

Surgically alters thumbs to better use iPhone

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Thomas Martel, 28, of Bonnie Brae is a big guy. So he has a hard time using the features on ever-shrinking user interfaces on devices like his new iPhone. At least, he did, until he had his thumbs surgically altered in a revolutionary new surgical technique known as "whittling."

"From my old Treo, to my Blackberry, to this new iPhone, I had a hard time hitting the right buttons, and I always lost those little styluses," explains Martel. "Sure, the procedure was expensive, but when I think of all the time I save by being able to use modern handhelds so much faster, I really think the surgery will pay for itself in ten to fifteen years. And what it's saving me in frustration - that's priceless."

"This is really, on the edge sort of stuff," explains Dr. Robert Fox Spars, who worked on developing the procedure. "We're turning plastic surgery from something that people use in service of vanity, to a real tool for improving workplace efficiency."

The procedure involved making a small incision into both thumbs and shaving down the bones, followed by careful muscular alteration and modification of the fingernails. While Martel's new thumbs now appear small and effeminate in comparison to his otherwise very large hands, he says he can still lift "pretty much anything I could lift before the surgery - though opening spaghetti sauce jars has been a problem. That was a big surprise."

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