

# Book Reviews

## Foundations for Integrative Musculoskeletal Medicine: An East-West Approach

Alon Marcus  
North Atlantic Books, 2005  
ISBN 1-5564-3540-1  
760 pages

## A Tooth from the Tiger's Mouth: How to Treat Your Injuries with Powerful Healing Secrets of the Great Chinese Warriors

Tom Bisio  
Simon & Schuster, 2004  
ISBN 0-7432-4551-2  
384 pages

The 'bread and butter' of an acupuncture practice (and probably a herbal medicine clinic) is the treatment of pain, more specifically pain that often arises from musculoskeletal injury, degeneration or overuse. The recent text, *Foundations for Integrative Musculoskeletal Medicine: An East-West Approach* by Alon Marcus is an excellent example of the integration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (both acupuncture and herbal medicine) and modern musculoskeletal medicine. This hardcover, 760-page text is an advanced-level manual that sets the benchmark for the future. Consisting of eleven chapters, the text is well laid-out and has extensive line drawings, tables and photographs that supplement the text. Chapter one, a huge 120 pages, outlines the basic theory underlying Chinese medicine with an emphasis on those theories that inform the treatment of musculoskeletal pain. Chapter two looks at the mechanisms and theories underlying pain both from a Western and an Eastern perspective. Both acute and chronic pain phases are discussed. Chapter three reviews the anatomical structure as well as the physiological and pathological processes

associated with muscle, joint, ligament, bone and tendon dysfunction. There is an emphasis on the spine and gait. The chapter concludes with a three-page section entitled 'A Systems Model for Biomechanical Construction', which outlines the concept of 'tensegrity' and the 'icosahedron-space-truss-model' and its application to the human torso and bodywork. Chapter four examines the current state of orthopaedic examination, including physical, neurological and orthopaedic testing procedures as well as the interpretation of information obtained from medical imaging and radiology.

At this stage of the book a very comprehensive and detailed picture of the theoretical side of musculoskeletal medicine has been relayed, giving a solid theoretical basis for the rest of the book, which concentrates on the practicalities of treatment. Chapter five details the treatment principles associated with acupuncture, while chapter six identifies and examines additional acupuncture microsystems, such as auricular, wrist and ankle and Korean hand acupuncture,

as adjunct treatment approaches. The following chapter seven highlights the use of Chinese herbal medicine for the treatment of musculoskeletal pain. The important concept of blood stasis is discussed as well as the use of individual herbs, with the associated herbal formula for a wide variety of conditions given in a tabulated form. Chapter eight returns to the related acupuncture techniques associated with electrotherapeutics. Electro-stimulation, laser and magnetic fields are discussed as well as the role they play in pain control and healing.

Chapter nine recounts the many traditional Chinese medicine and Western manual therapies used for the diagnosis and treatment of musculoskeletal pain and dysfunction. Postural alignment examination techniques, mobilisations, exercise regimes and osteopathic treatment techniques are outlined and line drawings used to assist the reader in utilising many of the techniques. A very short chapter ten relates the treatment of acute injuries associated with ligamentous sprain, muscle strain and soft tissue damage. Tables are used to give a clear step-like

approach to identifying both Traditional Chinese Medicine and Western treatment principles and treatment strategies. The final chapter eleven, which comprises 200 pages, discusses the presentation and treatment of a range of musculoskeletal disorders and conditions. Included are degenerative and joint disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia, myofascial pain, spinal pain and disc disorders, whiplash as well as the painful Bi syndromes in Traditional Chinese Medicine. The final section of the book consists of an extensive list of references cited in the text, as well as a detailed index making navigation of the book manageable.

My only criticism of *Foundations for Integrative Musculoskeletal Medicine* is the level of detail and technical complexity that may obscure the more practical aspects of treatment documented in the text. Nevertheless if you want a book with very current and comprehensive information concerning musculoskeletal medicine, this is it!

Another book in a similar vein is *A Tooth from the Tiger's Mouth* by Tom Bisio. Although a lot less technical than the previous book, this easy-to-read book focuses on the treatment of trauma with both acupuncture and Chinese herbal

medicine. The author, a martial artist, has gathered various herbal formulae and other therapies including acupuncture for the treatment of injuries arising from the practice of martial arts. The book is broken into four segments. The first segment looks at the principles of Chinese sports medicine. The concepts behind sports injuries, both East and West, are discussed including the contentious application of ice and heat. Also included are detailed herbal approaches to acute, sub-acute and chronic injuries associated with ligaments and bone fractures. As well, herbal formulae such as *san huang san* (Three Yellow Powder), bleeding, cupping, liniments and movement exercise and the role they play in healing are discussed.

The second segment looks at injury prevention and the role that exercise, diet and health preservation play. Strength training and the Eight Brocade as well as other traditional exercises are outlined. Line drawings assist the reader in following and performing the exercises. Of special interest is the role that foods play in assisting as well as preventing the healing process. Bisio also gives his opinion on detoxification diets, nutritional supplements and colon cleansing and their use in injury rehabilitation.

The third segment contains nine chapters, which detail the therapies of Chinese sports medicine. These chapters describe the use of cupping and bleeding, liniments, poultices and plasters, herbal soaks, acupoints, massage, internal herbal medicine and moxibustion. Various lotions and plasters are discussed and their indications are highlighted.

The final segment outlines a variety of different injuries and their treatment. For each condition a range of treatment options is given, including first aid (acute phase), follow-up treatment, traditional exercises, acupoints, massage and dietary advice. Conditions represented include Achilles tendinitis, tennis elbow, hip pain, torn meniscus and rotator cuff tear – in all, a total of 33 different sports or trauma injuries. Appendices include the equipping of a Chinese sports medicine First Aid Kit and a listing of stores and suppliers where the herbal substances can be ordered. Unfortunately, only suppliers in the United States are listed.

This is a practical little book that has relevance for the Chinese medicine practitioner, the martial artist as well as the general reader who is interested in finding out more about Chinese sports medicine.

*Chris Zaslowski*