

Recent Advances in Orthotic Therapy: Improving Clinical Outcomes with a Pathology-Specific Approach

Reviewed by Robert D. Phillips, DPM*

Recent Advances in Orthotic Therapy: Improving Clinical Outcomes with a Pathology-Specific Approach. 1st Ed. Edited by Paul R. Scherer, DPM, MS. 175 pages. Lower Extremity Review, 2011, \$129.95.

It has been quite some time since any book has approached the practice of orthotic management of common foot problems. Dr. Scherer is one of the most respected academicians as well as clinicians and brings to the reader a text that is both intellectually enlightening as well as hands-on practical. Many have criticized publicly and privately the use of custom foot orthotics, noting that there is very little evidence that custom orthotic therapy is firmly rooted in scientific literature. Dr. Scherer shows how this criticism is no longer valid. He explains how some of the most quoted anti-custom-made-orthotics literature is quite flawed in its methodology and cannot be relied on. In this book, Dr. Scherer brings to the reader important biomechanics theory that has been added to the literature since the basic Root theory that markedly aids the clinician in prescribing orthotics.

Most literature that proposes surgical interventions for foot problems briefly mentions that orthotic therapy was unsuccessful. There is almost never any description of the prescription variables built into the failed orthotic therapy. Dr. Scherer

brings into focus how important the small variables are in creating successful outcomes for various foot pathologies. The book has many pearls for differentiating various degrees of common diagnosis, and then shows how various therapies are needed for various severities of these problems. This concept is highlighted in the second chapter, which shows the proper uses of functional foot orthotics, Richie braces, and gauntlets for posterior tibial dysfunction. Other important therapy modifications are also presented in the other sections on plantar fasciitis, hallux valgus, pediatric flatfoot, cavus foot, tarsal tunnel syndrome, and knee pain.

This book is directed to the clinician who already has a basic foundation of foot biomechanics theory and who has had some initial experience in prescribing orthotics. It assumes that the reader has a grasp of orthotic terminology and the Root theory of neutral orthotic casting. It has excellent illustrations to explain the solutions that it discusses.

In summary, the book demonstrates that the clinician—and not the orthotic laboratory—needs to be in charge of the orthotic prescription. The reviewer strongly recommends that it be incorporated into the library of every clinician who prescribes orthotics, and that it should also be mandatory reading for all podiatric medical residents.

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