
This book, which had its first edition in 1985, covers many of the aspects of normal physiology which are relevant in rehabilitation medicine. By and large the chapters are authoritative, well-presented and reasonably up-to-date. Those with prior training in neurology will find the non-neurological sections most useful and Vice-versa.

There is an implicit assumption that clinical practice must always be based on an understanding of normal structure and function. The traditional view is sometimes a handicap in a textbook of this sort, as it sometimes is in undergraduate medical education. For example, there is no clearly defined topic in normal function which relates to epilepsy, perhaps the reason the topic fails to get a mention in the index. Conversely, normal structure and function sometimes throw little light on pathophysiology; for example, clinicians will not learn much of practical value from the section on the structure of the basal ganglia. The sections on pathophysiology in this book sometimes seem almost to be afterthoughts, introduced (as in many undergraduate textbooks) merely to lever the dought of normal physiology. Muscle contractures and spasticity are examples of topics which are of pragmatic importance, requiring a physiological explanation and meriting much more detailed treatment in the main text; neither is mentioned in the index. In further chapters would benefit from the clinical perspective which makes some of the chapters especially useful, for example the one on energy expenditure during ambulation.


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The book would also benefit greater emphasis on pharmacological principles relevant to normal function and clinical practice. Nevertheless this book is a convenient source of information which is otherwise not easily accessible to busy clinicians.


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