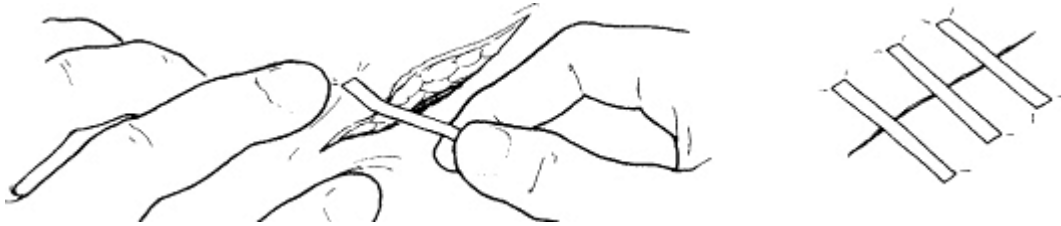


MINORS

WOUND CLOSURE

Steri-Strips

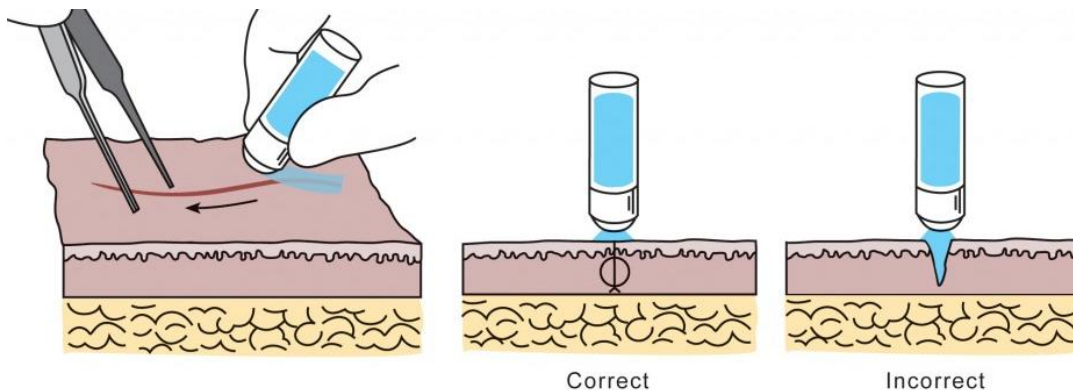
These are useful for closing wounds under low tension – especially skin flaps in elderly patients and pretibial lacerations (in both of these cases the skin is too friable for sutures). They are unsuitable on hairy/moist areas, deep wounds or over joints. The surface must be dry before application. Advise the patient to keep the strips dry until they are removed (7-10 days).



Skin glue

Glue is useful for superficial wounds with straight, easily apposed edges. It is not suitable if the wound edges cannot be apposed or if the wound is deep, overlying a joint or in a moist area. Once the wound is clean and dry, hold the edges of the skin together and apply the glue along the length of the wound. Hold in place for 30 seconds while the glue sets. Ensure that glue does not enter the wound as this will impede healing (and hurt!). Advise the patient not to get the glue wet for 5 days.

Avoid getting glue in a patient's eye or your fingers stuck to the patient! It is best avoided in wounds around eyes.



Staples

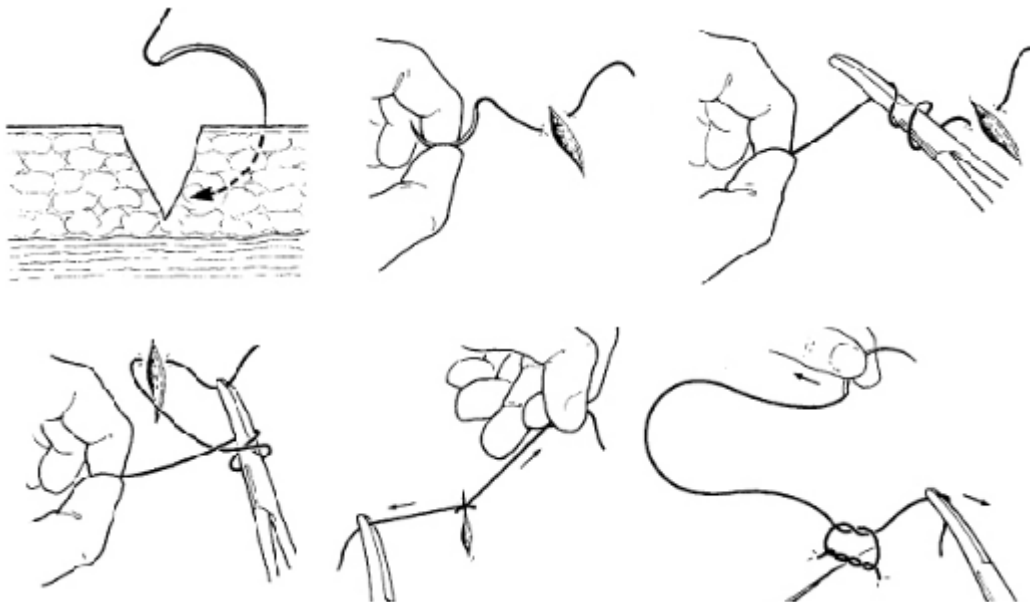
The main advantage over sutures is that they are time-saving. They are particularly useful for large scalp lacerations. As the staple sets are expensive do not use when the wound could be easily sutured; reserve them for large or multiple wounds.

Sutures

Sutures are an effective way to close almost any wound and are your usual method of closure for wounds that are too deep, under too much tension or otherwise inappropriate for steri-strips or glue. The size and type of suture is outlined in the table below, as is the time to removal.

Part of Body	Suture and Size	Time to Removal
Scalp	2/0 or 3/0 non-absorbable	7 days
Trunk	3/0 non-absorbable	10 days
Limbs	4/0 non-absorbable	10 days
Hands	4/0 non-absorbable	7 days
Face	5/0 or 6/0 non-absorbable	5 days
Lips, tongue or mouth	6/0 absorbable	-

Technique for Simple Interrupted Sutures



Remember to use a sterile field and sterile gloves.

Use toothed forceps on the wound edges rather than blunt forceps.

The sutures should be just tight enough to pull the wound together. Tight sutures strangulate the skin leading to scarring and necrosis.

Dispose of sharps appropriately.