

## Preface

The use of minimally invasive spine surgical principles and techniques is rapidly escalating. It is finding its way, to one degree or another, into the practice of many spine surgeons. The enthusiasm for its use, on the part of both the spine surgeon and the patient, is impressive and dominates medical websites and Internet discussion as well as many surgical society meetings.

The reasons for this popularity are myriad. They include safety, blood loss, pain, and popularity among patients. With this enthusiasm, however, some self-reflection and careful consideration are necessary. As physicians, we must always consider the best available evidence that supports the use of any new technology. In this text, our aim is to consider the available evidence to support minimally invasive spine surgery. However, we must also consider safety, learning curve issues, and the high cost of these technologies. The latter two concerns may be more relevant for some conditions than for others. In varying degrees, there are also important considerations to be made for surgeon-specific issues.

We have attempted to assemble, in the pages that follow, a collection of works that provide the foundation for a minimalist approach to surgery of the spine. This should provide insight into pathology-specific and technique-related concerns. With this comes an understanding of the limitations of minimally invasive surgery, as well as its advantages, on a case-by-case basis. One must remember that “through small openings can lurk large complications.” With this in mind, please read, enjoy, and learn from this collection of treatises from experienced authors/practitioners on the subject. We hope that you, as do we, find them to provide an objective, honest, and balanced approach to minimally invasive surgery and also to offer a useful reference for years to come.

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Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery  
A Practical Guide to Anatomy and Techniques  
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