

Book Review

by Michael A. Seffinger, DO, FAAFP, CSPOMM

The Muscle Energy Manual: Evaluation and Treatment of the Pelvis and Sacrum, Volume Three

by Fred L. Mitchell, Jr., DO, FAAO, FCA and P. Kai Galen Mitchell, BA

In the 1950s, inspired by the work of T.J. Ruddy, DO and Carl Kettler, DO, Fred Mitchell, Sr., DO developed a system of evaluation and treatment he called “muscle energy” techniques. His first application was to treat movement impairment of pelvisacral joints. He later developed applications to other areas of the body. In the 1960s and early 1970s, Fred Mitchell, Jr., DO collaborated with his father and developed the muscle energy concept into a refined learning module inclusive of functional anatomy, neuromusculo-skeletal physiology and biomechanics, visual and palpatory diagnosis and psychomotor skill development. This refinement is still evolving into the 21st century as Fred has collaborated with his son, Kai, to produce a superb instructional manual on muscle energy concepts, evaluation and treatment methods.

F.L. Mitchell, Jr., P.S. Moran and N.A. Pruzzo wrote the initial muscle energy treatise and published it in 1973 under the title “An Evaluation and Treatment Manual of Osteopathic Manipulative Procedures”. That manual was used for 25 years in hundreds of tutorials held worldwide on muscle energy technique. This new series of Volumes significantly upgrades and replaces that manual. Volume III is in a way a return to the roots

of muscle energy technique in that it addresses pelvic somatic dysfunction. The current Mitchell model of pelvic function and dysfunction is, however, a considerable expansion from the original journal article by Mitchell, Sr. in 1958 entitled “Structural Pelvic Function”. Additionally, this text has updated scientific references, engaging historical perspectives throughout, and is the most comprehensive treatise in print on pelvic somatic dysfunction and its evaluation and treatment with muscle energy techniques.

As stated in the preface, Muscle Energy Treatment (MET) “is more than a method of treatment or therapy; *it is also a biomechanics-based analytic diagnostic system, using precise physical diagnosis evaluation procedures designed to identify and quantify articular range-of-motion restriction.*” Like Volumes I and II, Volume III also succinctly covers pertinent articular anatomy and biomechanics, respiratory motion as it relates to the pelvis, and evaluation and treatment procedures using muscle energy concepts developed by Fred L. Mitchell, Sr. and Jr. Key concepts are summarized in well-designed tables. Kai Mitchell’s graphic drawings are innovative, accurate and clear. They complement and facilitate comprehension of the concepts described

concisely and eloquently in the text. The manual has a detailed table of contents and is well organized. Black and white photos depicting evaluation and treatment procedures enhance the text and drawings well. Explanations of procedures are very articulate and easily understood. Flow charts and differential diagnosis tables are helpful in making the material palatable and practical.

The manual is quite readable due to the matter-of-fact down to earth writing style and interesting historical references and discussions of controversies in the current medical literature that are seamlessly woven throughout. A unique aspect is that there are recommended treatment sequences, including their rationales; true pearls from the master himself. Since muscle energy procedures enlist the patient’s activation of muscle force, it is necessary to use very accurate commands to get the patient to move exactly how the practitioner wants in order to increase the effectiveness of the procedure. Again, as in previous volumes, Dr. Mitchell provides effective and succinct commands to use to instruct patients properly. The techniques are outlined in a step-wise fashion and are super easy to follow. The descriptions are as accurate as possible, stating positions

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in three planes, amount of movement in millimeters, amount of force in pounds and the duration of activity in seconds.

Volume III is far from merely a technical manual. It is a scholarly treatise on pelvic somatic dysfunction. It includes a detailed discussion of the gait cycle as it relates to the Mitchell model of pelvic mechanics. It also addresses the relationship between somatic dysfunction of the lumbar spine and lower extremities on pelvic mechanics and dysfunctions. Clinical cases, mechanisms of injury, problem solving, differential diagnosis and organization of examination and treatment procedures are additional components of this manual that set it apart from any other book on manual medicine in print today. Clinical indications and precautions are clearly delineated and clinical pearls derived from Dr. Mitchell's 40 years of intimacy with these procedures in clinical practice are abundant.

Most of the diagnostic and treatment procedures in this manual have been adopted as standard in all of the American osteopathic medical schools. They are also taught around the world and formulate integral components of the curricula at foreign osteopathic colleges and institutions as well. They have been taught to physical therapists and have made their way into the curriculum at their institutions as well. They are rationally based, logically sequenced and easily learned and reproduced.

I have been using these procedures for 15 years in clinical practice. They are amongst the most useful and effective procedures ever designed for evaluation and treatment of patients of all ages with pelvic and sacral somatic dysfunction. Their utility and effectiveness is readily experienced when applied to patients with acute as well as refractory and recurrent mechanical low back pain. The procedures taught in this manual are non-

invasive, non-traumatic, safe, efficient, and a rapidly effective alternative to joint mobilization by thrust or HVLA.

If you have been confused about pelvic mechanics and applications of muscle energy evaluation and treatment procedures to the pelvis, this manual will surely straighten you out. It is **the** authoritative text on muscle energy evaluation and treatment procedures of the pelvis and sacrum. I highly recommend this manual for practitioners and instructors using manual diagnostic and treatment procedures. □

Editor's note: Volume III of The Muscle Energy Manual can be ordered from the publisher: MET Press, P.O. Box 4577, East Lansing, MI 48826-4577. Fax: (517) 332 4196.

Inter Linea: The Journal of Osteopathic Philosophy

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Wm. Sutherland, DO

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