

Book Reviews

Functional Soft Tissue Examination and Treatment by Manual Methods. The Extremities.

Warren I. Hammer, editor.

Aspen Publishers, Inc., Gaithersburg, Maryland, 1990.

As a chiropractor, I am often frustrated by the relative lack of information regarding soft tissue injuries in major texts. For this reason, I found it refreshing to read an entire text dedicated to this subject, which is often covered in only a chapter or so in examination or technique texts. Dr. Hammer presents a comprehensive method of examination and treatment of the soft tissues of the extremities. Obviously influenced by the concepts of James Cyriax, he makes use of active and passive contractile tissues in determining the source of pain. His purpose is to employ this method of analysis in examining the structures of the extremities. This author advances these ideas beyond assessment of soft tissue injury and relates them to the manual treatment of injury of these structures in the extremities.

There is an orderly flow to the design of this text. This allows ease of reading initially and its use later as a reference. The book can be divided into three basic sections. In the first, basic soft tissue concepts are reviewed, ranging from patterns of pain to cellular repair. The second section discusses the examination and treatment of each region of the extremities. Each joint and its surrounding area is covered by a separate chapter. The final section of the text is devoted to manual treatment of injury to soft tissues of the extremities.

The graphics in this volume are clear and representative of the text. This is especially evident in the examination and treatment chapters where the majority are photographs. Arrows have been superimposed to describe directions of force. The illustrations also have sufficient detail to convey meaning, without being cluttered.

One of the strengths of this text is that Dr. Hammer has drawn on several authorities to address various topics in his book. As such, they are able to relate complex concepts in an understandable manner to the reader. Also, the reader has confidence that the material presented is current and reasonably objective. The contribution of the basic scientists in their chapter on pathology of musculoskeletal soft tissues, provides an excellent precis of the process of tissue damage and repair at the cellular level. These aspects of the soft tissue are too often overlooked in clinical practice.

Although the contribution of experts is an overall strength, it may also be a deficit. The chapter authored by John Mennel on the manipulable lesion is an example. Granted, this long-time proponent of manual treatment has enormous clinical experience, but I find that his guidelines for examination and manipulation are no more than opinion. He makes no mention of studies endeavoring to establish a valid and reliable means of diagnosing a manipulable lesion. This is one of a few poorly referenced chapters, in a text which otherwise has broad and recent references.

Personally, I also found that the final chapter on rehabilitation of soft tissue injuries adds little value to the text. It only serves to duplicate the treatment measures covered more thoroughly in the preceding chapters. As a result, this chapter could be accused of resembling a "cookbook", and is a disservice to the rest of the book, which was effective in relating treatment to both structure and dysfunction.

For this text, the audience would either be students of manual therapy or practicing clinicians. Students will find that this text relates basic structural information to the setting of examination and therapy. I would recommend it as an introductory book for this group. The practitioner will find this a good review text for soft tissue procedures. It will also update him/her on theoretical aspects of soft tissue treatment.

Apart from the few shortcomings outlined above, this text is a current and a comprehensive review of examination and treatment of soft tissue injury.

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Serious Training For Serious Athletes

Rob Sleamaker, MSc

Leisure Press, Champaign, Illinois

1989, \$12.95

Serious Training For Serious Athletes is an attractive 247 page soft cover book that is marketed for the ever-growing number of fitness enthusiasts in our population. Author Rob Sleamaker obtained a Masters degree in exercise physiology from the University of Arizona and has since worked in various sports related areas. A great deal of this time was spent as a consultant to the U.S. Biathlon Team. As well as having a scientific background, he also contributes from the athletes point of view being a competitor himself.

In the preface the author states that the two goals of the book are to bring a better understanding of the science behind fitness to the athletes and to encourage a systematic training approach. This is accomplished through eleven, well laid out chapters.

The first four chapters deal with basic planning and physiology. The material is written at a suitable level, combining enough science with easy to understand explanations.

Chapters five and six deal with the 'SERIOUS' system of training. SERIOUS is an acronym for speed, endurance, race/pace, interval, overdistance, up/vertical, and strength. These are the seven components that the author utilizes in his system of training. The general concepts are good and are explained well. The organization of training methods is accomplished through the use of logs and journals which are illustrated in the following chapter.

The next two chapters deal less with the systematic side of training but concentrate more on the areas of stretching and nutrition. While not being a treatise on the subject of nutrition, the book does explain the theory behind eating primarily carbohydrates. Practical dieting tips are also included.

One of the most important sections in the book deals not with training, but rather with rest and recovery. The author explains the often overlooked requirement for rest and emphasizes its importance.

The book is summed up nicely in the final chapter and appendices which include blank copies of the various logs and journals that are used with the SERIOUS system.

The only problem that I have with the book are some of the details of the system. I agree totally that monitoring one's progress, i.e. in a systematic manner, is essential to allow one to see what works and what does not for that person. I can not say that any two people can derive the same benefits from any system of training. Overall I recommend the book to anyone who is at all serious about competing in any endurance sport. The person does not have to be a world class athlete, but I believe that anyone who exercises regularly would benefit from increasing their knowledge in the area of exercise physiology.

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