

What Has Dr. Shook Been Reading?

*Pain Free, A Revolutionary Method For Stopping Chronic Pain.*

By Pete Egoscue,

Published by Bantam Books (2000)

Using clever visuals and stories gleaned from his own clients at the Egoscue Method Clinic in San Diego California, Pete Egoscue does a great job of describing the fabulous/miraculous/astounding and oh so adaptive workings of the human musculoskeletal system (the system of muscle and bones). A system perfectly designed to run, jump, crawl and dig as if the next meal depended upon it -- which of course it once did.

Pete goes on to do a bang up job of describing how our modern life style can -- and frequently does -- result in a musculoskeletal system that has adapted itself right out of it's full range of motion. Where once we walked and swam we now sit and stand. This creates compromised muscle action, leading to a less than optimal range of motion that in turn eventually leads to altered posture, loss of balance and increased incidence of injury and pain.

In his book *Pain Free*, Pete Egoscue recommends a daily practice of a short series of poses, referred to as "E-cises", to restore muscle alignment, improve posture and reduce the pain that stems from our modern lifestyles. These E-cises are neither traditional stretches nor are they a sweaty type of exercise, if anything an E-cise resembles an assisted yoga pose.

*Pain Free* begins with foot pain then moves upward to the ankle, knee, back and shoulder, and finally all the way up to the head and headaches. For each area of pain, written instructions illustrated with photographs explain a simple series of E-cises that can affect muscle alignment and optimize motion. As optimal motion is obtained, energy and physical performance improves and pain evaporates. Once pain relief is obtained, Egoscue recommends a daily series of E-cises to maintain optimal motion.

The recommended postures appear to be simple. As with any exercise program, always check with your chiropractor or your physician to see if there might be some underlying condition which would prevent you from attempting, the poses in this book. That said, I've recommended several of the E-cises to a few of my patients and so far the results have been good.

I do wish that Mr. EGOscue had been just a little more accepting of other health care providers. This master of the E-cise seriously bashed orthopedic surgeons and looked with scorn at chiropractors, physical therapists and even massage therapists. As a chiropractor with a solid background in massage therapy I could not help but feel that his knowledge of these fields was very limited or clouded. I kept wanting to say, "*Pete ... Honey ... Dude, ease up, stop by MY office, we'll have a chat.*" In the spirit of tolerance, I still recommend his book to those who think it may be helpful.

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