

Book Review:

Fitness Through Aerobics

Bishop, J. G. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. (1999). 205 pp., softcover

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Fitness Through Aerobics is an interesting and useful book that provides an encouraging and motivating approach to aerobic exercise. The author keeps a very simple vocabulary, throughout the majority of the book. Through its fourteen chapters, this fourth edition provides a strong foundation to the understanding of aerobic exercise, with very up to date information about all of the different modalities of aerobic exercise. Since this book is on aerobics, its emphasis is on the physical aspects of health. Moreover, it mentions a complete model of health, which the author called the five balloons: emotional, mental, social, spiritual, and physical aspects of our health.

In addition to the previously mentioned qualities of this book, some other highlights should be included in this review. The way this book is written empowers and motivates the reader to take care of his/her own physical health. It provides basic knowledge and practical tools in an easy “step by step” approach to aerobic exercise. A full chapter is dedicated to common injuries, how are they caused, and how to prevent them. This book also shows how cultural considerations and individual differences may affect compliance, dedication, motivation, and success potential to a new exercise routine.

The chapter dedicated to explaining the different types of clothing, the appropriate shoes and the correct use of other accessories (e.g., weights and elastic bands) is a plus for the amateur as well as for those who have embraced exercise as part of their daily lives. This chapter explains the advantages and disadvantages of having several features (e.g., flex points in the sole, ventilation holes, extra forefoot padding) as part of the athletic shoes. It also explains the appropriate characteristics of the exercise attire (e.g., two pairs of socks for protection, avoid rubber and plastic suits to prevent dehydration), resulting in a more thorough understanding of the workout, consequently increasing the potential for success in this kind of exercise routine.

Finally, a list of helpful “knowledge tips” is provided at the end of each chapter as part of the summary. I found this list very helpful in getting a

quick but accurate glance of the contents on each chapter. The fact that it primarily emphasizes physical aspects of health, could be mentioned as a weakness, although as I mentioned before, it also mentions other aspects that are important in reaching wellness. In addition, although the author uses a very simple and straight forward vocabulary throughout the majority of this book, she sometimes gets into very technical terms that might be problematic to lay audiences, who are not especially interested in exercise physiology.

In conclusion, this book provides a very straight forward and easy to follow approach to aerobic exercise that gets the attention and interest of both specialists in this area as well as amateurs. This book could be used as a text for an exercise physiology class or an aerobics course. It could also be used as a supplementary text to a basic health course with a strong exercise emphasis. The author has done a very good job including a wide diversity of ethnic groups throughout the book’s illustrations, making it appealing to a broader audience.

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