

Exercise Programming for Older Adults. By Kay A. Van Norman. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1995.

America is aging; even the Baby Boomers are facing fifty. With this demographic change, myths about aging are being challenged. Although there are undeniable biological consequences of aging, behavior can modify biology. The scientific literature now demonstrates clearly the benefits of exercise in the elderly. The old maxim "use it or lose it" rings true. *Exercise Programming for Older Adults* is a manual for the elderly to keep "using it" through exercise.

The author divides this work into six sections. Section I gives an overview of the aging population and the need for exercise programming with this population. As the literature suggests, the percentage of those 65 and over is steadily growing, so special programming to meet the specific needs of this population must grow as well. This information is widely appreciated by therapeutic recreators and is reinforced with sound arguments.

Section II begins with the caveat that it is intended for the non-health related professional and suggests that the reader reference basic muscle charts and exercise manuals. Yet it does mention, but not explain, such topics as blood lipids, glucose tolerance, audition, sensorimotor functioning, and atrophy. It provides a good overview of special problems which may occur in this population, e.g., hypertension, medications, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, etc., offering exercise benefits and modifications to exercise as needed. Unfortunately it does not offer suggestions for diabetes or obesity, which are common disorders in this population.

"Meeting the Needs of Older Exercisers" is the title of Section III. This section describes the process of setting up a fitness program and includes information for obtaining instructor training, scheduling classes, exercising to music, and establishing a safety and emergency plan. The author also discusses the general components of fitness, measuring target heart rate, strength and flexibility, and balance and coordination. She concludes this section with a discussion of the important social and emotional benefits of exercise.

Sections IV and V offer suggestions for land and water based exercising. The land exercises range from basic chair to standing exercises for the medium level exerciser. Information presented covers basic head to toe range of motion activities with appropriate exercise precautions. This section offers good information to the exercise leader for planning exercise routines which include aerobic and anaerobic activities, effectively using pictures to fully illustrate exercises. Water activities are also described with photographs to assist in developing a water exercise program of strength and aerobic activities. This section provides a good overview of safety and precautions with water activities; special considerations are suggested. There is an especially well done description of aquatic arthritis classes included in this section.

The last section, VI, is dedicated to the development and promotion of senior exercise programs. This information will be quite helpful to those initiating a senior exercise center or program.

This book offers good suggestions to therapeutic recreation specialists interested in exercise with the senior population. Much of the information will be repetitive to those with advanced training in the exercise sciences. The primary audience would be the instructor new to the older population, or to this type of exercise prescription.

This work has the difficult balancing act of all introductory textbooks—giving enough information to be helpful without being overwhelming. For the most part, the author succeeds in this task. As I was reading this book I could not help but think how therapeutic recreation fits into the exercise picture. Although one may argue details, in the final analysis the best exercise is the one which a person actually does. If it is fun it becomes a "want to," not a "have to." Therein lies the role of the therapeutic recreator.

Reviewed by: Susan M. Kaschalk, B.S., Exercise Physiologist, Waterford, Michigan.