

ESSA's Student Manual for Health, Exercise and Sport Assessment (2014)

Jeff Coombes, Tina Skinner (editors). Mosby Elsevier 446 pages, ISBN 978-0-7295-4142-8

Exercise prescription is increasingly important for physiotherapists for clients of all ages and conditions. Assessment of health, physical fitness and performance provides the baseline for prescribing safe and relevant programmes for individual clients. This text, written by Australian and New Zealand contributors in collaboration with Exercise and Sports Science Australia (ESSA), provides the basic theory and protocols for exercise testing. It includes tests that range from the use of a tape measure to sophisticated laboratory-based tests, such as lactate threshold and exercise electrocardiography. While most physiotherapists are less likely to be involved in the clinical procedures of the latter, they need a good understanding of the interpretation of results.

The cardiovascular health procedures include the basic assessment of auscultation, heart rate and blood pressure monitoring, the Framingham Risk Charts and the Australian Cardiovascular Disease Risk Charts. The chapter on Physical Activity describes the International Physical Activity Questionnaire, and use of commercially-available pedometers and accelerometers. Pre-exercise health screening and risk stratification, important for identifying potential 'red flags' for exercise prescription or indication for physician referral, are presented clearly. The chapters on neuromuscular strength, power, endurance and flexibility are applicable for clients ranging from sedentary to elite athletes. High intensity exercises that are not dependent on expensive laboratory equipment and interpretation of their results, including sub-maximal and VO_2 max testing procedures are described. Finally, functional measures relevant for older adults are presented.

Throughout the book, step-by-step procedures are explained which can be used in clinics and practices to standardize these assessments. Detailed questionnaires and reporting forms are provided, including normative values and the reliability of the data are where these are available. The ring bound structure makes the book user-friendly as a guide.

Students and novice graduates will find the book extremely useful, in addition to those colleagues wishing to update and expand their skills. A code inside the book allows full text download, add notes and highlight sections. It is extremely user-friendly and informative, providing expert knowledge for working in this highly competitive field of health and exercise assessment.

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