

~~WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:~~

~~1.~~ 1. An instrument guide, comprising:

a releasable lock assembly comprising a ~~lumen;~~

~~a shaft~~ movable outer tubular member having a ~~proximal end and a distal end, wherein~~ lumen, the ~~shaft is partially~~ outer tubular member being movable in the ~~lumen of the releasable lock assembly;~~

~~a handle at the proximal end of the shaft;~~

~~a means for detachably coupling an implantable device; and~~

~~at least one drill guide member joined to the means for detachably coupling an implantable device;~~

~~wherein the releasable lock assembly is configured to releasably lock the distal end of the shaft to the means for detachably coupling an implantable device.~~

~~2.~~ 2. — An instrument guide, comprising:

~~a releasable lock assembly comprising a lumen~~ longitudinal direction between a distal configuration and a proximal configuration;

a shaft having a proximal end and a distal end, wherein the shaft is partially in the lumen of the releasable lock assembly;

a handle at the proximal end of the shaft;

a device coupler comprising a coupling base with a through lumen and an elongate coupling member comprising a proximal end and a distal end, wherein the distal end is configured with a least one mechanical interfit structure, wherein at least a portion of the elongate coupling member is configured so as to move in the through lumen of the coupling base; and

at least one drill guide member joined to the device coupler;

wherein the releasable lock assembly is configured to releasably lock the proximal end of the elongate coupling member of the device coupler to the distal end of the shaft when the outer tubular member is in a distal configuration.

~~3.~~ 2. The instrument guide as in ~~Claim 2~~ claim 1, wherein the mechanical interfit structure comprises helical threads.

~~4.~~ ~~3.~~ The instrument guide as in ~~Claim 2, wherein the releasable lock assembly comprises an outer tubular member having a proximal end and a distal end.~~

5. ~~The instrument guide as in Claim 2~~claim 1, further comprising at least one fixed coupling member extending from the coupling base.
6. ~~4.~~ The instrument guide as in ~~Claim 2~~claim 1, wherein the distal end of the shaft comprises a ~~distal receiving lumen having a tubular engagement opening with an inner~~ luminal surface, an ~~outer~~ abluminal surface, and ~~at least one~~ lock ~~lumen aperture extending~~ between the luminal surface and the abluminal surface.
7. ~~5.~~ The instrument guide as in ~~Claim 6~~claim 4, wherein the distal ~~receiving lumen tubular engagement opening~~ of the shaft comprises a non-circular cross-sectional shape.
8. ~~6.~~ The instrument guide as in ~~Claim 7~~claim 5, wherein the proximal end of the elongate coupling member has a configuration that forms a mechanical interfit with the distal ~~receiving lumen tubular engagement opening~~ of the shaft.
9. ~~7.~~ The instrument guide as in ~~Claim 6~~claim 4, wherein the lock ~~lumen aperture~~ has ~~an opening on the inner~~ luminal ~~openings surface~~ and an ~~opening on the outer~~ abluminal ~~openings surface~~.
10. ~~8.~~ The instrument guide as in ~~Claim 9~~claim 7, wherein the ~~luminal~~ opening ~~of on~~ the ~~lock lumen inner luminal surface~~ has at least one dimension that is smaller than the ~~opening on the outer~~ abluminal ~~opening of the lock lumen surface~~.
11. ~~9.~~ The instrument guide as in ~~Claim 10~~claim 8, wherein the releasable lock assembly further comprises a movable lock element having a locking position wherein the lock element protrudes through the ~~luminal~~ opening ~~on the inner luminal surface~~ and a releasing position wherein the lock element does not protrude through the ~~luminal~~ opening ~~on the inner luminal surface~~.
10. The instrument guide as in ~~Claim 4~~claim 9, wherein the lock element is a ball bearing.
11. The instrument guide as in claim 9, further comprising a bias member within the tubular engagement opening of the shaft.
12. The instrument guide as in claim 11, wherein the bias member is configured to bias the lock element in the locking position.
12. ~~13.~~ The instrument guide as in claim 1, wherein the lumen of the releasable lock assembly has an enlarged cross-sectional area about the distal end of the shaft.
- 13.—~~14.~~ The instrument guide as in ~~Claim 11, wherein the lock element is a ball bearing.~~
- 14.—~~The instrument guide as in Claim 2, further comprising a bias member within the distal receiving lumen of the proximal tubular shaft.~~
- 15.—~~The instrument guide as in Claim 14, wherein the bias member is configured to bias the lock element in the lock position.~~
16. ~~The instrument guide as in Claim 2~~claim 1, wherein the coupling base comprises a distal concave surface.

~~17.~~ 15. The instrument guide as in ~~Claim 2~~claim 1, wherein the shaft and the releasable lock assembly are configured to permit at least some relative rotational movement between the shaft and the releasable lock assembly.

~~18.~~ 16. The instrument guide as in ~~Claim 2~~claim 1, wherein the shaft and the releasable lock assembly are configured to permit at least some relative axial movement between the shaft and the releasable lock assembly.

~~19.~~ 17. The instrument guide as in ~~Claim 2~~claim 1, further comprising a distal tubular shaft joined to the coupling base, the distal tubular shaft having a proximal end, a distal end and a lumen therebetween in which at least a portion of the elongate coupling member movably resides.

~~20.~~ 18. The instrument guide as in ~~Claim 19~~claim 17, wherein the elongate coupling member has a proximal position and a distal position.

~~21.~~ 19. The instrument guide as in ~~Claim 20~~claim 18, further comprising a distal bias member between a surface of the elongate coupling member and a surface of the distal tubular shaft.

~~22.~~ 20. The instrument guide as in ~~Claim 21~~claim 19, wherein the distal bias member is configured so as to bias the elongate coupling member to the proximal position.

~~23.~~ 21. The instrument guide as in ~~Claim 21~~claim 19, wherein the distal bias member is configured so as to bias the elongate coupling member to the distal position.

~~24.~~ 22. A method for treating a patient, comprising:

attaching an instrument guide with respect to an implantable device-, wherein the instrument guide comprises a detachable handle and at least one instrument guide lumen;

inserting the implantable device to an implantation site;

separating the handle from the instrument guide;

passing a component through the at least one instrument guide lumen to the implantable device to the implantation site;

reattaching a handle to the instrument guide; and

releasing the instrument guide with respect to the implantable device.

- ~~25.~~ 23. The method for treating a patient as in ~~Claim 24~~claim 22, wherein attaching the instrument guide to the implantable device occurs after inserting the implantable device to the implantation site.
- ~~26.~~ 24. The method for treating a patient as in ~~Claim 24~~claim 22, wherein the implantation site is an intervertebral space.
- ~~27.~~ 25. The method for treating a patient as in ~~Claim 24~~claim 22, wherein the implantable device is an interbody fusion implant.
- ~~28.~~ 26. The method for treating a patient as in ~~Claim 27~~claim 25, wherein the interbody fusion implant is a flanged interbody fusion implant.
- ~~29.~~ 27. The method for treating a patient as in ~~Claim 24~~claim 22, wherein the component passed through the at least one instrument guide lumen is selected from a group consisting of a drill, a fastener and a screw driver.