

Wilhelm Wagner

A craniotomy can be defined as a neurosurgical procedure aimed at achieving a wide cranial opening with the final purpose of performing a surgical therapeutic maneuver within the intracranial space. The current surgical technique for craniotomy is the final result of the development of the procedure since its introduction at the end of the 19th century. The very first wide cranial approach was introduced in 1889 by Wagner, and described as a 'temporary cranial resection'. This procedure could be named today as 'osteoplastic craniotomy with pedicle bone flap'. The final result of the procedural development of the craniotomy is the 'osteoplastic craniotomy with a free bone flap', used widely around the world ¹⁾.

From a historical context and perspective, cranial interventions varied from a single [burr hole trephination](#) to a larger [craniectomy](#). Modern craniotomies are performed by connecting a series of [burr holes](#). Although [trephination](#) is the oldest cranial [surgical technique](#) with ancient reports dating back to 2300 years, our current modern surgical [technique](#) for a [craniotomy](#) is the final cured result of the [procedure](#) introduced at the end of the 19th century by the self-educated surgeon [Wilhelm Wagner](#). Although it was much later in the course of history that the transition from [trephination](#) to a tailored resection via [craniotomy](#) happened, ancient civilizations, such as the Incas in [Peru](#), must have had some basic familiarity with anatomy and surgical interventions despite their rudimentary knowledge of pathology ²⁾.

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