

Preface

This book charts my journey through the study of medicine, orthopedics, and spine surgery. Throughout my training I found certain information extremely important, but I often noticed that studies and information were being misquoted or were difficult to remember. I began keeping note cards in my pocket for ready reference. When those note cards became an unwieldy stack, I began to think of the value to other residents of turning these notes into a book.

“Quick reference” was the key—and thus *The Pocket Spine* was born.

The compilation of this book was influenced by the tremendous opportunities I had with orthopedic mentors. In medical school my orthopedic and spine training began with Dr. Marc Asher, with whom I worked, researched, and published. During my residency and further training at the University of Kansas, Wichita, I gained a variety of insights into the art and science of orthopedics by working with 30 staff orthopedic surgeons. As my focus on orthopedics began to narrow to spine surgery, so did the focus of *The Pocket Spine*. During my fourth year of residency, I spent 6 months at the Shriners Children’s Hospital in St. Louis, during which I trained with Drs. Lawrence Lenke and Keith Bridwell. From this experience I gathered information on scoliosis. In Plano, Texas, I further refined the book’s content during my spine fellowship at the Texas Back Institute. Again with a diverse teaching staff, I benefited from the expertise of 11 spine surgeons, compiling notes on their techniques and sage advice. Next I spent 6 weeks with Drs. Hillebrand, Albert, and Vacarro and their

fellows, focusing on cervical surgery and spine trauma, guided by their experience and depth of knowledge.

This book is intended as a quick and convenient reminder of information for orthopedic residents and fellows, neurosurgical residents, medical students, family physicians, and emergency room physicians. This compact manual covers the spectrum of spinal conditions encountered in the clinical setting. The presentation throughout focuses on clearly delineating the essential points rather than on lengthy narrative. It is my sincere hope that *The Pocket Spine* will prove an invaluable aid to the reader.

Acknowledgment

To all of my mentors I owe great thanks for allowing me into the orthopedic field and then training me in the fascinating complexities of spine surgery.

This book is a significant contribution to the spine community that was initiated through the Texas Back Institute Research Foundation's Spine Surgery Fellowship program.

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Camden Whitaker, MD