

The three authors of *Applied Exercise and Sport Physiology* (Holcomb Hathaway; now in its second edition) are academic heavyweights in their field. Terry Housh and Dona Housh are both professors at University of Nebraska, and Herbert A. deVries is Professor Emeritus at USC, Los Angeles. However, our reviewer, Dr. Charlotte Olsson, did not find the book quite as weighty as its authors. It is certainly pedagogically well organized, and the first half of the book teaches basic exercise physiology with high scientific quality. But the rest of the chapters, where theory is converted into practice, are less useful, particularly where emphasis is put on gender rather than sex.

From high quality theory to superficial practice

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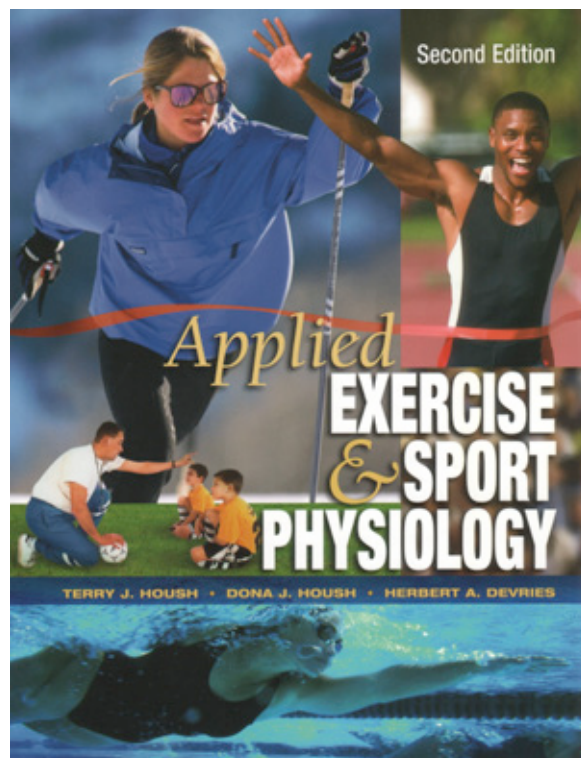
Applied Exercise and Sport Physiology

465 sidor, hft., ill.

Scottsdale, AZ: Holcomb Hathaway
2006

ISBN 1-890871-71-0

Most exercise physiology books are written for upper level university studies aimed at exercise science majors with a background in the natural sciences. For students interested in the field of exercise without a solid background in the natural sciences (perhaps with the intention of working as educators for young children, personal trainers etc.), these books are too in-depth and they feel overwhelmed with the course. Unfortunately, these students finish the course with a feeling that exercise physiology is “too difficult to comprehend” or “not important in my professional life”. The goal for the 2nd edition of *Applied Exercise & Sport Physiology* by Housh, Housh & deVries is to deliver a book that can be used as a basic yet scientifically very thorough introduction to the exercise physiology field.



The book is very well organized, with each chapter including learning objectives, key concepts and review questions at the end of the chapter. The first eight chapters consider basic exercise science needed to understand application issues dealt with in the following six chapters. The focus of the book is on the fundamentals of exercise physiology but with high scientific quality. Less useful are some of the following chapters where the authors look at special issues in exercise physiology such as nutrition, ergogenic aids and environmental issues. These chapters are so short and the content too shallow to be of any use teaching at the college level. In addition, the book gives a nice overview of similarities and differences in the exercise physiology of children and elderly and has a section with instructions to basic laboratory test within the field of exercise science.

The least useful part of the book is the chapter called “Gender Factors and Exercise”. Personally I feel that an exercise physiology book should consider *sex* factors in exercise rather than *gender* issues. This chapter seems to assume that the reader believes women cannot compete at the same level as men. They present very select research showing physiological similarities and differences between the sexes, focusing on a few issues where females are considered (socially or biologically?!) as having a “disadvantage” compared to males. Although they promote exercise for women, the chapter feels very old-fashioned and traditional; possibly because it is written from an American perspective?

All things considered, I would personally recommend using this book in exercise physiology survey courses. I have found that the ones most difficult to “sell” the importance of exercise physiology to, are the future PE teachers specialized towards younger children (k-6). Part of the problem is that the content of the textbooks used are either too shallow and unscientific for these students, or too detailed and extensive in their coverage. *Applied Exercise & Sport Physiology* fills this void and a nice aspect in this book for the k-6 PE students is the chapter on exercise physiology issues special to children.

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