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## A Simple Way to Drain a Subungual Hematoma

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THE RELIEVING OF PRESSURE in a subungual hematoma nearly always evokes expressions of gratitude from the patient. While the method described below probably is used by many physicians, it seems worthwhile reporting for those who are not acquainted with it.

The instruments needed are a paper clip with one prong bent outward at a 90 degree angle, a Kelly forcep and an alcohol lamp. After the nail plate has been prepared with alcohol or other suitable antiseptic, the paper clip is grasped with a Kelly forcep and the extended prong is heated in the flame of the spirit lamp until it becomes red. With

the patient's finger held steady to prevent jerking of the hand during treatment, the heated tip is pressed lightly against the nail plate over the hematoma. Usually it penetrates the nail quite easily and the hematoma drains, with decided relief of pain, as soon as it is withdrawn. Since the heat is readily dissipated as the tip of the clip burns through the nail plate and enters the encapsulated blood, there is little danger of causing a thermal burn of the nail bed.

This method is less painful than drilling of the nail plate, the procedure takes only a few seconds as against five to ten minutes for drilling, and the temperature of the probe provides comparative sterility.

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