



Exercise is Medicine: The Book

In my editorial in the Spring 2008 issue of the *AMAA Journal*, I briefly described the new American College of Sports Medicine's Exercise is Medicine™ (EiM) program. As I mentioned at the time, I am the co-author with my colleague Edward M. Phillips, MD, Director of the Institute of Lifestyle Medicine at the Harvard Medical School, of the textbook written in support of the program.

The original inspiration for the EiM program came from the fertile mind of Robert Sallis, MD, FACSM, who launched it during his recent ACSM presidency. As Bob has said, "The cost of inactivity is staggering, with an estimated 250,000 premature deaths annually in the U.S. directly attributed to inactivity and the costs of medical care for inactive patients dwarfing that required to care for active ones." These facts led him to conceive the "Exercise Rx," now the focus of this major program and our book.

The textbook is designed to assist physicians and all health care professionals, who deal with patients and clients in the realm of regular exercise, in learning how to most effectively provide guidance. It covers the regular exercise waterfront from mobilizing motivation, which we see as the key element in the whole enterprise, through the nuts and bolts of what to do and how to do it, and finishes up with how to have fun as a regular exerciser. Dr. Phillips and I present both the "lifestyle/activities of daily living" approach to exercising regularly and the "leisure-time scheduled activities/sports" approach, which many AMAA members engage in. It also explains how to design practical regular exercise programs for otherwise-healthy patients of all ages, as

well as those with conditions such as cardiac and pulmonary disease, pregnancy, obesity, and cancer.

Our hope is that the book will serve as a valuable resource for health care professionals, helping them to personalize the benefits of physical activity for each patient. As you're well aware, most health care professionals have only a limited amount of time to spend with each patient, especially on a subject as complex as becoming a regular exerciser. Among other things, the book provides a simple guide for using this short amount of time to effectively talk with patients about physical activity. For example, we offer a series of "Three-Minute Drills" which cover the theory and practice of promoting regular exercise with patients in small, manageable segments.

A major focus of the book's content is how to help patients mobilize their motivation. There is loads of material in the marketplace on "why you should exercise" and "what type of exercise to do." It can be found at the supermarket check-out counter, on TV, in newspapers, on videos, and, of course, on the Internet. If all folks needed were that type of information to start an exercise program, we would have one of the fittest populations on the planet. But that's obviously not the case. You talk with any regular exerciser and you will find out that it is mobilizing one's motivation that is key to getting started and staying with it. Dr. Phillips and I present two different approaches to help patients get motivated: Dr. Phillips' "The Behavior Change Pyramid," and my "Ordinary Mortals® Pathway to Mobilizing Motivation" (which just happens to be the subject of my "Talking About Training" column on page 13).

ACSM's Exercise is Medicine™: A Clinician's Guide to Exercise Prescription is published in cooperation with the

Institute of Lifestyle Medicine at Harvard and the American College of Preventive Medicine. It is supported by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sport and has been endorsed by many organizations including Kaiser Permanente; Apollo Hospitals Group (India); American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance; American Council on Exercise; American Physical Therapy Association; IDEA Health & Fitness Association; Medical Fitness Association; National Association for Health and Fitness; National Athletic Trainers' Association; National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity; and the National Strength and Conditioning Association.

Following the launch of the program, we've seen an increasing amount of attention from individual practitioners as well as from organized programs and organizations that represent them. It has also attracted some attention on Capitol Hill, which may eventually lead to specific federal legislative support for it.

Respectfully yours,
Steven Jonas

ACSM's Exercise is Medicine™: A Clinician's Guide to Exercise Prescription was published in March 2009 by Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins and can be found at www.lww.com. Dr. Edward Phillips presented the EiM program to the AMAA audience at its 38th Annual Sports Medicine Symposium at the Boston Marathon.