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Blain**

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(54) **METHOD OF USING A SURGICAL TISSUE  
RETRACTOR**

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(58) **Field of Classification Search**  
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See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method of performing an operation, e.g. a spinal operation,  
on a patient using a retractor comprising a pair of blade  
assemblies which are adapted to open about a set of axes that  
are not parallel to a third spatial axis, and further comprising  
a pair of arms, which are adapted to move the pair of blade  
assemblies apart from one another in the third spatial axis. In  
the method, the blade assemblies are closed to assume a low  
profile, inserted into a relatively small incision, and stretched  
apart from each other, thereby stretching the skin about the  
incision to form an aperture longer than the incision. The  
blade assemblies are then opened by rotating the blades about  
the set of axes, stretching the skin around the incision in a  
second direction that is substantially perpendicular to the first  
direction (i.e. the direction of the incision.)

**12 Claims, 29 Drawing Sheets**

