
Subject: Weird Question

Posted by [Neil](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 04:09:48 GMT

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I guess a little background is in order... for awhile now I've had this (what I and three Dr.'s thought was) an infection on my right index finger underneath the nail... tried a number of things attacking both viral and bacterial possibilities - never healed. Got referred to a different dermatologist last week & he examined it & immediately wanted to take a biopsy - lab results came back today: Squamous-Cell skin cancer. It's confirmed - he got five different opinions on it. So now I have to lose all or part of that finger.

Good news is, of course, this is nothing life-threatening or anything like that - I mean, it's just a finger, and this type of cancer is very unlikely to spread. Bad news is - well, it's what you hold the guitar pick with, so SOMETHING's gonna have to change there... i'm sure i'll still be able to play, but probably not like I can now. Right-hand stuff on the keyboard's gonna be even tougher, since that's not my main instrument to begin with, but it's what I mostly write on. Anyway, it's not like I'm losing a whole hand, I'm just a bit pissed (OK, MASSIVELY pissed) that I'm not going to be able to play anything at the level I currently am able to - in which case, what's the point?

Anyway, here's the Weird Question part: I'm going in for the surgical consult on Tuesday, and the Doc is going to give me three different options, essentially (he gave me a run-down over the phone) and what I need to decide is "How much of my finger do I want to lose?" The least-invasive is a thing called Mohs' Surgery, for which he has a specialist at his practice (whom I'll get to talk to on Tuesday). It takes off the least amount of tissue, and in the case of my particular situation, wouldn't remove any bone, either. Two other options would involve complete surgical removal of a portion of the entire section of the finger, down past the first joint, or even further.

SO... the wierd question is: Do any of you know any musicians with a prosthetic finger? Doesn't matter what instrument they play at this stage, I'm just trying to get an idea of if I have to make a choice of losing a small part of it or losing a larger part of it, which is better when it comes to a prosthesis, because I want to look into that, as well. The Doc says any of these methods would work in my case, because of where it's located & that it's still small in size & hasn't spread much, so I don't really have to be concerned

about "which one will be most effective?" IOW, I need to find out how much is not enough, how much is too much, and how much is "just right" for being able to effectively employ a prosthesis from a musician's standpoint. Might help me make a more educated decision.

Anyway, if anybody knows of anyone, that'd be great; I'd sure appreciate it. Lemme know!

Neil

Subject: Re: Weird Question

Posted by [Aaron Allen](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 04:28:44 GMT

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Tony Iommi had several fingers damaged and the drummer from Def Leppard was missing an entire arm. Many greats were blind or lost their sight. I didn't see them slowing down so I cannot imagine you will slow/stop if you love what you do. I believe you will prevail, and though you may not play the same way, I bet you'll find new ways and new things that are unique and possibly better if that is to be the way. We're amazing creatures when called upon to be.

All the best things man.

AA

"Neil" <OIUIU@OIU.com> wrote in message news:470da20c\$1@linux...

>

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Subject: Re: Weird Question

Posted by [Aaron Allen](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 04:46:52 GMT

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I've had friends meet lommi, and they said he's quite approachable if you can dig up a number/agent/contact info.

Geez, this might seem obvious, but have you googled keywords in combos?

AA

"Neil" <OIUIU@OIU.com> wrote in message news:470dab40\$1@linux...

>

> I know about lommi... he has two first-joint prosthesis' - he
> was the first guy I thought of, of course. That's a different
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> chat me up) about what kind of finger prosthesis they have,
> where it's attached, & what it's capable of doing in terms of
> both pressure & dexterity. I know nothing about this, so I'm
> just trying to get some info from a musical users' standpoint.

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>

>

> "Aaron Allen" <know-spam@not_here.dude> wrote:

>>Tony lommi had several fingers damaged and the drummer from Def Leppard

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>>missing an entire arm. Many greats were blind or lost their sight. I

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Posted by [Neil](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 04:49:04 GMT
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Subject: Re: Weird Question
Posted by [Neil](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 04:55:19 GMT
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"Aaron Allen" <know-spam@not_here.dude> wrote:
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>can dig up a number/agent/contact info.
>Geez, this might seem obvious, but have you googled keywords in combos?

Yes, actually - nothing yet, but still fishing.

Neil

Subject: Re: Weird Question
Posted by [Tom Bruhl](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 05:08:20 GMT
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This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

-----=_NextPart_000_0030_01C80BA3.36B622A0
Content-Type: text/plain;
 charset="iso-8859-1"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: quoted-printable

Neil,
If your doctors agree you have the same prognosis with the
least invasive surgery it sounds like that's the way to go.
I should think the prosthetic work being done today is fairly
custom. They'll make it work for you if you tell them your needs.

On a side note, I am a guitarist also and really did a good job=20

of mangling my left hand index finger with a hedge trimmer. Right where it touches the strings... I played incredibly differently for 6-8 months. I couldn't really use it at all without it feeling like the flesh would tear off again. It was difficult at first then I realized I = was playing some things better because of it. I tried lots of ideas and the other = fingers adapted better than I would have guessed. The music suffered at first = but shortly thereafter became more exciting because of the challenge.

You'll get through it either way but make sure you choose what is right = for longevity!!!

Tom

"Neil" <OIUOIU@OIU.com> wrote in message news:470dacb7\$1@linux...

"Aaron Allen" <know-spam@not_here.dude> wrote:
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Neil

I choose Polesoft Lockspam to fight spam, and you?

<http://www.polesoft.com/refer.html>

-----=_NextPart_000_0030_01C80BA3.36B622A0

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charset="iso-8859-1"

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</HEAD>
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<DIV><FONT face=3DArial size=3D2>If your doctors agree you have the same =  
prognosis=20
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> appreciate it. Lemme know!
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> Neil

Subject: Re: Weird Question
Posted by [rick](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 09:56:25 GMT
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Neil,

i can't recommend anything other my hope that everything turns out alright for you.

On 11 Oct 2007 14:09:48 +1000, "Neil" <OIOIU@OIU.com> wrote:

>
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Subject: Re: Weird Question
Posted by [dc\[3\]](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 12:20:35 GMT
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Good luck Neil!

DC

Subject: Re: Weird Question
Posted by [Graham Duncan](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 13:34:29 GMT
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Neil,

It sounds like the option that preserves the most bone would be best.
Good luck!

Graham

Subject: Re: Weird Question

Posted by [Neil](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 14:40:40 GMT

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"Sarah" <sarahjane@sarahtonin.com> wrote:

>Hi Neil,

>

> No personal similar experiences to relate, but just in thinking about

>it, it seems that for maximum control and sensation post-surgery, you would

>want to preserve the bone.

>

> Actually, I broke my right index finger many years ago with gigs to

>play, and I got pretty good pretty fast at holding the pick with my middle,

>ring, and thumb (I'm a 3 fingered pick holder, when I use them). Just

a

>thought.

>

> Sorry to hear about this, but glad that it's small and unlikely to

>metastasize. I'd be pissed, too. I hate when life throws stuff like this

>at us. But you sound positive and I think you'll do great.

Hey Sarah - I tried that last night (holding the pick with my middle finger) and it works to some extent, but it changes the pivot point of your wrist, so some things work fine, while others don't work too well at all (picking on the high strings is difficult, for example... I can't keep my hand anchored in the same place on the bridge as I can with using thumb & index finger, so that's something that would have to be adapted to/re-learned.

Anyway, yeah I'm positive overall about it - I mean it's a major annoyance, but like I said it's limited to one area, it's not going to spread, it can't affect major systems, etc. No big deal in the grande scheme.

Neil

Subject: Re: Weird Question

Posted by [Neil](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 14:46:33 GMT

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Thanks Don & Rick - I'm sure it'll work out fine.

Neil

"DC" <dc@spammersinhell.com> wrote:

>
>Good luck Neil!
>
>DC
>

Subject: Re: Weird Question

Posted by [Bill L](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 15:23:46 GMT

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How about Django? He was a violinist and lost 5/8 of his left hand fingers and switched to guitar. Good move for him!

I would go for the least removal option. If you practice a couple hours a day you will be playing at your previous level in just a few weeks.

I pick with the reverse grip, similar to Benson, Dimeola. I am guessing you are a conventional picker, resting the pick on the flat side of your index? You could just switch to the "bird" giving finger if you had to.

I once learned to pick the conventional way in about a month, but then realized it was not as good a method.

Yes, it's a big-assed bummer, but you will be fine and if you practice hard you might even become a modern day Django! Just think of the press release you can write for your next album, "Guitarist overcomes CANCER to make greatest album of his career!"

Neil wrote:

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> prosthesis from a musician's standpoint. Might help me make a
> more educated decision.
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> appreciate it. Lemme know!
>
> Neil

Subject: Re: Weird Question

Posted by [IOOIU](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 15:42:42 GMT

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Bill L <bill@billlorentzen.com> wrote:

>How about Django? He was a violinist and lost 5/8 of his left hand
>fingers and switched to guitar. Good move for him!

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>I would go for the least removal option. If you practice a couple hours

>a day you will be playing at your previous level in just a few weeks.

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>I pick with the reverse grip, similar to Benson, Dimeola. I am guessing

>you are a conventional picker, resting the pick on the flat side of your

>index? You could just switch to the "bird" giving finger if you had to.

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>I once learned to pick the conventional way in about a month, but then
>realized it was not as good a method.

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>Yes, it's a big-assed bumner, but you will be fine and if you practice

>hard you might even become a modern day Django! Just think of the press

>release you can write for your next album, "Guitarist overcomes CANCER

>to make greatest album of his career!"

That would be tacky & exploitive and an insult to all the
people that have a serious type of cancer.

Neil

Subject: Re: Weird Question

Posted by [D-unit](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 16:12:11 GMT

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"Neil" <OIOIU@OIU.com> wrote in message news:470da20c\$1@linux...

>

> I guess a little background is in order... for awhile now I've
> had this (what I and three Dr.'s thought was) an infection on
> my right index finger underneath the nail... tried a number of
> things attacking both viral and bacterial possibilities - never
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> more educated decision.
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> Anyway, if anybody knows of anyone, that'd be great; I'd sure
> appreciate it. Lemme know!
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> Neil

I tuned into a late night bluegrass show not too long ago and spotted a guy playing banjo with only 1 finger (from the top side). I've heard many banjo players and this guy could hang with any of them.

I play guit and banjo, but have started using fingerpicks with the guitar. It was a little weird at first but I can do things with the finger picks

and I cannot with a standard plectrum. I mean high speed stuff.

Music comes from your heart. I'd learn to play with my toes if I had to.

Cancer sucks. I hope everything goes well.

db

Subject: Re: Weird Question

Posted by [Jamie K](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 17:01:39 GMT

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Sorry to hear about your finger, Neil. I hope all goes as well as it can go, and it somehow helps rather than hinders your music.

Cheers,

-Jamie

www.JamieKrutz.com

rick wrote:

> Neil,

>

> i can't recommend anything other my hope that everything turns out

> alright for you.

>

> On 11 Oct 2007 14:09:48 +1000, "Neil" <OIOIU@OIU.com> wrote:

>

>> I guess a little background is in order... for awhile now I've

>> had this (what I and three Dr.'s thought was) an infection on

>> my right index finger underneath the nail... tried a number of

>> things attacking both viral and bacterial possibilities - never

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>> Neil
>

Subject: Re: Weird Question

Posted by [Bill L](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 17:12:00 GMT

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As Nigel would say, "Yeah, it's supposed to be "sexy". That's the point, init?"

Hope you're a Tap fan.

Neil wrote:

> Bill L <bill@billlorentzen.com> wrote:

>> How about Django? He was a violinist and lost 5/8 of his left hand

>> fingers and switched to guitar. Good move for him!

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>> I would go for the least removal option. If you practice a couple hours

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>> to make greatest album of his career!"

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> That would be tacky & exploitive and an insult to all the

> people that have a serious type of cancer.

>

> Neil

Subject: Re: Weird Question

Posted by [TCB](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 17:39:06 GMT

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Hey Neil,

Ouch, doesn't sound like a lot of fun. Three things I can say that might be useful.

1. You can always switch the way you hold the pick to the 'thumb presses pick into first knuckle on index finger which is curled underneath' technique. Think Vernon Reid. I tried to play like that on purpose at one point but eventually went back to my normal picking. You wind up using a lot more motion at the elbow than the wrist of fingers but once you're used to it in some ways I think it's more exact than the way most people (including me) hold a pick.

2. A good friend of mine and SPECTACULAR guitar player was working on his

garage when he sawed off big chunks of THREE fingers on his left hand. Index/middle at about the first knuckle and ring just above that knuckle. Of course he assumed he couldn't ever play for real again but it took him a couple of months at most after he had healed and he was playing essentially indistinguishably from before the accident. I was amazed, but not nearly as relieved as he was.

3. Django Reinhardt.

Good luck, and glad it's nothing worse than it is,

TCB

"Neil" <OIOIU@OIU.com> wrote:

>

>I guess a little background is in order... for awhile now I've
>had this (what I and three Dr.'s thought was) an infection on
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>appreciate it. Lemme know!
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>Neil

Subject: Re: Weird Question
Posted by [DJ](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 17:51:39 GMT
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"Neil" <OIOIU@OIU.com> wrote in message news:470da20c\$1@linux...
>
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> prosthesis from a musician's standpoint. Might help me make a
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>
> Anyway, if anybody knows of anyone, that'd be great; I'd sure
> appreciate it. Lemme know!
>
> Neil

Hey bro. first of all, I'm really glad this isn't some sort of life threatening situation. I understand your frustration though. I can't help much on the prosthesis info but years ago I broke my right hand and wrist. It pretty much screwed the pooch as far as my playin went because I really couldn't hold a pick worth a flip anymore. I looked into a lot of solutions and found some pretty amazing picks. The Fred Kelly Bumblebees worked pretty well for me back when I was gigging in Austin a while back.

<http://www.fredkellypicks.com/bumblebee.html>

Good luck amigo. Be sure to mount the portion of the digit that is removed on a board and hang it in the living room like a trophy bass so you can

discuss it with the grandkids.

;o)

Subject: Re: Weird Question

Posted by [D-unit](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2007 18:20:00 GMT

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'ear lyes David St. 'ubins.....

and whye not.

db

"Bill L" <bill@billlorentzen.com> wrote in message [news:470e5aed\\$1@linux...](news:470e5aed$1@linux...)

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> >
> > Neil

Subject: Re: Weird Question
Posted by [Martin Harrington](#) on Fri, 12 Oct 2007 00:40:03 GMT
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All the best, Neil.

--

Martin Harrington
Lend An Ear Sound
Sydney Australia
0414 913 247

"DC" <dc@spammersinhell.com> wrote in message news:470e1513\$1@linux...

>
> Good luck Neil!
>
> DC
>

Subject: Re: Weird Question
Posted by [steve the artguy](#) on Fri, 12 Oct 2007 08:59:44 GMT
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Neil-

I'd think Sarah's idea would be good.

Hope all comes out ok.

-steve

Personally, I can't play with a pick to save my life. Drop in within minutes.

"Sarah" <sarahjane@sarahtonin.com> wrote:

>Hi Neil,

>

> No personal similar experiences to relate, but just in thinking about

>it, it seems that for maximum control and sensation post-surgery, you would

>want to preserve the bone.

>

> Actually, I broke my right index finger many years ago with gigs to

>play, and I got pretty good pretty fast at holding the pick with my middle,

>ring, and thumb (I'm a 3 fingered pick holder, when I use them). Just

a

>thought.

>

> Sorry to hear about this, but glad that it's small and unlikely to

>metastasize. I'd be pissed, too. I hate when life throws stuff like this

>at us. But you sound positive and I think you'll do great.

>

>Hugs,

>

>Sarah

>

>"Neil" <OIOIU@OIU.com> wrote in message news:470da20c\$1@linux...

>>

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>> Neil
>
>

Subject: Re: Weird Question
Posted by [Ted Gerber](#) on Fri, 12 Oct 2007 16:32:37 GMT
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Hope things go well, Neil. I have no advice, but I'll be thinking of you.

Ted

"Neil" <OIOIU@OIU.com> wrote:

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>I guess a little background is in order... for awhile now I've
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>play at this stage, I'm just trying to get an idea of if I have
>to make a choice of losing a small part of it or losing a
>larger part of it, which is better when it comes to a
>prosthesis, because I want to look into that, as well. The Doc
>says any of these methods would work in my case, because of
>where it's located & that it's still small in size & hasn't
>spread much, so I don't really have to be concerned
>about "which one will be most effective?" IOW, I need to find
>out how much is not enough, how much is too much, and how much
>is "just right" for being able to effectively employ a
>prosthesis from a musician's standpoint. Might help me make a
>more educated decision.

>

>Anyway, if anybody knows of anyone, that'd be great; I'd sure
>appreciate it. Lemme know!

>

>Neil
