Book Review: "Introduction to Splinting: A Clinical Reasoning and Problem Solving Approach, Third Edition"

A text by Brenda M. Coppard, PhD,OTR/L, and Helene Lohman, MA, OTD, OTR/L
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REVIEW
Introduction to Splinting: A Clinical Reasoning and Problem Solving Approach presents valuable information to any professional who is interested in developing or improving their splinting/orthotic fabrication skills. The text is more than a mere instructional manual, it promotes problem solving and clinical reasoning skills, thus promoting professional growth. It is an excellent resource for independent study or as a classroom text.

PURPOSE
Custom splint fabrication is a vitally important component of upper extremity intervention. It is a skill that requires knowledge of pathology, physiology, anatomy, and biomechanics. Historically, occupational therapists have been the primary professionals responsible for UE splint fabrication. However, the increasing specialization of hand therapy has led to an increase in the number of physical therapists practicing in this arena. Although written by occupational therapists, it is not discipline specific and serves as an appropriate resource for all professional students and practitioners who might be interested in learning or improving skills of custom splint fabrication.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TEXT
The book is organized into three units consisting of nineteen chapters, a comprehensive glossary, four appendixes, and comes with a companion CD-ROM. The first three chapters in Unit One explore the foundations of splinting. Topics include the need for occupational- based splinting and equipment and tool characteristics and requirements. The final three chapters of the first unit provide the reader with detailed information on clinical assessment and clinical reasoning as they apply to splint fabrication. The authors encourage the reader to think about the functional needs of the client and how to improve or maintain that function through custom splinting.

Unit Two consists of ten chapters that address the fabrication and fitting of splints based on the anatomical region, specific diagnosis, or population. Each chapter follows the same format, beginning with the diagnostic indications for the splint and any precautions and/or special concerns. The chapter then details the method for fabricating the splint, including written instructions and a reproducible pattern. The method for fitting the splint is then discussed, with technical tips for proper fit provided as

appropriate. In addition to the prescription and design of specific splints, this text provides the reader with the opportunity to apply the knowledge presented.

Unit three consists of three chapters that provide a quick and less detailed overview of lower extremity orthotics, upper extremity prosthetics, and ethical issues related to splinting. These chapters follow the same format as the previous chapters, with the authors presenting background information followed by case studies and self quizzes. However, the chapters on lower extremity orthotics and upper extremity prosthetics do not meet the level of detail and depth attained in the previous chapters. While the information covered in these two chapters is not as detailed as the previous chapters, it is obvious that this text was written as an upper extremity custom splinting text and these two chapters serve only as an introductory bridge between custom splinting and two topics commonly associated with custom splinting. A reader interested in lower extremity orthotics and upper extremity prosthetics would receive an adequate introduction to these topics with this text, but would find it necessary to explore these topics in more detail with another text. The final chapter on ethical issues related to splinting is more than adequate, but it appears as if it was placed in Unit Three as an afterthought. It would have been more effective and beneficial to the reader if grouped with the topics discussed in Unit One.

GRAPHICS, PHOTOGRAGHS AND LEARNING AIDES
Each chapter provides the reader with a myriad of visual and/or practical methods for assuring a positive learning experience. All chapters contain clear learning objectives, multiple charts, reference photographs, diagrams, self quizzes and case studies. Many chapters contain a "what is wrong with this splint" laboratory experience, in which the reader is able to evaluate an imperfect splint. Practical guides and check sheets for completing various splints, along with reproducible patterns, are also provided to the reader. Clinical reasoning and problem solving are encouraged through the use of case studies that incorporate theory, practice, and fabrication of the splint. Additionally, video demonstration with verbal instruction is presented on the CD-ROM.

SUMMARY
This book has a format that is easy to follow and a writing style that is a quick and easy read. The authors provide the reader with a great deal of practical information that is immediately clinically relevant. In addition, the reader has many evaluative opportunities, including case studies and photographic examples. The appendices and CD-ROM are added bonuses which include videos, examples of home program instructions, fitting forms, and check sheets for assessing splints. This book is an excellent resource for any student or practitioner, new or seasoned alike, who is interested in custom splint fabrication.