
Therese Sullivan, MS, OTR

The Myofascial Release Manual
Carol J. Manheim and Diane K. Lavell, PhD (1989).
Slack, Inc., 6900 Grove Road, Thorofare, NJ 08086.
126 pp., $20.

This spiral-bound, 126-page manual, written by two physical therapists, provides one of the first illustrated references on myofascial release techniques. The introduction provides a brief philosophical base and general assumptions for therapists using this technique. The introduction also includes a statement regarding the purpose of the book, which is “to teach the technique of myofascial stretching as a mechanical skill.” I warn readers against trying to teach themselves this technique through the use of the manual—The usefulness of this manual is as a review and reference book for therapists who have already been instructed and guided in this technique.

The stretching techniques are pictured and described for various muscle groups and regions throughout the body. The manual is not very well organized, and it is difficult to see how the therapists would be positioned in several of the photographs. The manual does discuss one-, two-, and three-person stretching techniques, which is much-needed information to supplement many myofascial courses that concentrate on one-man stretching techniques.

The manual concludes with a brief discussion of initial assessment, an appendix that contains a sample evaluation form, and a helpful reference list for further information. The manual is easy to read and, despite several shortcomings, offers needed information on myofascial release techniques. Therapists who have undergone training in this technique can use this manual as a review guide.

Nancy Finkelstein, MS, OTR

Self-Injurious Behavior: A Somatosensory Treatment Approach
37 pp., $11.50.

This book represents a unique, well-organized, and succinct summary of an occupational therapist's clinical experience, which was gained over many years of practice and a focused doctoral dissertation. The author aptly notes both the strengths and limitations of her study and clinical protocol, which are built on a solid review of current literature. The text acknowledges the complexity involved in the treatment of persons with self-injurious behaviors and incidence rates as well as plausible etiologies and frames of reference for treatment.

The author describes the effect of tactile stimulation on the reduction of self-injurious behaviors of persons in a large institution for persons with developmental disabilities. The study and treatments are successfully executed within the confines of available staff and resources. The treatment program outlined is pragmatic and lends itself to easy replication for both clinical and research purposes.

I highly recommend this text for practicing clinicians and researchers who wish to enhance the quality of life of persons with self-injurious behaviors.

Dianne C. Schwarz, MS, Ed. OTR

Work Hardening: State of the Art
Slack, Inc., 6900 Grove Road, Thorofare, NJ 08086.
400 pp., $33.

The subject of work hardening is no easy matter: The name itself implies complexities and unknowns. The authors, however, address themselves well to the problems of and solutions to work hardening.

Although program models and history are described simply, this book's most useful aspect is its multitude of practical examples. More than half of the entire book is devoted to specific programs, which are divided into philosophy, evaluation and treatment methods, education, marketing, and a case study.

The successes and failures of marketing text are mentioned throughout this book. This is an important divergence from traditional program analysis, but it is now as important as reimbursement mechanisms and significant referral bases.

My only criticism of this book lies in the thought that work-hardening programs are complex and difficult to operate successfully. They require, by definition and by plan, an extensive rehabilitation team. This book is almost completely written for the occupational therapist. Although a discussion of team involvement would have increased the number of pages, it would also have given a more complete picture of work hardening's complexities. Nevertheless, this is an excellent book and I highly recommend it not only for those occupational therapists considering embarking into the work-hardening arena but also for seasoned practitioners. ▲

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