

BOOK REVIEWS

CARE OF THE LOW BACK

Garth S. Russell, MD, and Thomas R. Highland, MD

F.A. Davis, Philadelphia, 1990

Care of the Low Back by Russell and Highland, published by Spine Publications, is an excellent patient education book. Especially useful in this book is the emphasis that pain may be the result of day-to-day activities, life-style, level of fitness, nutritional status, and the aging process. It stresses the importance of the necessity for patients to participate in the treatment and prevention of their back pain. Included are excellent pictures and diagrams on correct ways to lift, carry, sit, sleep, get in and out of a car, clean a bathtub, sweep a floor, make a bed, and other activities of daily living. The section on recognition of stress and stress management is well written and contains practical examples of stress management tools. The weakest section of the book involves one of the last chapters discussing the diagnosis, workup, and treatment of various back problems. Patients may assume because a test or treatment is described from an educational standpoint that this is what they should expect a physician to do. Most physicians would agree that plain X-rays are not always indicated, particularly early in an evaluation process. Also, under treatment there is no description of physical therapy, modalities, myofascial release, or muscle energy techniques. These are very important parts of many treatment programs, yet there is no description of them, while there are descriptions of acupuncture, hypnosis, and brain stimulation. Even under the rehabilitation section there is no description of the benefits of physical therapy.

There is, however, so much good information on life-style, activities of daily living, posture, bending, and other areas that can impact pain in the lower back, that the few weaknesses in the medical section should not prevent you from recommending this book to your patients. I strongly suggest that this book be a part of every office practice of health care professionals who treat patients with low back pain.

The list price of \$19.95 is certainly affordable and the information provided is well worth the expenditure.

Karen S. Rucker, MD

MANUAL FOR FUNCTIONAL TRAINING, 3RD EDITION

M. Lynn Palmer, PhD

Janice E. Toms, MEd

F.A. Davis, Philadelphia, 1992

The authors of this book have attempted, quite successfully, to outline functional tasks for a variety of disabilities.

Initially the reader is provided with a concise introduction to spinal cord injury, brain injury, and amputees, focusing on the functional limitations related to each disability. This is followed by information a physical therapist may find useful on prosthetics, orthotics, wheelchairs, and other assistive devices, though this is an area that is rapidly changing, and with the advent of new materials and designs this chapter's information may be quickly out of date. The chapter on body mechanics, while useful for students, should be the standard of practice in a physical therapy clinic regardless of the types of patients treated.

Functional training is an integral part of a patient's rehabilitation and the authors, in outline format, describe in detail these tasks based on the amount of limb and trunk involvement the patient has.

This text is a great reference for physical therapy and physical therapy assistant students. This book will not be a valuable asset in a clinic that sees primarily rehabilitation patients. However, in a physical therapy clinic that treats an occasional spinal cord injury, brain injury, or amputee this book would be an excellent resource.

Karen Drilling, PT

Physical Therapy Department

Medical College of Virginia Hospitals