

FLESH STAPLING

From the ever-expanding horizon of body mod comes a new way to make a statement with your body

by Ryan Ouellette

When you think of the word "staple," what comes to mind? For many, the word evokes the image of a strip of metal used to hold paper together. For doctors, staples are a means to close large surgical or trauma wounds. But to a mod practitioner from Finland and a growing number of body-mod enthusiasts, staples are at the core of a bold and revolutionary new statement in body modification.

Flesh stapling is a fairly new mod procedure and one of the very few truly new procedures available today. The majority of so-called new mods are really just twists on old ones. Sure, somebody can pierce in a new spot or with a new technique, but it still boils down to another twist on an old, established procedure. In most of these cases, it's something that has already been done, although perhaps in a different form.

Flesh stapling, though, draws ideas from other procedures and changes them into a bold new procedure that's taking Europe and



North America by storm. It's part piercing, part pocketing and all new!

The Creator

Flesh stapling was invented by a body-mod practitioner from Finland, Sami Eerola, better known in the industry simply as Samppa. After working as a professional piercer for almost 10 years, Samppa had pretty much

seen it all. This made him search out new and unique procedures like implants and cutting. What Samppa didn't know was that a client's request for something new would lead to something that he not only had never seen before, but that the entire mod industry hadn't seen before, either.

When asked how he got the idea for flesh stapling, Samppa replied, "I was getting bored with everything, the usual stuff. I'd been doing custom jewelry also, so I started to plan new things. The stapling idea came from a Swedish girl I [chatted] with online, asking if I had ever done pocketing, because she wanted one. I said I hadn't, because pocketings won't last...long. But



from there I had the idea that maybe it could be done some other way, and because I had done a lot of custom surface bars, I planned a pocketing that looked something like a reversed surface bar.

"I did four of those on Janna, our piercer, and they worked well for many months. But the problem was that the end of those bars pointed outside and they looked like they would reject from there. After that I bent the ends inside with no straight line. If you look at it from above, it looks like a letter Z. This is because it will keep its place better. The staple must be bent so that it fits to the skin and that's not always simple. First you take a piece of wire and bend it so that it fits to the skin; then you get the model for the real staple. Both parts, the visible and the invisible, must be bent to fit for the skin. Otherwise, it won't last for long."

From there it was mostly trial and error at Samppa's studio, Mad Max Tattoo & Piercing, in Tampere, Finland. He went through a few different varia-

tions on his new concept until he found one that he was satisfied with. At that point, he started offering his new mod to clients, and the procedure became an international sensation among the body-mod community. Soon it was being tested out by practitioners such as the UK's Patrick Bartholemew, who performs his own version of flesh stapling at the London Piercing Clinic, and Blair of Passage in Ontario. From the success of Samppa's flesh stapling, many people are now researching their own brand-new procedures to offer the world. And we have Samppa to thank for it all.

How it Works

Flesh stapling is based on a lot of the same concepts as body piercing, but body piercing theories alone don't

make flesh stapling work. It also takes ideas from a procedure called pocketing. You may not have heard of pocketing, and there's a reason for that—very simply, it isn't a particularly successful procedure. Pocketing tends to cause problems similar to a rejected or chronically irritated piercing.

The basic way a piercing works is that the body of the jewelry, be it a ring or barbell, lies inside the recipient's body, passing into and then out of the skin; the ends of the jewelry lie outside the surface. A pocketing is more or less an inverted surface piercing, in which the body of the jewelry is exposed, with the ends lying under the surface of the skin.

The main problem with a pocketing is that the tissue

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around the openings of the pocket easily become sore and irritated, due to increased pressure caused by the jewelry being forced up from the surface. This causes problems similar to a piercing rejection, such as fluid building up under the surface, and the tissue over the jewelry slowly decaying and receding.

The largest benefit of a flesh stapling is that the jewelry rests more snugly against the skin, alleviating surface tension. This allows for healthier blood flow, which is obviously important for proper healing. A stapling rests more snugly against the skin because the ends of the jewelry curve in, creating more of a hugging effect, as opposed to a pocketing pushing out on the skin. Flesh staples also have another added benefit; they can be placed in areas once thought to be unmodifiable, such as the arm. This, understandably, has opened a whole new door in body modi-



fication. Flesh stapling can also be adapted to more traditional piercing, giving a bold new look to typically pierced areas such as the eyebrow.

The procedure involved in inserting a flesh staple is actually quite easy. It utilizes basic piercing techniques, which means that the client can relax and not have to deal with the slightly more invasive procedures such as those associated with implants, which involve scalpels and elevators. More or less, it

only involves two piercings per staple, placed at very specific angles to each other; this allows for proper insertion of the jewelry with minimal discomfort. The healing process is also very similar to that of a piercing, albeit slightly longer. The success rate, if the procedure is done properly with a custom-fit staple, is about as high as a well-done surface piercing.

The most common complications related to stapling are slight scarring





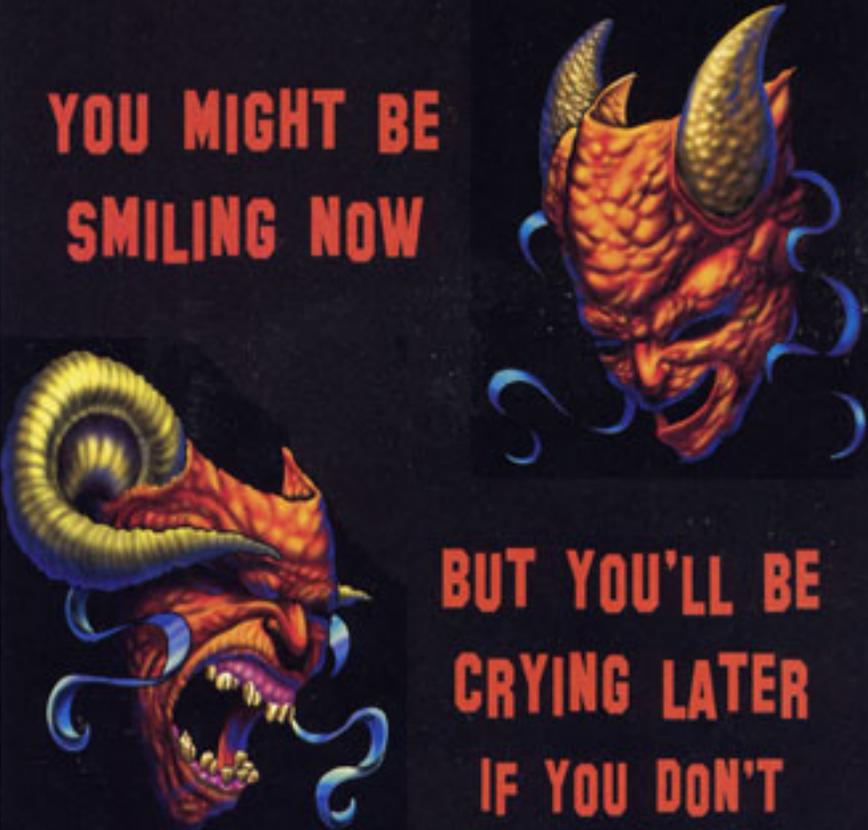
around the insertion points, extended redness and swelling during healing, and partial rejection. The biggest problem with stapling is that not very many practitioners have adopted the procedure yet, and the ones who have are doing a lot of research and trials of their own before they'll offer them to the public.

My best advice to anyone interested in having this procedure done is to go to a practitioner who has put in the time to make sure you're getting yours done properly. Don't just try to talk your piercer into doing one on you; chances are, it won't be done correctly, without the proper research and practice.

Samppa has created other new procedures in his career, some successful, some not. But what really makes Samppa noteworthy is that he set out to change and expand the world of body modification, to make something new to share with the industry and community. Others have now taken up what Samppa started. New procedures are being researched and tested. Again, some are successful, some not.

But that's what makes body modification so important. It's about expand-

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ing what you see the human body as being capable of achieving. Flesh stapling did more than just shed light on a new procedure; it rekindled the desire we each have to push our body to the limits in new and innovative ways, and

that's something the industry had all but forgotten about.

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Ryan Ouellette, XBM's Technical Editor, is the proprietor of Precision Body Arts in Nashua, NH.