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# Media Review

*Introducing the Core: Demystifying the Body of an Athlete*
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The *core* is commonly defined in the research literature as "lumbopelvic hip" segments[1] but regularly includes structures that extend into the thigh (gluteal muscles), thoracic vertebrae (rectus abdominis and iliopsoas) and even the cervical vertebrae (multifidus).[1–4] *Introducing the Core: Demystifying the Body of an Athlete* offers a compelling rationale for including the thigh musculature and thoracic segments in the definition of the core on the basis of function and structural balance. The rationale is further supported with unique and effective models (eg, a baseball as the pubis symphysis in a harness model).

It is also clear that the editor and sole contributor to the first half of this book possesses an excellent anatomical understanding beyond basic function. This knowledge is evident in the translation to surgical applications. The detailed descriptions of diagnostic and surgical strategies either initiated or refined by the author demonstrate that he is an expert on the topic. The cadaveric work on pages 24–26 is an excellent example of this. For these reasons, the content in this book is of value to those who seek a greater appreciation of this much-misunderstood body segment.

However, this book falls short of expectations on too many other conditions for it to be recommended to the greater health care provider population. The volume is seemingly presented as a useful text for academic purposes; that is, chapter questions and answers are provided for readers to self-assess comprehension. Yet *Introducing the Core* is so difficult to read that it presents a considerable barrier to student engagement, even at the graduate level. This is a very unfortunate circumstance, as I thoroughly enjoyed the content once I was able to filter out the chaff.

The language used reflects the way someone might speak very casually. At too many points in the first half of the book, the author deviates too far from the topic at great length. Also, unnecessary side comments appear in every paragraph (page 4: "okay, we got that"; page 6: "Duh"; page 8: "ya da, ya da, ya da"). Later, after describing what appears to be an important point, the author writes "We'll not talk about that now" without ever returning to the point. Outdated references to athletes or media personalities might limit the usefulness of this textbook. Juvenile attempts at humor fall flat (page 130, Eminem "demonstrating insertion of the iliopsoas muscle onto the lesser trochanter of the hip bone").

Early chapters follow a challenging structure, and case studies are either too short or too long, failing to address the important point in the chapter narrative. Several of the early chapters could be condensed without this unnecessary verbiage, thereby shortening the text substantially: for example, the history behind the "eureka" moment on pages 21–23.

At many points early and sporadically later in the book, the important point is made that medical knowledge of the core is challenged due to the location of the sex organs. As such, societal taboos may play a role, which is certainly an accurate statement. The author comments on possible and unnecessary titillation in this situation and then presents several figures that seem to strive to elicit that same titillation from the reader (pages 6, 16, and 69). As a reviewer, I was surprised that many of the images survived the editing of a volume for health care professionals. This is even more striking as the author does an excellent job of describing the sex-specific implications of the core on injury incidence later in the book, with appropriate selection of images.

Throughout the first half of the book, very specific patient cases are mentioned, with full patient names given. This is not the case in the second half of the text, where guest authors present their cases. Was patient consent obtained, and even if it was, are these depictions compliant with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act?

Chapters in the latter half of the publication are contributions from various authors. Many of these chapters offer interesting content and compelling perspectives. The chapter structure here is considerably improved over the first half of the book, but the progression is not always consistent in the flow of the text. This book would be more

useful if these chapters followed the same format (eg, diagnostic, surgical, rehabilitative, and preventive factors) for each joint or body segment (ie, spine, pelvis, sacrum, hip).

The format of this text adds to the challenge of extracting information. The main body of the text is provided in a very small font. Many images are superfluous and poorly aligned, making comprehension more difficult than necessary. An example is in the first chapter, where a reference is made to an athlete's batting prowess, but the image is of an athlete being injured while fielding. The suggestion was made in the text to eliminate the term *sports hernia*, and then an image displays a red line through the term *sports hernia*. Figures of disarticulated cadavers to illustrated the benefit of fresh over frozen cadavers are unnecessary.

Many of these concerns benefit from the use of subclassifications to case conditions beginning in Chapter 22. Before that chapter, case studies of various conditions are mixed even within the same paragraph. Later chapters have greatly improved text and image selection and alignment. Were the entire text organized as the last third of the book, then this review would likely have been very different.

Listed at $150.00, it would be challenging to understand which health care professionals might find the content worth that price in its current form. If the editor revisits the text presentation, surgical professionals might find the content of value. However, it would be presumptuous to estimate what value that content would have until the revisions take place.

My suggestion is to pass on this academic textbook at all levels. If future editions receive the considerable work needed to fix the format, especially in the first half of the book; remove unnecessary verbiage and graphics; adjust the font formatting; and remove gratuitous comments and images, this might offer value for higher-level undergraduate or graduate education, to medical students, and especially to those headed to the surgical or sports medicine environments. This book does offer a unique perspective on the core and implications from a mostly surgical perspective, with much less value for the rehabilitation practitioner.

## References


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