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principle of finite induction proven from the  
well-ordering principle for natural numbers

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We give a proof for the “strong” formulation.

Let  $S$  be a set of natural numbers such that  $n$  belongs to  $S$  whenever all numbers less than  $n$  belong to  $S$  (i.e., assume  $\forall n(\forall m < n \ m \in S) \Rightarrow n \in S$ , where the quantifiers range over all natural numbers). For indirect proof, suppose that  $S$  is not the set of natural numbers  $\mathbb{N}$ . That is, the complement  $\mathbb{N} \setminus S$  is nonempty. The well-ordering principle for natural numbers says that  $\mathbb{N} \setminus S$  has a smallest element; call it  $a$ . By assumption, the statement  $(\forall m < a \ m \in S) \Rightarrow a \in S$  holds. Equivalently, the contrapositive statement  $a \in \mathbb{N} \setminus S \Rightarrow \exists m < a \ m \in \mathbb{N} \setminus S$  holds. This gives a contradiction since the element  $a$  is an element of  $\mathbb{N} \setminus S$  and is, moreover, the *smallest* element of  $\mathbb{N} \setminus S$ .