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Actuation mechanisms and load adjustment assemblies for surgical instruments

Abstract

An ultrasonic surgical instrument includes an inner tube, an outer tube, an ultrasonic blade, and a clamp member pivotably moveable relative to the ultrasonic blade. The ultrasonic blade is acoustically coupled to an ultrasonic transducer. The clamp member pivotably movable relative to the ultrasonic blade between an open configuration and an approximated configuration with respect to the ultrasonic blade, wherein the clamp member is pivotably coupled to the inner tube, wherein the clamp member is pivotably coupled to the outer tube, and wherein movement of the outer tube relative to the inner tube between the first position and the second position transitions the clamp member between the open configuration and the approximate configuration.

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Background/Summary

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS (1) This application is a continuation application claiming priority under 35 U.S.C. § 120 to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/407,823, entitled ACTUATION MECHANISMS AND LOAD ADJUSTMENT ASSEMBLIES FOR SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, filed May 9, 2019, now U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2019/0262030, which is a divisional application claiming priority under 35 U.S.C. § 121 to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/448,430, entitled ACTUATION MECHANISMS AND LOAD ADJUSTMENT ASSEMBLIES FOR SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, filed Jul. 31, 2014, which issued on May 14, 2019 as U.S. Pat. No. 10,285,724, the entire disclosures of which are hereby incorporated by reference herein.

BACKGROUND

(1) The present disclosure is related generally to surgical instruments including ultrasonic instruments. Ultrasonic surgical instruments, such as ultrasonic scalpels, are used in many applications in surgical procedures by virtue of their unique performance characteristics. Ultrasonic surgical instruments can be configured for open surgical use, laparoscopic, or endoscopic surgical procedures including robotic-assisted procedures.

Description

DRAWINGS

(1) The features of the various embodiments are set forth with particularity in the appended claims. The various embodiments, however, both as to organization and methods of operation, together with advantages thereof, may best be understood by reference to the following description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings as follows:

- (2) FIG. 1 illustrates a surgical system including a surgical instrument and an ultrasonic generator;
- (3) FIG. 2 illustrates the surgical instrument shown in FIG. 1;
- (4) FIG. 2A illustrates a distal portion of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2 including an ultrasonic end effector;
- (5) FIG. 3 illustrates a distal portion of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2 including an ultrasonic end effector;
- (6) FIG. 4 illustrates an exploded view of the distal portion of FIG. 3;
- (7) FIG. 5 illustrates a clamp member of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2;
- (8) FIG. 6 illustrates a longitudinal cross-sectional view of the distal portion of FIG. 2A;
- (9) FIG. 6A illustrates a partial longitudinal cross-sectional view of an elongated shaft assembly of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2;
- (10) FIG. 7 illustrates a partial perspective view of an inner tube and an alignment feature of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2;
- (11) FIG. 8 illustrates a partial perspective view of an ultrasonic blade of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2;
- (12) FIG. 9 illustrates a partial longitudinal cross-sectional view of the ultrasonic blade of FIG. 7;

(13) FIG. 10 illustrates a transverse cross-sectional view of an elongated shaft assembly of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2;

(14) FIG. 11 illustrates a cross-sectional view of a distal portion of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2 with a removed outer tube;

(15) FIG. 12 illustrates a perspective cross-sectional view of a retaining cap of the distal portion of FIG. 11;

(16) FIG. 13 illustrates a transverse cross-sectional view of an ultrasonic blade, an inner tube, and an insert of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2;

(17) FIG. 14 illustrates a transverse cross-sectional view of an ultrasonic blade and a channel of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2;

(18) FIG. 15 illustrates a partial longitudinal cross-sectional view of the ultrasonic blade and the channel of FIG. 14;

(19) FIG. 16 illustrates a side elevational view of a surgical instrument;

(20) FIG. 17 illustrates a transverse cross-sectional view of the surgical instrument of FIG. 16;

(21) FIG. 18 illustrates a perspective view of a blade of the surgical instrument of FIG. 16;

(22) FIG. 19 illustrates a partial longitudinal cross-sectional view of a support shaft of the surgical instrument of FIG. 16;

(23) FIG. 20 illustrates a partial perspective view of the support shaft of FIG. 19;

(24) FIG. 21 illustrates a partial perspective view of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2 with several parts removed from the handle assembly to expose a load adjustment assembly and a reciprocating actuation member of the handle assembly of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2;

(25) FIG. 21A illustrates the load adjustment assembly of FIG. 21 with the reciprocating actuation member at an unactuated position;

(26) FIG. 21B illustrates the load adjustment assembly of FIG. 21 with the reciprocating actuation member at an actuated position;

(27) FIG. 22 illustrates a partial exploded view of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2;

(28) FIG. 23 illustrates a partial longitudinal cross-sectional view of a collar, and a load adjustment member of the load adjustment assembly of FIG. 21;

(29) FIG. 24 illustrates a perspective view of a load adjustment assembly of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2;

(30) FIG. 25 illustrates is an exploded view of a collar, a drive shaft, and a load adjustment member of the load adjustment assembly of FIG. 24;

(31) FIG. 26 illustrates a side-elevational view of a load adjustment assembly of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2 with an unattached load adjustment member;

(32) FIG. 26A illustrates a side-elevational view of the load adjustment assembly of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2 with an attached load adjustment member;

(33) FIG. 27 illustrates a perspective of a handle assembly of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2, wherein a left shell of the handle assembly is removed to expose a load adjustment assembly;

(34) FIG. 28 illustrates an exploded view of a load adjustment assembly of the handle assembly of FIG. 27; and

(35) FIG. 29 illustrates a side-elevational view of a load adjustment assembly of the surgical instrument of FIG. 2.

(36) Corresponding reference characters indicate corresponding parts throughout the several views. The exemplifications set out herein illustrate various embodiments of the invention, in one form, and such exemplifications are not to be construed as limiting the scope of the invention in any manner.

DESCRIPTION

(37) Numerous specific details are set forth to provide a thorough understanding of the overall structure, function, manufacture, and use of the embodiments as described in the specification and illustrated in the accompanying drawings. It will be understood by those skilled in the art, however,

that the embodiments may be practiced without such specific details. In other instances, well-known operations, components, and elements have not been described in detail so as not to obscure the embodiments described in the specification. Those of ordinary skill in the art will understand that the embodiments described and illustrated herein are non-limiting examples, and thus it can be appreciated that the specific structural and functional details disclosed herein may be representative and illustrative. Variations and changes thereto may be made without departing from the scope of the claims.

(38) Reference throughout the specification to “various embodiments,” “some embodiments,” “one embodiment,” or “an embodiment”, or the like, means that a particular feature, structure, or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment. Thus, appearances of the phrases “in various embodiments,” “in some embodiments,” “in one embodiment,” or “in an embodiment”, or the like, in places throughout the specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment. Furthermore, the particular features, structures, or characteristics may be combined in any suitable manner in one or more embodiments. Thus, the particular features, structures, or characteristics illustrated or described in connection with one embodiment may be combined, in whole or in part, with the features structures, or characteristics of one or more other embodiments without limitation. Furthermore, it will be appreciated that for conciseness and clarity, spatial terms such as “vertical,” “horizontal,” “up,” and “down”, for example, may be used herein with respect to the illustrated embodiments. However, these terms are used to assist the reader and are not intended to be limiting and absolute.

(39) Turning now to the figures, FIG. 1 illustrates a right side view of one embodiment of an ultrasonic surgical instrument **10**. In the illustrated embodiment, the ultrasonic surgical instrument **10** may be employed in various surgical procedures including endoscopic or traditional open surgical procedures. In one example embodiment, the ultrasonic surgical instrument **10** comprises a handle assembly **12**, an elongated shaft assembly **14**, an ultrasonic transducer **16**, and a blade **66**. The handle assembly **12** comprises a trigger assembly **24**, a distal rotation assembly **13**, and a switch assembly **28**. The elongated shaft assembly **14** comprises an end effector assembly **26**, which comprises elements to dissect tissue or mutually grasp, cut, and coagulate vessels and/or tissue, and actuating elements to actuate the end effector assembly **26**. The handle assembly **12** is adapted to receive the ultrasonic transducer **16** at the proximal end. The ultrasonic transducer **16** can be mechanically engaged to the elongated shaft assembly **14** and portions of the end effector assembly **26**. The ultrasonic transducer **16** can be electrically coupled to a generator **20** via a cable **22**. In certain instances, the generator can be integrated with the handle assembly **12**, for example. Although the majority of the drawings depict a multiple end effector assembly **26** for use in connection with laparoscopic surgical procedures, the ultrasonic surgical instrument **10** may be employed in more traditional open surgical procedures and in other embodiments, may be configured for use in endoscopic procedures. For the purposes herein, the ultrasonic surgical instrument **10** is described in terms of an endoscopic instrument; however, it is contemplated that an open and/or laparoscopic version of the ultrasonic surgical instrument **10** also may include the same or similar operating components and features as described herein.

(40) In various embodiments, the generator **20** comprises several functional elements, such as modules and/or blocks. Different functional elements or modules may be configured for driving different kinds of surgical devices. For example, an ultrasonic generator module **21** may drive an ultrasonic device, such as the ultrasonic surgical instrument **10**. In some example embodiments, the generator **20** also comprises an electrosurgery/RF generator module **23** for driving an electrosurgical device (or an electrosurgical embodiment of the ultrasonic surgical instrument **10**). In the example embodiment illustrated in FIG. 1, the generator **20** includes a control system **25** integral with the generator **20**, and a foot switch **29** connected to the generator via a cable **27**. The generator **20** may also comprise a triggering mechanism for activating a surgical instrument, such as the instrument **10**. The triggering mechanism may include a power switch (not shown) as well as

a foot switch **29**. When activated by the foot switch **29**, the generator **20** may provide energy to drive the acoustic assembly of the surgical instrument **10** and to drive the end effector **18** at a predetermined excursion level. The generator **20** drives or excites the acoustic assembly at any suitable resonant frequency of the acoustic assembly and/or derives the therapeutic/sub-therapeutic electromagnetic/RF energy.

(41) In one embodiment, the electrosurgical/RF generator module **23** may be implemented as an electrosurgery unit (ESU) capable of supplying power sufficient to perform bipolar electrosurgery using radio frequency (RF) energy. In one embodiment, the ESU can be a bipolar ERBE ICC 350 sold by ERBE USA, Inc. of Marietta, Ga. In bipolar electrosurgery applications, as previously discussed, a surgical instrument having an active electrode and a return electrode can be utilized, wherein the active electrode and the return electrode can be positioned against, or adjacent to, the tissue to be treated such that current can flow from the active electrode to the return electrode through the tissue. Accordingly, the electrosurgical/RF module **23** generator may be configured for therapeutic purposes by applying electrical energy to the tissue T sufficient for treating the tissue (e.g., cauterization).

(42) In one embodiment, the electrosurgical/RF generator module **23** may be configured to deliver a subtherapeutic RF signal to implement a tissue impedance measurement module. In one embodiment, the electrosurgical/RF generator module **23** comprises a bipolar radio frequency generator as described in more detail below. In one embodiment, the electrosurgical/RF generator module **12** may be configured to monitor electrical impedance Z, of tissue T and to control the characteristics of time and power level based on the tissue T by way of a return electrode provided on a clamp member of the end effector assembly **26**. Accordingly, the electrosurgical/RF generator module **23** may be configured for subtherapeutic purposes for measuring the impedance or other electrical characteristics of the tissue T. Techniques and circuit configurations for measuring the impedance or other electrical characteristics of tissue T are discussed in more detail in commonly assigned U.S. Patent Publication No. 2011/0015631, titled "Electrosurgical Generator for Ultrasonic Surgical Instrument," the disclosure of which is herein incorporated by reference in its entirety.

(43) A suitable ultrasonic generator module **21** may be configured to functionally operate in a manner similar to the GEN300 sold by Ethicon Endo-Surgery, Inc. of Cincinnati, Ohio as is disclosed in one or more of the following U.S. patents, all of which are incorporated by reference herein in their entireties: U.S. Pat. No. 6,480,796 (METHOD FOR IMPROVING THE START UP OF AN ULTRASONIC SYSTEM UNDER ZERO LOAD CONDITIONS); U.S. Pat. No. 6,537,291 (METHOD FOR DETECTING BLADE BREAKAGE USING RATE AND/OR IMPEDANCE INFORMATION); U.S. Pat. No. 6,662,127 (METHOD FOR DETECTING PRESENCE OF A BLADE IN AN ULTRASONIC SYSTEM); U.S. Pat. No. 6,977,495 (DETECTION CIRCUITRY FOR SURGICAL HANDPIECE SYSTEM); U.S. Pat. No. 7,077,853 (METHOD FOR CALCULATING TRANSDUCER CAPACITANCE TO DETERMINE TRANSDUCER TEMPERATURE); U.S. Pat. No. 7,179,271 (METHOD FOR DRIVING AN ULTRASONIC SYSTEM TO IMPROVE ACQUISITION OF BLADE RESONANCE FREQUENCY AT STARTUP); and U.S. Pat. No. 7,273,483 (APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR ALERTING GENERATOR FUNCTION IN AN ULTRASONIC SURGICAL SYSTEM). Furthermore, U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2014/0005702, entitled ULTRASONIC SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH DISTALLY POSITIONED TRANSDUCERS, and filed on Jun. 29, 2012, is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

(44) It will be appreciated that in various embodiments, the generator **20** may be configured to operate in several modes. In one mode, the generator **20** may be configured such that the ultrasonic generator module **21** and the electrosurgical/RF generator module **23** may be operated independently.

(45) For example, the ultrasonic generator module **21** may be activated to apply ultrasonic energy

to the end effector assembly **26** and subsequently, either therapeutic sub-therapeutic RF energy may be applied to the end effector assembly **26** by the electrosurgical/RF generator module **23**. As previously discussed, the sub-therapeutic electrosurgical/RF energy may be applied to tissue clamped between claim elements of the end effector assembly **26** to measure tissue impedance to control the activation, or modify the activation, of the ultrasonic generator module **21**. Tissue impedance feedback from the application of the sub-therapeutic energy also may be employed to activate a therapeutic level of the electrosurgical/RF generator module **23** to seal the tissue (e.g., vessel) clamped between claim elements of the end effector assembly **26**.

(46) In another embodiment, the ultrasonic generator module **21** and the electrosurgical/RF generator module **23** may be activated simultaneously. In one example, the ultrasonic generator module **21** is simultaneously activated with a sub-therapeutic RF energy level to measure tissue impedance simultaneously while an ultrasonic blade such as, for example, the blade **66** of the end effector assembly **26** cuts and coagulates the tissue (or vessel) clamped between the clamp elements of the end effector assembly **26**. Such feedback may be employed, for example, to modify the drive output of the ultrasonic generator module **21**. In another example, the ultrasonic generator module **21** may be driven simultaneously with electrosurgical/RF generator module **23** such that the ultrasonic blade **66** of the end effector assembly **26** is employed for cutting the damaged tissue while the electrosurgical/RF energy is applied to electrode portions of the end effector clamp assembly **26** for sealing the tissue (or vessel).

(47) When the generator **20** is activated via the triggering mechanism, electrical energy is continuously applied by the generator **20** to a transducer stack or assembly of the acoustic assembly. In another embodiment, electrical energy is intermittently applied (e.g., pulsed) by the generator **20**. A phase-locked loop in the control system of the generator **20** may monitor feedback from the acoustic assembly. The phase lock loop adjusts the frequency of the electrical energy sent by the generator **20** to match the resonant frequency of the selected longitudinal mode of vibration of the acoustic assembly. In addition, a second feedback loop in the control system **25** maintains the electrical current supplied to the acoustic assembly at a pre-selected constant level in order to achieve substantially constant excursion at the end effector **18** of the acoustic assembly. In yet another embodiment, a third feedback loop in the control system **25** monitors impedance between electrodes located in the end effector assembly **26**.

(48) In ultrasonic operation mode, the electrical signal supplied to the acoustic assembly may cause the distal end of the end effector **18**, to vibrate longitudinally in the range of, for example, approximately 20 kHz to 250 kHz. According to various embodiments, the blade **66** may vibrate in the range of about 54 kHz to 56 kHz, for example, at about 55.5 kHz. In other embodiments, the blade **66** may vibrate at other frequencies including, for example, about 31 kHz or about 80 kHz. The excursion of the vibrations at the blade **66** can be controlled by, for example, controlling the amplitude of the electrical signal applied to the transducer assembly of the acoustic assembly by the generator **20**. As noted above, the triggering mechanism of the generator **20** allows a user to activate the generator **20** so that electrical energy may be continuously or intermittently supplied to the acoustic assembly. The generator **20** also has a power line for insertion in an electro-surgical unit or conventional electrical outlet. It is contemplated that the generator **20** can also be powered by a direct current (DC) source, such as a battery. The generator **20** can comprise any suitable generator, such as Model No. GEN04, and/or Model No. GEN11 available from Ethicon Endo-Surgery, Inc.

(49) In various instances, when the acoustic assembly is energized, a vibratory motion standing wave is generated through the acoustic assembly. The amplitude of the vibratory motion at any point along the acoustic assembly depends on the location along the acoustic assembly at which the vibratory motion is measured. A minimum or zero crossing in the vibratory motion standing wave is generally referred to as a node (i.e., where motion is usually minimal), and an absolute value maximum or peak in the standing wave is generally referred to as an anti-node.

(50) FIG. 2 is a left perspective view of one example embodiment of the ultrasonic surgical instrument **10** showing the handle assembly **12**, the distal rotation assembly **13**, the elongated shaft assembly **14**, and the end effector assembly **26**. In the illustrated embodiment the elongated shaft assembly **14** comprises a distal end **52** dimensioned to mechanically engage the end effector assembly **26** and a proximal end **50** that mechanically engages the handle assembly **12** and the distal rotation assembly **13**. The proximal end **50** of the elongated shaft assembly **14** is received within the handle assembly **12** and the distal rotation assembly **13**.

(51) In the illustrated embodiment, the trigger assembly **24** comprises a trigger **32** that operates in conjunction with a fixed handle **34**. The fixed handle **34** and the trigger **32** are ergonomically formed and adapted to interface comfortably with the user. The fixed handle **34** is integrally associated with the handle assembly **12**. The trigger **32** is pivotally movable relative to the fixed handle **34** as explained in more detail below with respect to the operation of the ultrasonic surgical instrument **10**. The trigger **32** is pivotally movable in direction **33A** toward the fixed handle **34** when the user applies a squeezing force against the trigger **32**. A spring element may cause the trigger **32** to pivotally move in direction **33B** when the user releases the squeezing force against the trigger **32**.

(52) In one example embodiment, the trigger **32** comprises an elongated trigger hook **36**, which defines an aperture **38** between the elongated trigger hook **36** and the trigger **32**. The aperture **38** is suitably sized to receive one or multiple fingers of the user therethrough. The trigger **32** also may comprise a resilient portion **32a** molded over the trigger **32** substrate. The overmolded resilient portion **32a** is formed to provide a more comfortable contact surface for control of the trigger **32** in outward direction **33B**. In one example embodiment, the overmolded resilient portion **32a** may be provided over a portion of the elongated trigger hook **36**. The proximal surface of the elongated trigger hook **32** remains uncoated or coated with a non-resilient substrate to enable the user to easily slide their fingers in and out of the aperture **38**. In another embodiment, the geometry of the trigger forms a fully closed loop which defines an aperture suitably sized to receive one or multiple fingers of the user therethrough. The fully closed loop trigger also may comprise a resilient portion molded over the trigger substrate.

(53) In one example embodiment, the fixed handle **34** comprises a proximal contact surface **40** and a grip anchor or saddle surface **42**. The saddle surface **42** rests on the web where the thumb and the index finger are joined on the hand. The proximal contact surface **40** has a pistol grip contour that receives the palm of the hand in a normal pistol grip with no rings or apertures. The profile curve of the proximal contact surface **40** may be contoured to accommodate or receive the palm of the hand. A stabilization tail **44** is located towards a more proximal portion of the handle assembly **12**. The stabilization tail **44** may be in contact with the uppermost web portion of the hand located between the thumb and the index finger to stabilize the handle assembly **12** and make the handle assembly **12** more controllable.

(54) In one example embodiment, the switch assembly **28** may comprise a toggle switch **30**. The toggle switch **30** may be implemented as a single component with a central pivot **304** located within inside the handle assembly **12** to eliminate the possibility of simultaneous activation. In one example embodiment, the toggle switch **30** comprises a first projecting knob **30a** and a second projecting knob **30b** to set the power setting of the ultrasonic transducer **16** between a minimum power level (e.g., MIN) and a maximum power level (e.g., MAX). In another embodiment, the rocker switch may pivot between a standard setting and a special setting. The special setting may allow one or more special programs to be implemented by the device. The toggle switch **30** rotates about the central pivot as the first projecting knob **30a** and the second projecting knob **30b** are actuated. The one or more projecting knobs **30a**, **30b** are coupled to one or more arms that move through a small arc and cause electrical contacts to close or open an electric circuit to electrically energize or de-energize the ultrasonic transducer **16** in accordance with the activation of the first or second projecting knobs **30a**, **30b**. The toggle switch **30** is coupled to the generator **20** to control

the activation of the ultrasonic transducer **16**. The toggle switch **30** comprises one or more electrical power setting switches to activate the ultrasonic transducer **16** to set one or more power settings for the ultrasonic transducer **16**. The forces required to activate the toggle switch **30** are directed substantially toward the saddle point **42**, thus avoiding any tendency of the instrument to rotate in the hand when the toggle switch **30** is activated.

(55) In one example embodiment, the first and second projecting knobs **30a**, **30b** are located on the distal end of the handle assembly **12** such that they can be easily accessible by the user to activate the power with minimal, or substantially no, repositioning of the hand grip, making it suitable to maintain control and keep attention focused on the surgical site (e.g., a monitor in a laparoscopic procedure) while activating the toggle switch **30**. The projecting knobs **30a**, **30b** may be configured to wrap around the side of the handle assembly **12** to some extent to be more easily accessible by variable finger lengths and to allow greater freedom of access to activation in awkward positions or for shorter fingers.

(56) In the illustrated embodiment, the first projecting knob **30a** comprises a plurality of tactile elements **30c**, e.g., textured projections or “bumps” in the illustrated embodiment, to allow the user to differentiate the first projecting knob **30a** from the second projecting knob **30b**. It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that several ergonomic features may be incorporated into the handle assembly **12**. Such ergonomic features are described in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2009/0105750 entitled ERGONOMIC SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,623,027, which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

(57) In one example embodiment, the toggle switch **30** may be operated by the hand of the user. The user may easily access the first and second projecting knobs **30a**, **30b** at any point while also avoiding inadvertent or unintentional activation at any time. The toggle switch **30** may readily operated with a finger to control the power to the ultrasonic assembly **16** and/or to the ultrasonic assembly **16**. For example, the index finger may be employed to activate the first contact portion **30a** to turn on the ultrasonic assembly **16** to a maximum (MAX) power level. The index finger may be employed to activate the second contact portion **30b** to turn on the ultrasonic assembly **16** to a minimum (MIN) power level. In another embodiment, the rocker switch may pivot the instrument **10** between a standard setting and a special setting. The special setting may allow one or more special programs to be implemented by the instrument **10**. The toggle switch **30** may be operated without the user having to look at the first or second projecting knob **30a**, **30b**. For example, the first projecting knob **30a** or the second projecting knob **30b** may comprise a texture or projections to tactilely differentiate between the first and second projecting knobs **30a**, **30b** without looking.

(58) In one example embodiment, the distal rotation assembly **13** is rotatable without limitation in either direction about a longitudinal axis “T.” The distal rotation assembly **13** is mechanically engaged to the elongated shaft assembly **14**. The distal rotation assembly **13** is located on a distal end of the handle assembly **12**. The distal rotation assembly **13** comprises a cylindrical hub **46** and a rotation knob **48** formed over the hub **46**. The hub **46** mechanically engages the elongated shaft assembly **14**. The rotation knob **48** may comprise fluted polymeric features and may be engaged by a finger (e.g., an index finger) to rotate the elongated shaft assembly **14**. The hub **46** may comprise a material molded over the primary structure to form the rotation knob **48**. The rotation knob **48** may be overmolded over the hub **46**. The hub **46** comprises an end cap portion **46a** that is exposed at the distal end. The end cap portion **46a** of the hub **46** may contact the surface of a trocar during laparoscopic procedures. The hub **46** may be formed of a hard durable plastic such as polycarbonate to alleviate any friction that may occur between the end cap portion **46a** and the trocar. The rotation knob **48** may comprise “scallops” or flutes formed of raised ribs **48a** and concave portions **48b** located between the ribs **48a** to provide a more precise rotational grip. In one example embodiment, the rotation knob **48** may comprise a plurality of flutes (e.g., three or more flutes). In other embodiments, any suitable number of flutes may be employed. The rotation knob **48** may be formed of a softer polymeric material overmolded onto the hard plastic material. For

example, the rotation knob **48** may be formed of pliable, resilient, flexible polymeric materials including Versaflex® TPE alloys made by GLS Corporation, for example. This softer overmolded material may provide a greater grip and more precise control of the movement of the rotation knob **48**. It will be appreciated that any materials that provide adequate resistance to sterilization, are biocompatible, and provide adequate frictional resistance to surgical gloves may be employed to form the rotation knob **48**.

(59) In one example embodiment, the handle assembly **12** is formed from two (2) housing portions or shrouds comprising a first portion **12a** and a second portion **12b**. The first and second portions **12a** and **12b** (as well as the other components described below) may be assembled together in any fashion known in the art. For example, alignment pins, snap-like interfaces, tongue and groove interfaces, locking tabs, adhesive ports, may all be utilized either alone or in combination for assembly purposes.

(60) Referring to FIGS. **1-2A**, the elongated shaft assembly **14** comprises a proximal end **50** adapted to mechanically engage the handle assembly **12** and the distal rotation assembly **13**, and a distal end **52** adapted to mechanically engage the end effector assembly **26**. The elongated shaft assembly **14** comprises an outer tubular sheath **56** and a reciprocating tubular actuating member **58** located within the outer tubular sheath **56**. The proximal end of the tubular reciprocating tubular actuating member **58** is mechanically engaged to the trigger **32** of the handle assembly **12** to move in either direction **60A** or **60B** in response to the actuation and/or release of the trigger **32**. The pivotably moveable trigger **32** may generate reciprocating motion along the longitudinal axis “T.” Such motion may be used, for example, to actuate the jaws or clamping mechanism of the end effector assembly **26**. A series of linkages translate the pivotal rotation of the trigger **32** to axial movement of a yoke coupled to an actuation mechanism, which controls the opening and closing of the jaws of the clamping mechanism of the end effector assembly **26**. The distal end of the tubular reciprocating tubular actuating member **58** is mechanically engaged to the end effector assembly **26**. In the illustrated embodiment, the distal end of the tubular reciprocating tubular actuating member **58** is mechanically engaged to a clamp member **64**, which is pivotable about a pivot point **70**, to open and close the clamp member **64** in response to the actuation and/or release of the trigger **32**. For example, in the illustrated embodiment, the clamp member **64** is movable in direction **62A** from an open position to a closed position about a pivot point **70** when the trigger **32** is squeezed in direction **33A**. The clamp member **64** is movable in direction **62B** from a closed position to an open position about the pivot point **70** when the trigger **32** is released or outwardly contacted in direction **33B**.

(61) In one example embodiment, the end effector assembly **26** is attached at the distal end **52** of the elongated shaft assembly **14** and includes a clamp member **64** and a blade **66**. The jaws of the clamping mechanism of the end effector assembly **26** are formed by clamp member **64** and the blade **66**. The blade **66** is ultrasonically actuable and is acoustically coupled to the ultrasonic transducer **16**. The trigger **32** on the handle assembly **12** is ultimately connected to a drive assembly, which together, mechanically cooperate to effect movement of the clamp member **64**. Squeezing the trigger **32** in direction **33A** moves the clamp member **64** in direction **62A** from an open position, wherein the clamp member **64** and the blade **66** are disposed in a spaced relation relative to one another, to a clamped or closed position, wherein the clamp member **64** and the blade **66** cooperate to grasp tissue therebetween. The clamp member **64** may comprise a clamp pad to engage tissue between the blade **66** and the clamp member **64**. Releasing the trigger **32** in direction **33B** moves the clamp member **64** in direction **62B** from a closed relationship, to an open position, wherein the clamp member **64** and the blade **66** are disposed in a spaced relation relative to one another.

(62) The proximal portion of the handle assembly **12** comprises a proximal opening **68** to receive the distal end of the ultrasonic assembly **16**. The ultrasonic assembly **16** is inserted in the proximal opening **68** and is mechanically engaged to the elongated shaft assembly **14**.

(63) Referring now to FIGS. 3-5, in certain instances, the surgical instrument **10** may include an elongated shaft assembly **114**, which is similar in many respects to the elongated shaft assembly **14**. In addition, as illustrated in FIG. 3, the surgical instrument **10** may include an end effector assembly **126**, which is similar in many respects to the end effector assembly **26**, for example. In certain instances, the end effector assembly **126** may include a clamp member **164**, for example. In certain instances, the elongated shaft assembly **114** may include an outer tubular reciprocating member **156** and an inner tubular member **158**, for example. In certain instances, the outer tubular reciprocating member **156** and the inner tubular member **158** may extend coaxially along the longitudinal axis “T”, for example. In certain instances, the inner tubular member **158** may be partially surrounded by the outer tubular reciprocating member **156**, for example. In certain instances, the blade **66** may extend through the inner tubular member **158**; the inner tubular member **158** can be configured to receive the blade **66**.

(64) In certain instances, the blade **66** can be cooperatively coupled to the inner tubular member **158**, for example. In certain instances, a sealing member **131** (FIG. 4) can be disposed between the blade **66** and inner tubular member **158**, and may resist fluid entry into the elongated shaft assembly **114**, for example. In certain instances, the sealing member **131** can be disposed around, or at least partially around, the blade **66**, for example. In certain instances, the sealing member **131** may be positioned at or adjacent to a distal node of vibration. In certain instances, the sealing member **131** may be positioned at or adjacent to a node closest to the distal end of the blade **66**, for example. In various instances, the sealing member **131** may comprise a sealing lip or a ring disposed around the blade **66**, for example.

(65) In certain instances, the outer tubular reciprocating member **156** can be axially movable relative to the inner tubular member **158**. For example, the outer tubular reciprocating member **156** can be retracted proximally and/or advanced distally relative to the inner tubular member **158**. In certain instances, the ultrasonic blade **66** can be coupled to the inner tubular member **158**. In such instances, the outer tubular reciprocating member **156** can be retracted proximally and/or advanced distally relative to the blade **66** and the inner tubular member **158**, for example.

(66) A proximal portion of the outer tubular reciprocating member **156** can be operably coupled to the trigger **32** of the handle assembly **12** to move in either direction **160A** or **160B** in response to the actuation and/or release of the trigger **32**. A distal portion **127** of the outer tubular reciprocating member **156** can be movably coupled to the end effector assembly **126**. In at least one example, the distal portion **127** of the outer tubular reciprocating member **156** can be pivotably coupled to the clamp member **164**. Reciprocating the outer tubular reciprocating member **156** between a first or retracted position and a second or advanced position may cause the clamp member **164** to be transitioned between an approximated configuration and an open configuration with the ultrasonic blade **66**, for example. FIG. 3, for example, illustrates the clamp member **164** in a partially open configuration with respect to the blade **66**.

(67) In certain instances, the clamp member **164** may be pivotably coupled to the outer tubular reciprocating member **156** at a pivot point defined by pivot pins **170** (FIG. 5) which can be received in designated slots **171** (FIG. 4) on the distal portion **127** of the outer tubular reciprocating member **156**, for example. In such instances, the clamp member **164** can be pivoted about the pins **170**, in response to the reciprocating motion of the outer tubular reciprocating member **156**, to transition between the approximated configuration and the open configuration with respect to the blade **66**.

(68) Further to the above, the clamp member **164** can also be pivotably coupled to the inner tubular member **158**, and can be configured to pivot relative to the inner tubular member **158** in response to the reciprocating motion of the outer tubular reciprocating member **156**, for example. In certain instances, the inner tubular member **158** may comprise a connection member **157** disposed at a distal end portion of the inner tubular member **158**, as illustrated in FIG. 3. In certain instances, the clamp member **164** can be pivotably coupled to the connection member **157**. For example, a pivot

pin **159** may extend through openings **161** of the clamp member **164** and through the connection member **157** to pivotably couple the clamp member **164** to the connection member **157**.

(69) In any event, reciprocating the outer tubular reciprocating member **156** between the first position and the second position may cause the clamp member **164** to pivot about the pin **159** and the pins **170** to transition between the open configuration and the approximated configuration with respect to the blade **66**, for example. In certain instances, the pin **159**, which couples the clamp member **164** to the connection member **157**, and the pins **170**, which couple the clamp member **164** to the distal portion **127** of the outer tubular reciprocating member **156**, may reside on opposite sides of the blade **66**, as illustrated in FIG. 3. In other words, the blade **66** can be disposed between the distal portion **127** and the blade **66**.

(70) In certain instances, as illustrated in FIG. 3, the blade **66** may extend between the distal portion **127** of the outer tubular reciprocating member **156** and the connection member **157**. The distal portion **127** may be partially open which may expose, or partially expose, the connection member **157**, for example. In certain instances, the side of the connection member **157** may comprise a shape that complements the blade **66**, for example.

(71) In certain instances, the connection member **157** can be manufactured with the inner tubular member **158** as a single unit. For example, the connection member **157** and the inner tubular member **158** can be injection molded together as a single unit. In other instances, the connection member **157** and the inner tubular member **158** can be manufactured separately and attached together during assembly of the surgical instrument **10**. In at least one example, the connection member **157** and the inner tubular member **158** may comprise complimentary portions **165** and **167**, respectively, which can be welded together, for example, to attach the connection member **157** to the inner tubular member **158**. Other mechanisms for manufacturing and/or attaching the inner tubular member **158** and the connection member **157** are contemplated by the present disclosure. The reader will appreciate that manufacturing of the connection member **157** separately may ensure a greater accuracy in the dimensions of the connection member **157**, which may lead to a better alignment between the clamp member **164** and the blade **66** during assembly of the surgical instrument **10**.

(72) In certain instances, as illustrated in FIG. 4, the connection member **157** may comprise a greater thickness than the wall of the inner tubular member **158**. The increased thickness of the connection member **157** may provide stability to the clamp member **164** during the transition between the open configuration and the approximated configuration. In addition, the increased thickness of the connection member **157** may provide sufficient space for a through-hole **169** for receiving the pin **159**, for example.

(73) Further to the above, the present disclosure provides a method for assembling a surgical instrument such as, for example, the surgical instrument **10**. In certain instances, the method for assembling the surgical instrument **10** may ensure proper alignment between the blade **66** and the clamp member **164**. The reader will appreciate that it can be desirable to accurately align the clamp member **164** with the blade **66** to ensure proper transmission of ultrasonic energy through the blade **66** to tissue captured between the clamp member **164** and the blade **66** in the approximated configuration. In certain instances, it can be desirable for the clamp member **164** to be rotationally aligned with the blade **66**, for example, to ensure that a curvature of the clamp member **164** is aligned with a curvature of the blade **66**, for example. In certain instances, it can be desirable for a distal end **66a** of the blade **66** to be axially aligned with a distal end **164a** of the clamp member **164**, for example.

(74) In any event, the method for assembling the surgical instrument **10** may comprise the steps of: positioning the blade **66** with respect to the inner tubular member **158**, positioning the inner tubular member **158** with respect to the outer tubular reciprocating member **156**, coupling the clamp member **164** to the outer tubular reciprocating member **156**, coupling the clamp member **164** to the connection member **157**, and/or attaching the connection member **157** to the inner tubular member

158, for example. The reader will appreciate that reserving the attachment of the connection member **157** to the inner tubular member **158** until the assembly stage can facilitate fine adjustment of the relative positions of the clamp member **164** and the connection member **157** thereby ensuring the proper rotational and axial alignment between the blade **66** and the clamp member **164**.

(75) Referring now to FIGS. **6-9**, the surgical instrument **10** may include an elongated shaft assembly **214**. FIG. **6** illustrates a partial cross-sectional view of the elongated shaft assembly **214**. The elongated shaft assembly **214** is similar in many respects to the elongated shaft assembly **14** and/or the elongated shaft assembly **114**. In certain instances, the elongated shaft assembly **214** can be adapted for coupling engagement with the end effector assembly **26** to actuate the clamp member **64** in a similar manner to the elongated shaft assembly **14**, for example. In certain instances, the elongated shaft assembly **214** can be adapted for coupling engagement with the end effector assembly **126** to actuate the clamp member **164** in a similar manner to the elongated shaft assembly **114**, for example.

(76) In any event, the elongated shaft assembly **214** may include an outer tube **256**, which is similar in many respects to the outer tubular member **56** and/or the outer tubular member **156**, for example. In addition, the elongated shaft assembly **214** may include an inner tube **258**, which is similar in many respects to the inner tubular member **58** and/or the inner tubular member **158**, for example. Furthermore, the elongated shaft assembly **214** may include an ultrasonic blade **266**, which is similar in many respects to the ultrasonic blade **66**. For example, like the ultrasonic blade **66**, the ultrasonic blade **266** can be acoustically coupled to the transducer **16**.

(77) In various instances, in an exemplary assembled form of the surgical instrument **10**, the outer tube **256** and the inner tube **258** may extend coaxially along a longitudinal axis “T”, as illustrated in FIG. **6A**. In certain instances, the inner tube **258** may be partially surrounded by the outer tube **256**, for example. In certain instances, the blade **266** may extend through the inner tube **258**; the inner tube **258** can be configured to receive the blade **266**. In certain instances, the blade **266** can be cooperatively coupled to the inner tube **258**, for example.

(78) As described above, rotational and/or axial positioning and/or alignment of an ultrasonic blade such as, for example, the ultrasonic blade **266** with respect to other components of the surgical instrument **10** can be important in ensuring proper performance of the surgical instrument **10** including but not limited to efficient transmission of the ultrasonic energy. In various instances, the inner tube **258** and/or the blade **266** may include one or more alignment features, which may establish the rotational and/or axial positioning and/or alignment of the blade **266** with respect to other components of the surgical instrument **10** and maintain such rotational and/or axial positioning and/or alignment during use of the surgical instrument **10** in a surgical procedure, for example. In at least one example, as illustrated in FIG. **6**, the inner tube **258** may comprise an alignment feature **258a**, and the blade **266** may comprise an alignment feature **266a**.

(79) In various instances, referring primarily to FIGS. **6** and **8**, the alignment features **258a** and/or **266a** may be positioned at a node of vibration along the blade **266**. As described above, a minimum or zero crossing in the vibratory motion may exist at a node of vibration; positioning the alignment features **258a** and/or **266a** at the node of vibration may reduce interference with the operation of the blade **266**, which may increase the efficiency of the ultrasonic energy transmission, for example. In certain instances, the alignment features **258a** and/or **266a** may be positioned at a distal node of vibration. In certain instances, the alignment features **258a** and/or **266a** may be positioned at a node closest to the distal end of the blade **266**, for example.

(80) In various instances, referring to FIGS. **6-9**, the alignment feature **258a** and/or the alignment feature **266a** may comprise one or more vibration isolating portions **259** such as, for example, an overmolded silicone rubber bushing. In various instances, the vibration isolating portions **259** can be overmolded onto the blade **266** and/or the inner tube **258**, for example. In certain instances, the vibration isolating portions **259** can be integrated with the sealing member **131**, as illustrated in

FIG. 6.

(81) In certain instances, as illustrated in FIG. 6A, the alignment feature **266a** of the blade **266** may comprise a receiving portion **266c**, which can be adapted to receive a constraining member **258c** of the alignment feature **258a** of the inner tube **258**, for example. In certain instances, the receiving portion **266c** can be interfaced with the constraining member **258c** to establish rotational and/or axial positioning and/or alignment of the blade **266** with respect to other components of the surgical instrument **10** and maintain such rotational and/or axial positioning and/or alignment during use of the surgical instrument **10** in a surgical procedure, for example. As illustrated in FIG. 6A, the receiving portion **266c** may be comprised of a slot, a notch, a groove, an aperture, and/or a gap in the body of the blade **266**, which can be adapted for mating engagement with the constraining member **258c**, for example. For example, the constraining member **258c** may comprise a tab, a tongue or a latch, which can be inserted into a socket of the receiving portion **266c** to establish rotational and/or axial positioning and/or alignment of the blade **266** with respect to other components of the surgical instrument **10** and maintain such rotational and/or axial positioning and/or alignment during use of the surgical instrument **10** in a surgical procedure, for example. In certain instances, as illustrated in FIG. 10, the alignment feature **258a** may comprise a flat section **258b** which can be aligned with a corresponding flat section **266b** of the blade **266** to establish rotational alignment between the blade **266** and the inner tube **258** and maintain such alignment during use of the surgical instrument **10** in a surgical procedure, for example.

(82) Referring to FIG. 7, in certain instances, the inner tube **258** may comprise a side opening **272** in a wall of the inner tube **258**, for example. In certain instances, the constraining member **258c** can be interfaced with the receiving portion **266c** by inserting at least a portion of the constraining member **258c** through the side opening **272** of the inner tube **258** into engagement with the receiving portion **266c**, for example. In certain instances, the blade **266** can be inserted into the inner tube **258** and aligned therewith such that the receiving portion **266c** is faced with the side opening **272** of the inner tube. The constraining member **258c** can then be inserted, or at least partially inserted, through the side opening **272** of the inner tube **258** and into engagement with the receiving portion **266c**, which may establish and maintain rotational and/or axial positioning and/or alignment between the blade **266** with the inner tube **258**, for example. In certain instances, the constraining member **258c** may be fixedly attached to the inner tube **258** at the side opening **272**, for example. In certain instances, the constraining member **258c** can be welded to the wall of the inner tube **258** at the side opening **272**, for example. In certain instances, the constraining member **258c** can be assembled with the inner tube **258** through a snap-like interface, locking tabs, and/or an adhesive, for example. In at least one example, the constraining member **258c** may comprise a c-clip or a pin which can be welded to the inner tube **258**, for example.

(83) Referring mainly to FIGS. 11 and 12, in certain instances, the sealing member **131** may comprise an alignment feature **131a**, which is similar in many respects to the alignment feature **266a** of the blade **266**. For example, the alignment feature **131a** can be employed in a similar manner to the alignment feature **266a** in establishing and maintaining the rotational and/or axial positioning and/or alignment of the blade **266** with respect to other components of the surgical instrument **10**. In certain instances, the alignment feature **131a** may comprise a receiving portion **131c** similar to the receiving portion **266c**, which can be adapted to receive constraining member **258c**. In certain instances, the alignment feature **131a** may comprise a flat section **131b** that is similar in many respects to the flat section **266b** of the alignment feature **266a**. In certain instances, the flat section **131b** can be adapted for interfacing with the flat section **258b** of the inner tube **258**, as illustrated in FIG. 12.

(84) In certain instances, as illustrated in FIGS. 11 and 12, the alignment feature **258a** of the inner tube **258** can be positioned at a distal portion of the inner tube **258**. In certain instances, the inner tube **258** may comprise a retaining cap **258d** at a distal portion of the inner tube **258**. In certain instances, the alignment feature **258a** may be positioned at an inner wall of the retaining cap **258d**,

for example. In certain instances, as illustrated in FIG. 12, the retaining cap **258d** may comprise the side opening **272**, for example. A constraining member such as, for example, the constraining member **258c** can be interfaced with the receiving portion **131c** by inserting at least a portion of the constraining member **258c** through the side opening **272** of the retaining cap **258d** to engage the receiving portion **131c**, for example.

(85) In various instances, the sealing member **131** can be coupled to the blade **266**. For example, the sealing member **131** can be snugly fitted around, or at least partially around, the blade **266**, as illustrated in FIG. 12. In such instances, interfacing the alignment feature **131a** of the sealing member **131** with the alignment feature **258a** of the retaining cap **258d** may establish and maintain rotational and/or axial positioning and/or alignment between the sealing member **131** and the retaining cap **258d**, which in turn may establish and maintain the rotational and/or axial positioning and/or alignment between the blade **266** and the inner tube **258**, for example.

(86) In various instances, referring primarily to FIG. 13, the elongated shaft assembly **214** may comprise an insert **274**, which can be positioned between the inner tube **258** and the blade **266**. In certain instances, the insert **274** may comprise a plurality of flat sections **274a-274c**, which can be adapted to interface with a plurality of corresponding flat sections **266d-266f** on the blade **266**, as illustrated in FIG. 13. Such an arrangement may establish and maintain rotational positioning and/or alignment between the insert **274** and the blade **266**, which in turn may establish and maintain the rotational positioning and/or alignment between the blade **266** and the inner tube **258**, for example.

(87) In certain instances, the insert **274** can be fixedly attached to the inner tube **258**. In at least one example, the insert **274** can be welded to the inner tube **258**. In such instances, the insert **274** can be positioned in place between the blade **266** and the inner tube **258** during assembly of the surgical instrument **10**. Once the rotational positioning and/or alignment between the insert **274** and the blade **266** is adjusted to a desired degree, the insert **274** can be welded to the inner tube **258** to maintain such rotational positioning and/or alignment, for example.

(88) In certain instances, the insert **274** can be positioned at or adjacent to a distal node of vibration. In certain instances, the insert **274** may be positioned at a node closest to the distal end of the blade **266**, for example. In at least one example, the insert **274** may comprise a single flat wall insertable between the blade **266** and the inner tube **258**. In at least one example, the insert **274** may comprise two flat walls insertable between the blade **266** and the inner tube **258**. The flat walls may intersect at a perpendicular, or at least substantially perpendicular, angle and. In at least one example, as illustrated in FIG. 13, the insert **274** may comprise three flat walls insertable between the blade **266** and the inner tube **258**.

(89) In various instances, referring primarily to FIG. 14, the elongated shaft assembly **214** can be modified by replacing the inner tube **258** with a channel **258'** which, in certain instances, may comprise a semi-circular transverse cross-section, for example. In various instances, a blade **266'**, which is similar in many respects to the blade **266**, can be assembled with the channel **258'**. As illustrated in FIG. 15, the channel **258'** and the blade **266'** may comprise complimenting alignment features **276** and **278**, respectively. In various instances, the alignment features **276** and **278** can be similar in many respects to the alignment features **258a** and **266a**, for example. In certain instances, the alignment features **276** and **278** can be interfaced to establish and maintain rotational and/or axial positioning and/or alignment between the channel **258'** and the blade **266'**, for example.

(90) In certain instances, as illustrated in FIG. 15, the alignment feature **276** of the channel **258'** may comprise one or more divots **276a**. In certain instances, each divot **276a** can be received between two divots **278a** of the alignment feature **278** of the blade **266'**, for example. The divots **276a** and **278a** can cooperate to establish and maintain rotational and/or axial positioning and/or alignment between the channel **258'** and the blade **266'**, for example, and maintain such to establish and maintain rotational and/or axial positioning and/or alignment during use of the surgical instrument **10** in a surgical procedure.

(91) In certain instances, the alignment features **276** and **278** may comprise complimenting flat sections which can be interfaced to establish and maintain rotational positioning and/or alignment between the channel **258'** and the blade **266'**, for example. In at least one example, the alignment feature **276** may comprise three flat sections **276b** which can be disposed on three inner walls of the channel **258'**, as illustrated in FIG. **14**. In addition, the blade **266'** may comprise three flat sections **278b** for mating engagement with the flat sections **276b**, for example. In various instances, the alignment features **276** and/or **278** can be positioned at or adjacent to one or more nodes of vibration. In certain instances, the alignment features **276** and/or **278** may be positioned at one or more nodes of vibration at a distal portion of the blade **266**, for example.

(92) In various instances, as illustrated in FIG. **6**, the elongated shaft assembly **214** can be adapted for coupling engagement with the end effector assembly **26** to actuate the clamp member **64** between an open configuration and an approximated configuration to capture tissue between the clamp member **64** and the blade **266**, for example. In such instances, the clamp member **64** can be actuated to generate a clamping force against the blade **266**. In various instances, the elongated shaft assembly **214** can be adapted for coupling engagement with the end effector assembly **126** to actuate the clamp member **164** between an open configuration and an approximated configuration to capture tissue between the clamp member **164** and the blade **266**, for example. In such instances, the clamp member **164** can be actuated to generate a clamping force against the blade **266**.

(93) In certain instances, the clamping force generated by the clamp member **164** or the clamp member **64** can be applied along a vector which intersects a plane P defined by the flat section **266b** of the blade **266**, for example. In certain instances, the vector of the generated clamping force may form a perpendicular, or at least substantially perpendicular, angle with the plane P, for example. In certain instances, the angle between the vector of the generated clamping force and the plane P defined by the flat section **266b** of the blade **266** can be any value selected from a range of about 85 degrees to about 95 degrees. In certain instances, the angle between the vector of the generated clamping force and the plane P defined by the flat section **266b** of the blade **266** can be any value selected from a range of about 89 degrees to about 91 degrees. In certain instances, the angle between the vector of the generated clamping force and the plane P defined by the flat section **266b** of the blade **266** can be about 90 degrees.

(94) In various instances, as illustrated in FIG. **6**, the clamp member **64** of the end effector assembly **26** can be moved between the open configuration and the closed configuration along, or at least substantially along, a plane P1 intersecting the plane P defined by the flat section **266b** of the blade **266**. In certain instances, the plane P1 can be perpendicular, or at least substantially perpendicular, with the plane P. In certain instances, the angle between the plane P1 and the plane P is any angle selected from a range of about 85 degrees to about 95 degrees. In certain instances, the angle between the plane P1 and the plane P is any angle selected from a range of about 89 degrees to about 91 degrees.

(95) Similarly, the clamp member **164** of the end effector assembly **126** can be moved between the open configuration and the closed configuration along, or at least substantially along, a plane P2 intersecting the plane P defined by the flat section **266b** of the blade **266**. In certain instances, the plane P2 can be perpendicular, or at least substantially perpendicular, with the plane P. In certain instances, the angle between the plane P2 and the plane P is any angle selected from a range of about 85 degrees to about 95 degrees. In certain instances, the angle between the plane P2 and the plane P is any angle selected from a range of about 89 degrees to about 91 degrees.

(96) In various instances, as illustrated in FIG. **6**, the clamp member **64** of the end effector assembly **26** and the flat section **258b** of the inner tube **258** can be disposed on opposite sides of the plane P defined by the flat section **266b** of the blade **266**. In such instances, the clamping force generated by the clamp member **64** may bias, motivate, and/or move the alignment feature **266a** of the blade **266** toward the alignment feature **258a** of the inner tube **258**. In certain instances, the clamping force generated by the clamp member **64** may bring the alignment feature **266a** of the

blade **266** into contact with the alignment feature **258a** of the inner tube **258**.

(97) Similarly, the clamp member **164** of the end effector assembly **126** and the flat section **258b** of the inner tube **258** can be disposed on opposite sides of the plane P defined by the flat section **266b** of the blade **266**. In such instances, the clamping force generated by the clamp member **164** may bias, motivate, and/or move the alignment feature **266a** of the blade **266** toward the alignment feature **258a** of the inner tube **258**. In certain instances, the clamping force generated by the clamp member **164** may bring the alignment feature **266a** of the blade **266** into contact with the alignment feature **258a** of the inner tube **258**.

(98) Referring now to FIGS. **16-20**, an ultrasonic surgical instrument **310** is depicted. The surgical instrument **310** is similar in many respects to the surgical instrument **10**. For example, the instrument **310** includes an ultrasonic blade **366**, which is similar in many respects to the ultrasonic blade **66**. Like the blade **66**, the blade **366** can be acoustically coupled to the ultrasonic transducer **16**, for example. Furthermore, the instrument **310** may include a clamp member **364**, which is similar in many respects to the clamp member **64** and/or the clamp member **164**, for example.

(99) In various instances, the surgical instrument **310** can be employed in open surgery. In certain instances, the clamp member **364** can be transitioned between an approximated configuration and an open configuration with respect to the ultrasonic blade **366** by actuating a handle **301**, for example. In certain instances, the clamp member **364** may be pivotably coupled to a support shaft **358** at a pivot point **370**. In such instances, the clamp member **364** can be pivoted about the point **370** by actuating the handle **301**. The blade **366** may extend through the support shaft **358**; the support shaft **358** can be configured to receive the blade **266**.

(100) In various instances, rotational and/or axial positioning and/or alignment of an ultrasonic blade such as, for example, the ultrasonic blade **366** with respect to other components of the surgical instrument **310** can be important in ensuring proper performance of the surgical instrument **310** including but not limited to efficient transmission of the ultrasonic energy. In various instances, the support shaft **358** and/or the blade **366** may include one or more alignment features, which may establish the rotational and/or axial positioning and/or alignment of the blade **366** with respect to other components of the surgical instrument **310**. The alignment features can also maintain the rotational and/or axial positioning and/or alignment during use of the surgical instrument **310** in a surgical procedure, for example. In at least one example, as illustrated in FIG. **17**, the support shaft **358** may comprise an alignment feature **358a**, and the blade **366** may comprise an alignment feature **366a**.

(101) In various instances, referring primarily to FIGS. **16-18**, the alignment features **358a** and/or **366a** may be positioned at a node of vibration along the blade **366**. As described above, a minimum or zero crossing in the vibratory motion may exist at a node of vibration; positioning the alignment features **358a** and/or **366a** at the node of vibration may reduce interference with the operation of the blade **366**, which may increase the efficiency of the ultrasonic energy transmission, for example. In certain instances, the alignment features **358a** and/or **366a** may be positioned at a distal node of vibration. In certain instances, the alignment features **358a** and/or **366a** may be positioned at a node closest to the distal end of the blade **366**, for example.

(102) In various instances, referring to FIGS. **16-18**, the alignment feature **358a** and/or the alignment feature **366a** may comprise one or more vibration isolating portions **259** such as, for example, an overmolded silicone rubber bushing. In various instances, the vibration isolating portions **259** can be overmolded onto the blade **366** and/or the support shaft **358**, for example. In certain instances, the vibration isolating portions **259** can be integrated with the sealing member **131**. As illustrated in FIG. **17**, the sealing member **131** can be disposed between the blade **366** and support shaft **358**. In certain instances, the sealing member **131** can be disposed around, or at least partially around, the blade **366**, for example. In certain instances, the sealing member **131** may be positioned at or adjacent to a distal node of vibration. In certain instances, the sealing member **131** may be positioned at or adjacent to a node closest to the distal end of the blade **366**, for example. In

various instances, the sealing member **131** may comprise a sealing lip or a ring disposed around the blade **366**, for example.

(103) In certain instances, as illustrated in FIGS. **17-20**, the alignment feature **358a** may comprise a flat section **358b** which can be aligned with a corresponding flat section **366b** of the blade **266** to establish rotational alignment between the blade **366** and the support shaft **358** and maintain such alignment during use of the surgical instrument **310** in a surgical procedure, for example. In certain instances, the greater the surface areas of the interfacing flat sections **358b** and/or **366b**, the more robust the alignment achieved therebetween. In at least one example, one or both of the surface areas of the interfacing flat sections **358b** and/or **366b** may comprise a multilateral shape such as a square, for example. In at least one example, one or both of the surface areas of the interfacing flat sections **358b** and/or **366b** may comprise a circular shape.

(104) In various instances, as described above, the support shaft **358** can be pivotably coupled to the clamp member **364** such that actuation of the handle **301** may cause the clamp member **364** to transition between an open configuration and an approximated configuration to capture tissue between the clamp member **364** and the blade **366**, for example. In such instances, the clamp member **364** may generate a clamping force against the blade **366**.

(105) In certain instances, the clamping force generated by the clamp member **364** can be applied along a vector which intersects a plane P defined by the flat section **366b** of the blade **366**, for example. In certain instances, the vector of the generated clamping force can form a perpendicular, or at least substantially perpendicular, angle with the plane P, for example. In certain instances, the angle between the vector of the generated clamping force and the plane P defined by the flat section **366b** of the blade **366** can be any value selected from a range of about 85 degrees to about 95 degrees. In certain instances, the angle between the vector of the generated clamping force and the plane P defined by the flat section **366b** of the blade **366** can be any value selected from a range of about 89 degrees to about 91 degrees.

(106) In various instances, as illustrated in FIG. **16**, the clamp member **364** can be movable between the open configuration and the closed configuration along, or at least substantially along, a plane P1 intersecting the plane P defined by the flat section **366b** of the blade **366**. In certain instances, the plane P1 can be perpendicular, or at least substantially perpendicular with the plane P. In certain instances, the angle between the plane P1 and the plane P is any angle selected from a range of about 85 degrees to about 95 degrees. In certain instances, the angle between the plane P1 and the plane P is any angle selected from a range of about 89 degrees to about 91 degrees.

(107) In various instances, referring primarily to FIGS. **16** and **18**, the clamp member **364** and the flat section **358b** of the support shaft **358** can be disposed on opposite sides of the plane P defined by the flat section **366b** of the blade **366**, for example. In such instances, the clamping force generated by the clamp member **364** may bias, motivate, and/or move the alignment feature **366a** of the blade **266** toward the alignment feature **358a** of the support shaft **358**. In certain instances, the clamping force generated by the clamp member **364** may bring the alignment feature **366a** of the blade **366** into contact with the alignment feature **358a** of the inner tube **358**. As illustrated in FIG. **17**, in certain instances, a slight rotational misalignment may remain after assembly of the surgical instrument **310**. Such slight rotational misalignment is, however, corrected when the alignment feature **366a** of the blade **266** is biased toward the alignment feature **358a** of the support shaft **358** by the application of the clamping force generated by the clamp member **364** against the blade **366**, for example.

(108) As described above, the surgical instrument **10** (FIG. **2**) may include a handle assembly such as, for example, the handle assembly **12** (FIG. **2**), an end effector assembly such as, for example, the end effector assembly **26** (FIG. **2A**), and an elongated shaft assembly such as, for example, the elongated shaft assembly **14** (FIG. **2**) which extends between the handle assembly **12** and the end effector assembly **26**. The handle assembly **12** may be adapted to receive the ultrasonic transducer **16** at the proximal end. The ultrasonic transducer **16** can be mechanically engaged to the elongated

shaft assembly **14** and portions of the end effector assembly **26**. Furthermore, the handle assembly **12** may comprise a trigger assembly such as, for example, the trigger assembly **24**. As described above, the trigger assembly **24** may include a trigger **32** that operates in conjunction with a fixed handle **34**.

(109) In various instances, the trigger **32** can be operably coupled to a reciprocating actuation member **402** (FIG. **21**). In at least one example, a linkage assembly can be employed to couple the trigger **32** to the reciprocating actuation member **402**. In certain instances, as illustrated in FIG. **21**, the reciprocating actuation member **402** may be operably coupled to the clamp member **64**. In at least one example, a drive shaft such as, for example, the outer tubular sheath **56** of the elongated shaft assembly **14** may be employed to transmit actuation motions from the reciprocating actuation member **402** to the clamp member **64**, for example. The reader will appreciate that, in certain instances, the inner tubular member **158** of the elongated shaft assembly **114** can be employed as a drive shaft. In such instances, the inner tubular member **158** can be operably coupled to the reciprocating actuation member **402**, for example.

(110) In any event, the trigger **32** can be pivotally movable relative to the fixed handle **34** to reciprocate the reciprocating actuation member **402** between a first position, as illustrated in FIG. **21A**, and a second position, as illustrated in FIG. **21B**. In certain instances, the first position can be at a distal location to the second position, for example. In certain instances, the clamp member **64** can be transitioned between an open configuration and a closed configuration with respect to the ultrasonic blade **66** in response to the reciprocating motion of the reciprocating actuation member **402** between the first position and the second position, for example. In at least one example, the clamp member **64** can be in a fully open configuration while the reciprocating actuation member **402** is at the first position, as illustrated in FIG. **21**. In at least one example, if the path of the clamp member **64** toward the ultrasonic blade **66** is not impeded, the clamp member **64** can be in a fully closed configuration while the reciprocating actuation member **402** is at the second position.

(111) In certain instances, the trigger **32** can be pivotally movable in the direction **33A** toward the fixed handle **34** to transition the reciprocating actuation member **402** toward the second position and transition the clamp member **64** toward the closed configuration. In certain instances, the trigger **32** can be pivotally movable in the direction **33B** away from the fixed handle **34** to transition the reciprocating actuation member **402** toward the first position and transition the clamp member **64** toward the closed configuration, for example.

(112) In certain instances, a biasing mechanism **404** may cause the trigger **32** to pivotally move in the direction **33B** when the user releases the squeezing force against the trigger **32**. The biasing mechanism **404** may bias the reciprocating actuation member **402** toward the first position and bias the clamp member **64** toward the open configuration, as illustrated in FIG. **21A**. In certain instances, the biasing mechanism **404** may comprise one or more springs. In at least one example, the biasing mechanism **404** may include a proximal spring **406**, for example, and/or a distal spring **408**, for example, as illustrated in FIG. **21**.

(113) In various instances, the biasing mechanism **404** may be configured to apply an initial load to the reciprocating actuation member **402** to maintain the reciprocating actuation member **402** at the first position; in turn, the reciprocating actuation member **402** maintains the clamp member **64** in the open configuration, as illustrated in FIG. **21**. The reader will appreciate that the initial load applied by the biasing mechanism **404** against the reciprocating actuation member **402** defines, at least in part, an initial force required to overcome the initial load to motivate the reciprocating actuation member **402** from the first position toward the second position and motivate the clamp member **64** from the open configuration toward the closed configuration, for example.

(114) The reader will also appreciate that accurately and reproducibly setting and maintaining the initial load ensures uniformity of the initial force required to overcome the initial load. Such uniformity aids a user of the surgical instrument **10** in developing a type of tactile memory when squeezing the trigger **32** to generate the initial force. In other words, eliminating, or at least

reducing, variability of the initial load provides a user of the surgical instrument **10** with an element of predictability in using the trigger **32** that facilitates developing a tactile memory associated with squeezing the trigger **32**, for example. Furthermore, accurately and reproducibly setting and maintaining the initial load ensures that the surgical instrument **10** produces a consistent and optimized clamp force on tissue, which creates consistent and optimum hemostasis and tissue effects.

(115) In various instances, the handle assembly **12** may comprise a load adjustment assembly **410**, which can be employed to set and maintain the initial load against the reciprocating actuation member **402** at a predetermined value. In certain instances, as illustrated in FIG. **21**, the load adjustment assembly **410** can be coupled to a drive shaft of the surgical instrument **10** such as, for example, the outer tubular sheath **56** or inner tubular member **158**. The load adjustment assembly **410** may include a stop **412** and a load adjustment member **414**. In certain instances, the stop **412** can be disposed at a distal location relative to the load adjustment member **414**, for example. In at least one example, the stop **412** can be disposed at a proximal location to the load adjustment member **414**.

(116) In certain instances, as illustrated in FIG. **21**, the biasing mechanism **404** can be disposed between the stop **412** and the load adjustment member **414**. The reciprocating actuation member **402** can be disposed between the stop **412** and the biasing mechanism **404**. In certain instances, the reciprocating actuation member **402** is abutted against the stop **412** at the first position, as illustrated in FIG. **21A**. In certain instances, as described above, the biasing mechanism **404** may include a proximal spring **406** and a distal spring **408**. A first washer **407** can be disposed between the proximal spring **407** and the distal spring **408**, for example. A second washer **409** can be disposed between the distal spring **408** and the reciprocating actuation member **402**, for example. Other relative positions and/or arrangements of the stop **412**, the load adjustment member **414**, and the biasing mechanism **404** with respect to each other are contemplated by the present disclosure.

(117) In various instances, the distance between the stop **412** and the load adjustment member **414** can determine the initial load against the reciprocating actuation member **402**. In certain instances, the load adjustment member **414** is movable relative to the stop **412** to adjust the initial load applied against the reciprocating actuation member **402** to the predetermined value by adjusting the distance between the stop **412** and the load adjustment member **414**. In certain instances, upon reaching the predetermined value of the initial load, the load adjustment member **414** is fixed in position relative to the stop **412**, as described below in greater detail, to fix the distance between the stop **412** and the load adjustment member **414**.

(118) In certain instances, movement of the load adjustment member **414** relative to the stop **412** motivates the springs **406** and/or **408** of the biasing mechanism **404** to change the load applied by the biasing mechanism **404** against the reciprocating actuation member **402**. In at least one example, movement of the load adjustment member **414** toward the stop **412** compresses the springs **406** and/or **408** of the biasing mechanism **404** which increases the initial load applied by the biasing mechanism **404** against the reciprocating actuation member **402**. In at least one example, movement of the load adjustment member **414** away from the stop **412** at least partially decompresses the springs **406** and/or **408** of the biasing mechanism **404** which decreases the initial load applied by the biasing mechanism **404** against the reciprocating actuation member **402**.

(119) In certain instances, the load adjustment assembly **410** may include a collar **416**. The collar **416** can be attached to a drive shaft of the surgical instrument **10** such as, for example, the outer tubular sheath **56** or the inner tubular member **158**. FIG. **23** shows the collar **416** assembled with the outer tubular sheath **56**. As illustrated in FIG. **23**, the collar **416** may comprise a cylindrical, or at least substantially cylindrical, shape which can be disposed around the outer tubular sheath **56**, for example. In certain instances, as illustrated in FIG. **23**, the collar **416** may comprise a plurality of mating members **416A** configured for mating engagement with a plurality of corresponding openings **56A** of the outer tubular sheath **56**, for example. As illustrated in FIG. **23**, the matting

members **416A** may be disposed on an inner wall of the collar **416**. In at least one example, the collar **416** can be glued to the outer tubular sheath **56**. In another example, the collar **416** can be welded onto the outer tubular sheath **56**. Other techniques for attaching the collar **416** to the outer tubular sheath **56** are contemplated by the present disclosure.

(120) As illustrated in FIG. **23**, the collar **416** can be attached to a proximal portion of the outer tubular sheath **56**. In certain instances, the collar **416** and the stop **412** can be manufactured as a single unit. The stop **412** may be comprised of a flange positioned at a distal end of the collar **416**, for example. In certain instances, the load adjustment member **414** can be coupled to the collar **416**. For example, the collar **416** may include a threaded proximal portion **416b** which can be configured to receive the load adjustment member **414**. The load adjustment member **414** can, for example, be threadedly engaged with the threaded proximal portion **416b**, as illustrated in FIG. **23**. In such instances, rotation of the load adjustment member **414** relative to the collar **416** in a first direction, for example a clockwise direction, may advance the load adjustment member **414** toward the stop **412**, and rotation of the load adjustment member **414** relative to the collar **416** in a second direction, for example a counterclockwise direction, may retract the load adjustment member **414** away from the stop **412**. Advancement of the load adjustment member **414** toward the stop **412** may compress the springs **406** and/or **408** thereby increasing the load applied against the reciprocating actuation member **402**. On the other hand, retraction of the load adjustment member **414** away from the stop **412** may allow the springs **406** and/or **408** to at least partially decompress thereby reducing the load applied against the reciprocating actuation member **402**.

(121) In certain instances, to set the initial load applied against the reciprocating actuation member **402** to a predetermined value, a load monitoring unit can be employed. The load exerted by the biasing mechanism **404** against the reciprocating actuation member **402** can be monitored by the load monitoring unit. Meanwhile, the load adjustment member **414** can be turned clockwise and/or counterclockwise, for example, to adjust the initial load to the predetermined value based on feedback from the load monitoring unit. Once the initial load is set to the predetermined value, in certain instances, a final position of the load adjustment member **414** can be fixed to maintain the initial load at the predetermined value. In certain instances, the final position of the load adjustment member **414** can be fixed by fixing the load adjustment member **414** to the collar **416**. In at least one example, the final position of the load adjustment member **414** can be fixed by welding the load adjustment member **414** to the collar **416** at the final position. In at least one example, the final position of the load adjustment member **414** can be fixed by gluing the load adjustment member **414** to the collar **416** at the final position. Other techniques for fixing the load adjustment member **414** to the collar **416** at the final position are contemplated by the present disclosure.

(122) Referring primarily to FIG. **24**, in certain instances, the handle assembly **12** of the surgical instrument **10** may include a load adjustment assembly **510**, which is similar in many respects to the load adjustment assembly **410**. For example, the load adjustment assembly **510** includes the biasing mechanism **404**. Also, like the load adjustment assembly **410**, the load adjustment assembly **510** is operably coupled to a drive shaft of the surgical instrument **10** such as, for example, the outer tubular sheath **56** (FIG. **24**) or the inner tubular member **158**. Furthermore, like the load adjustment assembly **410**, the load adjustment assembly **510** can be employed to adjust an initial load applied against a clamp member of the surgical instrument **10**.

(123) Referring to FIG. **24**, the load adjustment assembly **510** may include a load adjustment member **514**. The load adjustment member **514** may be comprised of a stop **512**, a body portion **516**, and a plurality of projections **516A** extending proximally from the body portion **516**. In certain instances, the stop **512** may be comprised of a flange member disposed at distal end of the body portion **516**, as illustrated in FIG. **24**. In certain instances, each of the plurality of projections **516A** may be comprised of a tab extending proximally from the body portion **516**, as illustrated in FIG. **25**.

(124) In certain instances, as illustrated in FIGS. **24** and **25**, the body portion **516** of the load

adjustment assembly **510** may comprise a cylindrical, or at least substantially cylindrical, shape which can be disposed around the drive shaft of the surgical instrument **10**. For example, FIG. **24** shows the body portion **516** disposed around the outer tubular sheath **56**.

(125) Further to the above, as illustrated in FIG. **24**, the load adjustment assembly **510** may also include a receiving end portion **530**, which can be comprised of a flange member disposed at a proximal end of a drive shaft of the surgical instrument **10** such as, for example, the outer tubular sheath **56** or the inner tubular member **158**. In certain instances, the receiving end portion **530** may comprise a plurality of slots **530A** (FIG. **25**), which can be configured to receive the projections **516A**. In certain instances, the receiving end portion **530** can be integrated with the drive shaft of the surgical instrument **10**. In certain instances, the receiving end portion **530** and the drive shaft of the surgical instrument **10** can be manufactured together as a single unit. In other instances, the receiving end portion **530** and the drive shaft of the surgical instrument **10** can be manufactured separately and attached to each other during assembly of the surgical instrument **10**, for example.

(126) In certain instances, as illustrated in FIG. **24**, the biasing mechanism **404** can be disposed between the stop **512** and the receiving end portion **530**. The reciprocating actuation member **402** can be disposed between the stop **512** and the biasing mechanism **404**. Other relative positions and/or arrangements of the stop **512**, the receiving end portion **530**, and the biasing mechanism **404** with respect to each other are contemplated by the present disclosure.

(127) As described above, in certain instances, the clamp member **64** can be transitioned between an open configuration and a closed configuration with respect to the ultrasonic blade **66** in response to the reciprocating motion of the reciprocating actuation member **402** between a first position and a second position, for example. In certain instances, the reciprocating actuation member **402** is abutted against the stop **512** at the first position.

(128) In various instances, the distance between the stop **512** and the receiving end portion **530** of the load adjustment assembly **510** can determine the initial load against the reciprocating actuation member **402** at the first position. In certain instances, the load adjustment member **514** is slidably movable relative to the outer tubular sheath **56** to adjust the initial load applied against the reciprocating actuation member **402** to a predetermined value by adjusting the distance between the stop **512** and the receiving end portion **530**. In certain instances, upon reaching the predetermined value of the initial load, the projections **516A** are fixed to the receiving end portion **530** to fix the distance between the stop **512** and the receiving end portion **530**.

(129) In certain instances, movement of the load adjustment member **514** relative to the receiving end portion **530** motivates the springs **406** and/or **408** of the biasing mechanism **404** to change the load applied by the biasing mechanism **404** against the reciprocating actuation member **402**. In at least one example, movement of the load adjustment member **514** toward the receiving end portion **530** compresses the springs **406** and/or **408** of the biasing mechanism **404** which increases the initial load applied by the biasing mechanism **404** against the reciprocating actuation member **402**. In at least one example, movement of the load adjustment member **514** away from the receiving end portion **530** at least partially decompresses the springs **406** and/or **408** of the biasing mechanism **404** which decreases the initial load applied by the biasing mechanism **404** against the reciprocating actuation member **402**.

(130) In certain instances, to set the initial load to a predetermined value, a load monitoring unit can be employed. The load exerted by the biasing mechanism **404** against the reciprocating actuation member **402** can be monitored by the load monitoring unit. Meanwhile, the load adjustment member **514** can be slidably moved relative to the receiving end portion **530** to adjust the distance between stop **512** and the receiving end portion **530** based on feedback from the load monitoring unit until the predetermined value of the initial load is realized. As the load adjustment member **514** is moved relative to the outer tubular sheath **56**, the projections **516A** slide with respect to the slots **530A**.

(131) Once the initial load is set to the predetermined value, in certain instances, a final position of

the load adjustment member **514** can be fixed to maintain the initial load at the predetermined value. In certain instances, the final position of the load adjustment member **514** can be fixed by fixing the projections **516A** to the receiving end portion **530**. In at least one example, the final position of the load adjustment member **514** can be fixed by bending or crimping the distal ends of the projection **516A** that extend proximally beyond their corresponding slots **530A**, as illustrated in FIG. **24**. In certain instances, the distal ends of the projections **516A** that extend proximally beyond their corresponding slots **530A** can be welded to the receiving end portion **530** at the final position of the load adjustment member **514**, for example. In at least one example, the distal ends of the projection **516A** that extend proximally beyond their corresponding slots **530A** can be glued to the receiving end portion **530** at the final position of the load adjustment member **514**, for example. Other techniques for fixing the load adjustment member **514** to the receiving end portion **530** at the final position are contemplated by the present disclosure.

(132) Referring primarily to FIGS. **26** and **26A**, in certain instances, the handle assembly **12** of the surgical instrument **10** may include a load adjustment assembly **610**, which is similar in many respects to the load adjustment assemblies **410** and/or **510**. For example, the load adjustment assembly **610** includes the biasing mechanism **404**. Also, like the load adjustment assemblies **410** and **510**, the load adjustment assembly **610** is operably coupled to a drive shaft of the surgical instrument **10** such as, for example, the outer tubular sheath **56** or the inner tubular member **158**. Furthermore, like the load adjustment assemblies **410** and **510**, the load adjustment assembly **610** can be employed to adjust an initial load applied against a clamp member of the surgical instrument **10**.

(133) Referring to FIGS. **26** and **26A**, the load adjustment assembly **610** may include a stop **612** and a load adjustment member **614**. In certain instances, the stop **612** may be comprised of a flange member disposed around, or at least partially around, a proximal portion of a drive shaft of the surgical instrument **10** such as, for example, the outer tubular sheath **56** and the inner tubular member **158**. For example, FIG. **26** shows the stop **612** disposed around a proximal portion of the outer tubular sheath **56**.

(134) In certain instances, as illustrated in FIG. **26A**, the load adjustment member **614** may be assembled with the outer tubular sheath **56** such that the biasing mechanism **404** is disposed between the stop **612** and the load adjustment member **614**. In certain instances, the load adjustment member **614** may comprise a cylindrical, or at least substantially cylindrical, shape which can be slidably inserted around a proximal end of the drive shaft of the surgical instrument **10**. For example, FIG. **26A** shows the load adjustment member **614** disposed around the proximal portion of the outer tubular sheath **56**. In certain instances, the stop **612** can be disposed at a distal location relative to the load adjustment member **614**, for example. Alternatively, the stop **612** can be disposed at a proximal location relative to the load adjustment member **614**. The reciprocating actuation member **402** can be disposed between the stop **612** and the biasing mechanism **404**. In certain instances, the reciprocating actuation member **402** is abutted against the stop **612** at the first position, as illustrated in FIG. **26A**. Other relative positions and/or arrangements of the stop **612**, the load adjustment member **614**, and the biasing mechanism **404** with respect to each other are contemplated by the present disclosure.

(135) In various instances, the relative distance between the stop **612** and the load adjustment member **614** can determine the initial load against the reciprocating actuation member **402**. In certain instances, the load adjustment member **614** is slidably movable relative to the stop **612** to adjust the initial load applied against the reciprocating actuation member **402** to the predetermined value by adjusting the distance between the stop **612** and the load adjustment member **614**. In certain instances, upon reaching the predetermined value of the initial load, the load adjustment member **614** is fixed in position relative to the stop **612**, as described below in greater detail, by fixing the distance between the stop **612** and the load adjustment member **614**.

(136) In certain instances, movement of the load adjustment member **614** relative to the stop **612**

motivates the springs **406** and/or **408** of the biasing mechanism **404** to change the load applied by the biasing mechanism **404** against the reciprocating actuation member **402**. In at least one example, movement of the load adjustment member **416** toward the stop **612** compresses the springs **406** and/or **408** of the biasing mechanism **404**, which increases the initial load applied by the biasing mechanism **404** against the reciprocating actuation member **402**. In at least one example, movement of the load adjustment member **614** away from the stop **612** at least partially decompresses the springs **406** and/or **408** of the biasing mechanism **404**, which decreases the initial load applied by the biasing mechanism **404** against the reciprocating actuation member **402**.

(137) In certain instances, to set the initial load to a predetermined value, a load monitoring unit can be employed. The load exerted by the biasing mechanism **404** against the reciprocating actuation member **402** can be monitored by the load monitoring unit. Meanwhile, the load adjustment member **614** can be slidably moved relative to the stop **612** to adjust the distance between the load adjustment member **614** and the stop **612** until the predetermined value of the initial load is realized. Once the initial load is set to the predetermined value, in certain instances, a final position of the load adjustment member **614** can be fixed to maintain the initial load at the predetermined value by fixing the distance between the load adjustment member **614** and the stop **612**. In certain instances, the final position of the load adjustment member **614** can be fixed by fixing the load adjustment member **614** to the outer tubular sheath **56**. In at least one example, the final position of the load adjustment member **614** can be fixed by welding the load adjustment member **614** to the outer tubular sheath **56** at the final position. In at least one example, the final position of the load adjustment member **614** can be fixed by gluing the load adjustment member **614** to the outer tubular sheath **56** at the final position. Other techniques for fixing the load adjustment member **614** to the outer tubular sheath **56** at the final position are contemplated by the present disclosure.

(138) Referring primarily to FIG. 27, in certain instances, the handle assembly **12** of the surgical instrument **10** may include a load adjustment assembly **710**, which is similar in many respects to the load adjustment assemblies **410**, **510**, and/or **610**. For example, like the load adjustment assemblies **410**, **510**, and **610**, the load adjustment assembly **710** is operably coupled to a drive shaft of the surgical instrument **10** such as, for example, the outer tubular sheath **56** or the inner tubular member **158**. Furthermore, the load adjustment assembly **710** can be employed to adjust an initial load (a pre-load) applied against a biasing member **704**. As described in greater detail below, the biasing member **704** can be configured to protect from transmission of excessive actuation forces greater than the pre-load to a clamp member of the surgical instrument **10**.

(139) Referring to FIG. 27, the load adjustment assembly **710** may include a distal yoke portion **712**, a proximal yoke portion **716**, and a load adjustment member **714** extending between the distal yoke portion **712** and the proximal yoke portion **716**. In certain instances, the biasing member **704** may comprise a tension spring which can be located at least partially around the load adjustment member **714**, as illustrated in FIG. 27. In certain instances, a distal end of the biasing member **704** can be connected to the distal yoke portion **712** and a proximal end of the biasing member **704** can be connected to the proximal yoke portion **716**.

(140) Further to the above, the distal yoke portion **712** can be operably coupled to a drive shaft of the surgical instrument **10** such as, for example, the outer tubular sheath **56** or the inner tubular member **158**. FIG. 27 shows a drive collar **711** coupling the distal yoke portion **712** to the inner tubular member **158**. In addition, the proximal yoke portion **716** may be operably coupled to the trigger **32** of the handle assembly **12**. For example, a linkage assembly **732** may couple the trigger **32** to the proximal yoke portion **716**, as illustrated in FIG. 27.

(141) In certain instances, the trigger **32** can be pivotably moved relative to the fixed handle **34** to reciprocate the inner tubular member **158** axially between a first position and a second position. As described above, the inner tubular member **158** can be pivotably coupled to a clamp member such as, for example, the clamp member **164**. In certain instances, the first position can be at a distal

location to the second position, for example. In certain instances, the clamp member **164** can be transitioned between an open configuration and a closed configuration with respect to the ultrasonic blade **66** in response to the reciprocating motion of the inner tubular member **158** between the first position and the second position, for example. In at least one example, the clamp member **164** can be in a fully open configuration while the inner tubular member **158** is at the first position. In at least one example, if the path of the clamp member **164** toward the ultrasonic blade **66** is not impeded, the clamp member **164** can be in a fully closed configuration while the inner tubular member **158** is at the second position.

(142) In use, the trigger **32** can be pivoted toward the fixed handle **34** to apply a force to the load adjustment assembly **710** to transition the load adjustment assembly **710** and the inner tubular member **158** proximally thereby causing the clamp member **164** to be actuated toward the closed configuration, for example. In certain instances, the force applied to the clamp member **164** of the surgical instrument **10** by pivotal movement of the trigger **32** acting through the load adjustment assembly **710** can be limited, or at least partially limited, by the biasing member **704**. In certain instances, the biasing member **704** can be a tension coil spring which can be stretched between the proximal yoke portion **716** and the distal yoke portion **712** to set a biasing member pre-load to a predetermined value. The pre-load can be adjusted to the predetermined value by employing the load adjustment member **714** to adjust the distance between the proximal yoke portion **716** and the distal yoke member **712**, as described in greater detail below.

(143) In certain instances, the biasing member **704** may limit force transmission from the trigger **32** to the clamp member **164** if excessive force is applied to the trigger **32** by a user of the surgical instrument **10**. When the force, which is applied by the user to the trigger **32**, is less than the pre-load limit of the biasing member **704**, the load adjustment assembly **710** moves as a single unit to reciprocate the inner tubular member **158** and actuate the clamp member **164**. In other words, a force less than the pre-load limit of the biasing member **704** does not result in relative motion between the proximal yoke portion **716** and the distal yoke portion **712**.

(144) However, when the force, which is applied by the user to the trigger **32**, exceeds the pre-load limit of the biasing member **704**, the biasing member **704** may be further stretched between the proximal yoke portion **716** and the distal yoke portion **712** thereby causing the proximal yoke portion **716** to move independently from the distal yoke portion **712** for a limited degree thereby limiting the transmission of the excessive force to the inner tubular member **158** and the clamp member **164**.

(145) In certain instances, as illustrated in FIG. **28**, the load adjustment member **714** may comprise a threaded proximal portion **714A** and a distal stop **714B**. The distal stop **714B** can be abutted against the distal yoke portion **712**. The threaded proximal portion **714A** can be received, or at least partially received, within a receiving portion **716A** of the proximal yoke portion **716**. For example, the receiving portion **716A** may include a thread on an internal wall of the receiving portion **716A** which can be threadedly engaged with the threaded proximal portion **714A**, for example.

(146) The load adjustment member **714** can be employed to stretch the tension spring of the biasing member **704** between the proximal yoke portion **716** and the distal yoke portion **712** to an initial stretched condition corresponding to a desired pre-load by adjusting the distance between the proximal yoke portion **716** and the distal yoke portion **712**. For example, rotation of the load adjustment member **714** relative to the proximal yoke portion **716** in a first direction, for example a clockwise direction, may cause the proximal yoke portion **716** to move toward the distal yoke portion **712** thereby decreasing the distance between the proximal yoke portion **716** and the distal yoke portion **712**. Alternatively, rotation of the load adjustment member **714** relative to the proximal yoke portion **716** in a second direction opposite the first direction, for example a counterclockwise direction, may cause the proximal yoke portion **716** to move away from the distal yoke portion **712** thereby increasing the distance between the proximal yoke portion **716** and the distal yoke portion **712**. Because the biasing member is stretched between the proximal yoke

portion **716** and the distal yoke portion **712**, increasing the distance between the proximal yoke portion **716** and the distal yoke portion **712** may increase the pre-load applied to the biasing member **704**. On the other hand, decreasing the distance between the proximal yoke portion **716** and the distal yoke portion **712** may decrease the pre-load applied to the biasing member **704**.

(147) In certain instances, the pre-load applied against the biasing member **704** is set to a predetermined value during the assembly of the surgical instrument **10**. To set the pre-load, the load adjustment member **714** can be turned clockwise and/or counterclockwise, for example, until the predetermined value of the pre-load load is realized by a load monitoring unit, for example. Once the pre-load is set to the predetermined value, the load adjustment assembly **710** can be assembled with the handle assembly **12**.

(148) In certain instances, the distance between the proximal yoke portion **716** and the distal yoke portion **712** can be fixed to maintain the pre-load at the predetermined value. In certain instances, the distance between the proximal yoke portion **716** and the distal yoke portion **712** can be fixed by fixing the load adjustment member **714** to proximal yoke portion **716**. In at least one example, the load adjustment member **714** can be fixed to the proximal yoke portion **716** by welding the load adjustment member **714** to the proximal yoke portion **716**. In at least one example, the load adjustment member **714** can be fixed to the proximal yoke portion **716** by gluing the load adjustment member **714** to the proximal yoke portion **716**. Other techniques for fixing the load adjustment member **714** to the proximal yoke portion **716** are contemplated by the present disclosure.

(149) Referring now to FIG. **29**, in certain instances, the handle assembly **12** of the surgical instrument **10** may include a load adjustment assembly **810**, which is similar in many respects to the load adjustment assembly **710**. For example, like the load adjustment assembly **710**, the load adjustment assembly **810** is operably coupled to a drive shaft of the surgical instrument **10** such as, for example, the outer tubular sheath **56** or the inner tubular member **158**. Furthermore, like the load adjustment assembly **710**, the load adjustment assembly **810** can be employed to adjust an initial load (a pre-load) applied against a biasing member **804**. As described in greater detail below, the biasing member **804** can be configured to protect from transmission of excessive actuation forces greater than the pre-load to a clamp member of the surgical instrument **10**.

(150) As illustrated in FIG. **29**, the load adjustment assembly **810** may include a distal yoke portion **812**, a proximal yoke portion **816**, and a load adjustment member **814**. In certain instances, the load adjustment member **814** may comprise a threaded proximal portion **814a** and a distal stop **814b**. In certain instances, the biasing member **804** may comprise a compression spring which can be located at least partially around a body portion **814c** of the load adjustment member **814**. In such instances, the biasing member **804** can be compressed between the distal stop **814b** and a coupling member **812a** of the distal yoke portion **812**.

(151) In certain instances, as illustrated in FIG. **29**, the coupling member **812a** can be movably engaged with the load adjustment member **814**. For example, the coupling member **812a** may comprise a through-hole which can be configured to receive the body portion **814c** of the load adjustment member **814**. In certain instances, the coupling member **812a** can be slidably moved relative to the body portion **814c** of the load adjustment member **814**, for example. In such instances, the biasing member **804** may cause the coupling member **812a** of the distal yoke portion **812** to be abutted against the proximal yoke portion **816**, as illustrated in FIG. **29**.

(152) Further to the above, referring again to FIG. **29**, the threaded proximal portion **814a** can be received, or at least partially received, within a receiving portion **816a** of the proximal yoke portion **816**. For example, the receiving portion **816a** may include a thread on an internal wall of the receiving portion **816a** which can be threadedly engaged with the threaded proximal portion **814a**, for example.

(153) Further to the above, the distal yoke portion **812** can be operably coupled to a drive shaft of the surgical instrument **10** such as, for example, the outer tubular sheath **56** or the inner tubular

member **158**. FIG. 29 shows a drive collar **811** coupling the distal yoke portion **812** to the inner tubular member **158**. In addition, the proximal yoke portion **816** may be operably coupled to the trigger **32** of the handle assembly **12**. For example, a linkage assembly may couple the trigger **32** to the proximal yoke portion **816**. As described above, the trigger **32** can be pivotably moved relative to the fixed handle **34** to reciprocate the inner tubular member **158** axially between a first position and a second position; and the clamp member **164** can be transitioned between an open configuration and a closed configuration with respect the ultrasonic blade **66** in response to the reciprocating motion of the inner tubular member **158** between the first position and the second position.

(154) In use, the trigger **32** can be pivoted toward the fixed handle **34** to apply a force to the load adjustment assembly **810** to transition the load adjustment assembly **810** and the inner tubular member **158** proximally thereby causing the clamp member **164** to be actuated toward the closed configuration, for example. The force applied to the clamp member **164** of the surgical instrument **10** by pivotal movement of the trigger **32** acting through the load adjustment assembly **810** can be limited, or at least partially limited, by the biasing member **804**. In certain instances, as described above, the biasing member **804** may comprise a compression spring which can be compressed between the distal stop **814b** and the coupling member **812a**, abutted against the proximal yoke portion **816**, to set a biasing member pre-load to a predetermined value. The pre-load can be adjusted to the predetermined value by employing the load adjustment member **714** to adjust the distance between the distal stop **814b** and the coupling member **812a** of the distal yoke portion **812**, as described in greater detail below.

(155) In certain instances, the biasing member **804** may limit force transmission from the trigger **32** to the clamp member **164** if excessive force is applied to the trigger **32** by a user of the surgical instrument **10**. When the force, which is applied by the user to the trigger **32**, is less than the pre-load limit of the biasing member **804**, the load adjustment assembly **810** moves as a single unit to reciprocate the inner tubular member **158** and actuate the clamp member **164**. In other words, a force less than the pre-load limit of the biasing member **804** does not result in relative motion between the distal stop **814b** and the coupling member **812a**. Said another way, if the force applied by the user through the trigger **32** is less than the pre-load limit of the biasing member **804**, the coupling member **812a** remains abutted against the proximal yoke portion **816** as the load adjustment assembly **810** moves to cause the inner tubular member **158** to actuate the clamp member **164** to the closed configuration.

(156) However, when the force, which is applied by the user to the trigger **32**, exceeds the pre-load limit of the biasing member **804**, the biasing member **804** may be further compressed between the distal stop **814b** and the coupling member **812a** thereby causing the coupling member **812a** to move away from the proximal yoke portion **816** for a limited degree thereby limiting the transmission of the excessive force to the inner tubular member **158** and the clamp member **164**.

(157) The load adjustment member **814** can be employed to compress the biasing member **804** between the distal stop **814b** and the coupling member **812a** to an initial compressed condition corresponding to a desired pre-load by adjusting the distance between the distal stop **814b** and the proximal yoke portion **816** abutting against the coupling member **812a**. For example, rotation of the load adjustment member **814** relative to the proximal yoke portion **816** in a first direction, for example a clockwise direction, may cause the proximal yoke portion **816** to move toward the distal yoke portion **812** thereby decreasing the distance between the distal stop **814b** and the coupling member **812a**. Alternatively, rotation of the load adjustment member **814** relative to the proximal yoke portion **816** in a second direction opposite the first direction, for example a counterclockwise direction, may cause the proximal yoke portion **816** to move away from the distal yoke portion **812** thereby increasing the distance between the distal stop **814b** and the coupling member **812a**.

Because the biasing member is compressed between the distal stop **814b** and the coupling member **812a**, increasing the distance between the distal stop **814b** and the coupling member **812a** may

decrease the pre-load applied to the biasing member **804**. On the other hand, decreasing the distance between the distal stop **814b** and the coupling member **812a** may increase the pre-load applied to the biasing member **804**.

(158) In certain instances, the pre-load applied against the biasing member **804** is set to a predetermined value during the assembly of the surgical instrument **10**. To set the pre-load, the load adjustment member **814** can be turned clockwise and/or counterclockwise, for example, until the predetermined value of the pre-load is realized by a load monitoring unit, for example. Once the pre-load is set to the predetermined value, the load adjustment assembly **810** can be assembled with the handle assembly **12**.

(159) In certain instances, the distance between the distal stop **814b** and the coupling member **812a** can be fixed to maintain the pre-load at the predetermined value. In certain instances, the distance between the distal stop **814b** and the coupling member **812a** can be fixed by fixing the load adjustment member **814** to proximal yoke portion **816**. In at least one example, the load adjustment member **814** can be fixed to the proximal yoke portion **816** by welding the load adjustment member **814** to the proximal yoke portion **816**. In at least one example, the load adjustment member **814** can be fixed to the proximal yoke portion **816** by gluing the load adjustment member **814** to the proximal yoke portion **816**. Other techniques for fixing the load adjustment member **814** to the proximal yoke portion **816** are contemplated by the present disclosure.

(160) Although the various embodiments of the devices have been described herein in connection with certain disclosed embodiments, many modifications and variations to those embodiments may be implemented. Also, where materials are disclosed for certain components, other materials may be used. Furthermore, according to various embodiments, a single component may be replaced by multiple components, and multiple components may be replaced by a single component, to perform a given function or functions. The foregoing description and following claims are intended to cover all such modification and variations.

(161) The devices disclosed herein can be designed to be disposed of after a single use, or they can be designed to be used multiple times. In either case, however, the device can be reconditioned for reuse after at least one use. Reconditioning can include any combination of the steps of disassembly of the device, followed by cleaning or replacement of particular pieces, and subsequent reassembly. In particular, the device can be disassembled, and any number of the particular pieces or parts of the device can be selectively replaced or removed in any combination. Upon cleaning and/or replacement of particular parts, the device can be reassembled for subsequent use either at a reconditioning facility, or by a surgical team immediately prior to a surgical procedure. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that reconditioning of a device can utilize a variety of techniques for disassembly, cleaning/replacement, and reassembly. Use of such techniques, and the resulting reconditioned device, are all within the scope of the present application.

(162) Preferably, the invention described herein will be processed before surgery. First, a new or used instrument is obtained and if necessary cleaned. The instrument can then be sterilized. In one sterilization technique, the instrument is placed in a closed and sealed container, such as a plastic or TYVEK bag. The container and instrument are then placed in a field of radiation that can penetrate the container, such as gamma radiation, x-rays, or high-energy electrons. The radiation kills bacteria on the instrument and in the container. The sterilized instrument can then be stored in the sterile container. The sealed container keeps the instrument sterile until it is opened in the medical facility.

(163) While this invention has been described as having exemplary designs, the present invention may be further modified within the spirit and scope of the disclosure. This application is therefore intended to cover any variations, uses, or adaptations of the invention using its general principles. Further, this application is intended to cover such departures from the present disclosure as come within known or customary practice in the art to which this invention pertains.

(164) Any patent, publication, or other disclosure material, in whole or in part, that is said to be incorporated by reference herein is incorporated herein only to the extent that the incorporated materials does not conflict with existing definitions, statements, or other disclosure material set forth in this disclosure. As such, and to the extent necessary, the disclosure as explicitly set forth herein supersedes any conflicting material incorporated herein by reference. Any material, or portion thereof, that is said to be incorporated by reference herein, but which conflicts with existing definitions, statements, or other disclosure material set forth herein will only be incorporated to the extent that no conflict arises between that incorporated material and the existing disclosure material.

Claims

1. An ultrasonic surgical instrument for use in a surgical procedure, comprising: an ultrasonic transducer; an ultrasonic blade, wherein the ultrasonic blade is acoustically coupled to the ultrasonic transducer; a clamp member pivotably movable between an open configuration and an approximated configuration relative to the ultrasonic blade; a reciprocating actuation member operably coupled to the clamp member, wherein the reciprocating actuation member is actuatable between a first position and a second position, and wherein the clamp member moves between the open configuration and the approximated configuration in response to movement of the reciprocating actuation member between the first position and the second position; a load adjustment assembly that applies an initial load against the reciprocating actuation member, wherein the initial load is maintained by the load adjustment assembly at a predetermined value during the surgical procedure, wherein the load adjustment assembly comprises: a stop; a load adjustment member; and a biasing member extending between the stop and the load adjustment member, wherein the initial load is adjustable to the predetermined value by adjusting a distance between the stop and the load adjustment member.
2. The ultrasonic surgical instrument of claim 1, further comprising a drive shaft extending from the reciprocating actuation member to the clamp member, wherein the drive shaft transmits movement of the reciprocating actuation member between the first position and the second position to the clamp member.
3. The ultrasonic surgical instrument of claim 2, wherein the drive shaft extends through the reciprocating actuation member and the load adjustment assembly.
4. The ultrasonic surgical instrument of claim 1, further comprising: a drive shaft, wherein the stop is coupled to the drive shaft, the load adjustment member is attachable to the drive shaft at a proximal location to the stop, and the biasing member extends between the stop and the load adjustment member, and is configured to apply the initial load against the reciprocating actuation member.
5. The ultrasonic surgical instrument of claim 4, wherein the load adjustment member is fixedly attached to the drive shaft at a final distance between the stop and the load adjustment member, wherein the final distance corresponds to the predetermined value of the initial load.
6. The ultrasonic surgical instrument of claim 1, further comprising: a drive shaft, wherein the load adjustment assembly further comprises: a collar at least partially disposed around the drive shaft, wherein the collar comprises the stop at a distal end of the collar, the load adjustment member is located at a proximal location to the stop, and the biasing member extends between the stop and the load adjustment member and is configured to apply the initial load against the reciprocating actuation member.
7. The ultrasonic surgical instrument of claim 6, wherein the collar comprises a threaded proximal portion, wherein the load adjustment member is threadedly engaged with the threaded proximal portion.
8. An ultrasonic surgical instrument for use in a surgical procedure, comprising: an ultrasonic

transducer; an ultrasonic blade, wherein the ultrasonic blade is acoustically coupled to the ultrasonic transducer; a clamp member pivotably movable between an open configuration and an approximated configuration relative to the ultrasonic blade; a reciprocating actuation member operably coupled to the clamp member, wherein the reciprocating actuation member is actuatable between a first position and a second position, and wherein the clamp member moves between the open configuration and the approximated configuration in response to movement of the reciprocating actuation member between the first position and the second position; a load adjustment assembly that applies an initial load against the reciprocating actuation member, wherein the initial load is maintained by the load adjustment assembly at a predetermined value during the surgical procedure; and a drive shaft extending from the reciprocating actuation member to the clamp member, wherein the drive shaft transmits movement of the reciprocating actuation member between the first position and the second position to the clamp member, wherein the load adjustment assembly comprises: a stop coupled to the drive shaft; a load adjustment member attachable to the drive shaft at a proximal location to the stop; and a biasing member extending between the stop and the load adjustment member, wherein the biasing member is configured to apply the initial load against the reciprocating actuation member, wherein the initial load is adjustable to the predetermined value by adjusting a distance between the stop and the load adjustment member.

9. An ultrasonic surgical instrument for use in a surgical procedure, comprising: an ultrasonic transducer; an ultrasonic blade, wherein the ultrasonic blade is acoustically coupled to the ultrasonic transducer; a clamp member pivotably movable between an open configuration and an approximated configuration relative to the ultrasonic blade; a reciprocating actuation member operably coupled to the clamp member, wherein the reciprocating actuation member is actuatable between a first position and a second position, and wherein the clamp member moves between the open configuration and the approximated configuration in response to movement of the reciprocating actuation member between the first position and the second position; a load adjustment assembly that applies an initial load against the reciprocating actuation member, wherein the initial load is maintained by the load adjustment assembly at a predetermined value during the surgical procedure; and a drive shaft extending from the reciprocating actuation member to the clamp member, wherein the drive shaft transmits movement of the reciprocating actuation member between the first position and the second position to the clamp member, wherein the load adjustment assembly further comprises: a collar at least partially disposed around the drive shaft, wherein the collar comprises a stop at a distal end of the collar; a load adjustment member located at a proximal location to the stop; and a biasing member extending between the stop and the load adjustment member, wherein the biasing member is configured to apply the initial load against the reciprocating actuation member, wherein the initial load is adjustable to the predetermined value by adjusting a distance between the stop and the load adjustment member.
