



A massage therapist's guide to lower back and pelvic pain

Leon Chaitow

Sandy Fritz

Foreword by
Tom Myers

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therapists' guide
to lower back
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With accompanying DVD

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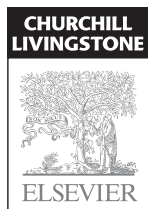
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Foreword



Given the wide range and prodigious output of both Dr Leon Chaitow and Dr Sandy Fritz, it is no surprise that a book that combines their efforts should be well researched, comprehensively presented and generally a treat to read and use. Low Back and Pelvic Pain is a timely subject, and the authors' approach lends itself to contemporary competently trained massage therapists.

Modern medicine is so intricate (and the system for delivering it is so distressed) that both orthopedists and physiotherapists have migrated toward more complex care, aimed at the many simultaneously serious and mysterious pathologic and injury conditions associated with back and pelvic pain. This leaves a large area of non-specific back pain, what could be called sub-clinical pain, which fails to meet the threshold for specified care within the medical system, but is nevertheless somewhere between bothersome and debilitating to the patient. Into this gap steps today's well-trained massage therapist, and he or she will be well advised to come armed with this book.

Our very human process of achieving upright standing – always a precarious balance of the segmented tent pole of our spine swaying above the two small tripods of our feet, with the pelvis arbitrating both stability and mobility between the two – is further challenged these days by the amount of sitting we do before computers and in cars. The original 'thousand ills the flesh is heir to' are further augmented by poor nutritional support and 'one-size fits all' exercise systems that can put significant strain into low back and pelvic tissues.

Easing the resulting strain patterns is well within the purview and skill level of the well-versed, sensitive, observant and curious massage therapist. What has been missing is a resource to guide one

through the bewildering range of alternative treatments in light of new and traditional research findings. The book in your hand is just such a map of the current state-of-play for getting such non-specific sufferers out of trouble.

The process begins with the act of 'triage' – determining which cases are appropriate to the massage or manual therapist, versus those that are beyond that level of skill. Today's massage therapist can often be the first health professional who sees the back pain patient (where formerly they might have gone to their GP first). Such increased responsibility must be met with increased assessment skill to separate out those who need advanced care – the signs for which are detailed in this book with clear cautionary 'flags'.

Spinal pathologies and radiculopathies are best addressed with the aid of sophisticated imaging tools and medical procedures, (often supplemented, we hope, with good manual therapy). But there remain a host of less complicated conditions – some temporary, some chronic - resulting from misuse, over-use, chronic structural abuse, parasitic patterns of recruitment, or simple lack of appropriate muscle tonus. These conditions often get better over time by themselves, but massage and movement techniques have been shown to help shorten recovery time, as well as blocking the road to re-injury through preventive movement education.

We could add 'recovery from surgery or other trauma' to this list, since – and while this may not be universally true, it is accurate in many cases indeed – our current medical system allocates inadequate resources, especially that of time, to integrated recovery after medical intervention.

These non-specific pains and integrative rehabilitation patients do not always require the complexities of modern medical care, especially in the hands of

these two experienced experts to guide the assessment and treatment of these conditions. Massage, trigger point work, myofascial release, positional release, joint mobilization, recruitment repatterning and stabilization training can all serve to put such clients back on their feet shortly, efficiently, and with less financial outlay all around.

Once this triage is completed, the authors move smoothly into the assessment of the pain, its sources, and its connections, mainly using palpatory assessments of muscles, movements (including breathing), and reflex points. A wide array of assessments, tests and treatment methods are presented – with a clear sequence of indicating signs, intents for outcome, cautions and comprehensive techniques combining many approaches for easing pelvic and low back pain syndromes.

In Chapter 7, these techniques are brought together in a series of strategies for using massage and manipulation for restoring full, integrated function. Well illustrated, this section ranges more widely than just the lower torso, to take in the full body, all of which can sometimes be involved in pelvic or lumbar pain through fascial, functional or reflexive connections. In Chapters 8 and 9, the authors explore preventive training and exercise for restoring balance and preventing re-injury.

Every procedure in this volume is backed up with the relevant research references, linking the practitioner with the source material for why the protocol is included, and providing doctors and physiotherapists with sound reasoning for why such approaches work on a scientific and clinical level (and are thus suitable for referral). As such, this book represents a significant step forward in bringing together the intuitive arts of the manual therapist with the scientific backing required by outcomes-based clinical practice.

Use this book for all it is worth – to deepen your practical and theoretical grasp of why non-specific low back and pelvic pain occurs and (more to the point) why it persists, to expand your therapeutic approaches when your own ‘library’ of manual therapy does not seem to be doing the trick. Finally, ‘seal the deal’ by helping your patients prevent recurrence and build the strength necessary to a pain free functional life.

Welcome to this new guide to the complex foundation of the human body.

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