function

- To retract tissue or anatomical structures during surgical procedures.
- Allows the surgeon unobstructed visualization and access to the target area.
- Reduces the need for manual retraction by assistants.

Types

By Design

- **Sharp hook**: Penetrates fascia or muscle. Used in spinal, orthopedic, or neurosurgical exposure.
- **Blunt hook**: Retracts softer structures without trauma (e.g., vessels or nerves).
- **Skin hook**: Fine and delicate, used in plastic or ophthalmic surgery.

By Configuration

- **Handheld**: Requires manual control by assistant or surgeon.
- **Self-retaining**: Mounted or attached to retraction systems (e.g., Leyla arm, Greenberg system).

Common Examples

- **Cushing hook**
- **Cloward hook**
- **Hohmann retractor (with hook tip)**
- **Adson hook**
- **Miyake nerve hook**

Surgical Uses

- **Neurosurgery**: Retraction of dura, nerve roots, brain parenchyma.
- **Orthopedic surgery**: Exposure of joints, bones, and ligaments.
- **ENT and plastic surgery**: Fine tissue handling with minimal trauma.
- **Spinal surgery**: Retraction of paraspinal muscles, lamina, or dura.

Key Considerations

- Must avoid excessive pressure to prevent tissue ischemia or nerve damage.
- Sharp hooks must be used carefully to prevent accidental puncture.
- Always assess anatomical relationships before placement.
- Should be cleaned and inspected regularly to maintain sharpness and integrity.

Related Instruments

- Langenbeck retractor
- Rake retractor
- Deaver retractor
- Nerve root retractor
- Malleable retractor