The classic reprint: Why I hate the index finger

by William L. White originally published in *Orthopaedic Review* 9:23–29, 1980

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Abstract In 1980, William White published a paper “Why I Hate the Index Finger”. The National Library of Medicine never indexed it so it has been missing for almost 30 years. It is reprinted here for the benefit of the current generation of hand surgeons.

Keywords Ray amputation · Hand pain · Joint stiffness · Neuroma · Quadriga

Some surgical discoveries that are obvious advances in technique are immediately recognized as important, confirmed, and accepted into the surgical armamentarium. Other great advances become the foundations of surgical care without their authors or origins ever being remembered—almost as if surgeons had “always done it that way.”

With our growing reliance upon databases, it is possible for a classical paper that clarifies both thought and techniques to be lost in time and space, particu-

larly if the National Library of Medicine never indexed it.

Sadly, that has been the fate of the following paper by William White, a giant of hand surgery in the twentieth century, who was chief of plastic surgery at the University of Pittsburgh for 20 years. Upon his election to honorary membership in the American Association for Hand Surgery in 1979, White presented the following paper. White’s concise writing and words of wisdom are as relevant in the twenty-first century as when they were written 30 years ago. The paper was published in *Orthopedic Review*, but *Orthopedic Review* was not indexed in any database and the paper is missing from PubMed. Until now, this paper has been shared by word of mouth and handed down from teacher to student as did my first hand teacher, AAHS member Marvin Arons, who snail mailed a copy to me. Now it is my turn to share this masterpiece with everyone.

Enjoy!

The related article can be found at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11552-010-9285-5>.

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