

Burning question: Why do paper cuts hurt so much?

Skin expert Dr Hayley Goldbach believes the pain is partly because fingertips are one of the most sensitive areas of the body. This sensitivity is caused by nerve endings that can warn the brain, through pain, of any danger – for example, the risk of being burnt by hot things. Another possible reason why paper cuts hurt so much is because they are not usually deep enough for the body's healing mechanisms (such as scabbing) to be triggered. This means that the nerves are left exposed for longer and keep sending danger messages to the brain. In addition, the edges of paper aren't often as smooth as they look – they can actually be quite rough, which means that they do more damage than you'd expect. Finally, your hands are often in use, meaning the cut is pulled and stretched. This means it can take longer to heal than if it were elsewhere on your body.



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