

## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Title:** Fitness for the Pelvic Floor  
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**Publisher:** 2005, OPTP, Minneapolis, MN: Phone: 800-367-7393, [www.optp.com](http://www.optp.com)  
**Reviewer:** Blair Markovitz, PT

This book highlights treatment options for a variety of pelvic floor disorders. It is written by a German physical therapist and is the English translation of Carriere's original text. The intent of Fitness for the Pelvic Floor is to provide a number of exercises that may be performed in physical therapy or as a home exercise program.

The first part of the text provides a brief summary of the anatomy and function of the pelvic floor muscles and the urogenital organs. Chapters 1 and 2 give a summary of the functions of the bladder, pelvic floor muscles, and their nervous input. Chapter 3 discusses the role of breathing and common breathing dysfunctions. Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to incontinence of bowel and bladder and include a voiding diary. This section of the text is basic, so that the patient/client may understand the terminology and have a good understanding of the anatomy and physiology of the pelvic floor. The author makes the assumption that a physical therapist reading this text will already have a basic knowledge of these structures and functions.

The second part of the text provides treatment options and exercises for the pelvic floor. The exercises introduced are based on the works of Tanzenberger and Heller and Klein-Vogelbach. Carriere treats the musculature of the pelvic floor as one would treat a biceps or a hamstring muscle. Carriere emphasizes safety and recommends a medical examination prior to beginning the exercises (Chapter 6). Chapters 7 and 8 discuss sensory awareness of the pelvic floor through feeling, hearing, and visualization of the contraction of the anal sphincter, vagina, and urethra. She describes several exercises in a number of positions and gives examples of when they would be appropriate. Chapter 9 addresses breathing dysfunction and describes diaphragmatic breathing. Chapters 10 and 11 are the longest, describing specific exercises for uterine prolapse, prostate dysfunction, pelvic pain, and incontinence. In addition to illustrations of each exercise with modifications, she also includes a list of other physical therapy treatment options for each disorder. She incorporates the use of a Swiss ball and Theraband into the exercises. At the end of Chapter 11 she describes two 'challenging' exercises. Chapter 12 addresses posture and flexibility of the muscles of the lower extremity.

Carriere includes an appendix at the end of the text, in which she provides sample evaluations of the pelvic floor for males and females. She also provides a glossary to assist the patient/client with technical terms. Fitness for the Pelvic Floor is a worthwhile book for the consumer as well as the physical therapist. The included exercises are comprehensive, well described, and are easy to perform with supervision or at home. The author is complete in that she includes not only female dysfunctions, but addresses males and children as well. Although I found the structure of the text to be somewhat unorganized, I did not find the descriptions of anatomy, physiology, or of the specific exercises difficult to understand. The illustrations are colored and arrows are used to direct the movement of specific body parts. The author accounts for all body types and levels of modifications. Carriere has shown that exercising the pelvic floor has taken a step beyond Kegel exercises. This book would be an asset to any therapist treating pelvic floor dysfunction or to a client who would like to independently manage his or her impairments.