The wrist: master techniques in orthopaedic surgery (3rd edition)
Edited by R. H. Gelberman

The flavour of a practical surgical textbook is determined by the angle from which the subject matter is approached: either problem-based (making each clinical condition the focus, to which methods of treatment, surgical or otherwise, are attached) or technique-based, where the heading of each chapter states the procedure under discussion, and the indications are attached to it. This book, and indeed the whole series, falls very much into the latter category. As a result it feels rather like a cookery book, providing the trainee or fully fledged surgeon with a valuable source of technical information. If used in that way it has an important place, but it should not be used as a primary source of guidance in the management of clinical conditions presenting in the wrist.

There is a strong emphasis on surgery of the bones of the wrist: there are, for example, no less than eight chapters on various methods of internal fixation of fractures of the distal radius, but no real guidance to the reader on choice of procedure for an individual case. By contrast, scapholunate ligament injury has a chapter on acute repair (which is sadly only possible when early diagnosis is made, and that is rarely the case), and two brief chapters on tenodesis techniques, which many feel have been superseded by techniques of ligament reconstruction. The Brunelli operation, for example, and other tendon substitutes, are not mentioned.

The format of the book is standardised throughout the series. It is logical and predictable, but it can also be irritating, particularly the endless repetition of detail that could and should be taken for granted, such as the need for a tourniquet, anaesthesia and a sterile field. The shorthand bullet-point system of technical description does make for easy reading. A little editorial culling would be welcome to simplify the language, avoiding expressions like ‘in contradistinction’ and ‘sterilely prepare the arm’.

Some chapters stand out, especially Marc Garcia-Elias’ account of radio-scapho-lunate arthrodesis with distal scaphoid excision and Kleinman’s chapter on capsular release of the distal radioulnar joint. Kirk Watson’s ideas on scaphoid internal fixation avoiding compression screwing are interesting. The account of distal radioulnar joint reconstruction for instability is disappointing; Linscheid describes one technique only, and that is partly directed towards correcting carpal supination. True DRUJ instability is very disabling, and there are excellent methods of reconstruction that could have been mentioned, including those of Adams and Scheker. Another surprising omission was the pisiform bone. Pisotriquetral arthritis is common, painful and readily cured – something that cannot be said for many of the conditions that are covered.

There is a great deal of technical information to be found in this book. It is well organised and readily accessible once a surgical course of action has been determined, but it will not provide the means to move from the clinical presentation through diagnostic methods to a decision that surgical treatment is needed, and the selection of the most suitable procedure.

D. Evans

Emerging techniques in spine surgery
Edited by A. Bhave

Professor Bhave has assembled a state-of-the-art multi-author review of a series of spinal surgical techniques which represent the emerging ideas on invasive treatments for disease of the spine. Such books by definition merely tend to depict a snapshot which includes some early stage techniques of uncertain future, some more established techniques with some supportive evidence and then a series of mature techniques, each of which has opponents and critics. The book is divided into broad sections around endoscopic spinal surgery, percutaneous minimally invasive techniques, alternatives to spinal fusion, advances in instrumentation of the spine and one chapter on the potential role of stem cells in the spine. The editor has brought considerable discipline to the contributions, with regard to the style, layout and philosophy. It is well illustrated with clinical cases, intra-operative images and technical diagrams.

The section on endoscopic spinal surgery starts with a review of the techniques in degenerative disease of the lower back from an established leader of opinion. There is then a series of chapters describing more innovative techniques including percutaneous endoscopic cervical and thoracic discectomy. The section also includes a chapter on some percutaneous pain techniques to achieve thoracic and lumbar sympathectomy.
The section on spinal fixation addresses technical advances in the management of scoliosis, tumours of the spine and spinal infection, and introduces some novel technical ideas. The section on vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty avoids the current controversies around the relevant evidence base, but provides a neat technical description of these techniques and the newer ‘vesselpasty’. A longer section on non-fusion implants including disc replacement, ligamentoplasty and interspinous implants is particularly timely as the use of all of these approaches is an increasing feature in current surgical practice.

The final chapter on the use of stem cells in the spine focuses on their use in spinal cord injury. This is a very elegant and comprehensive chapter and certainly both thought-provoking and informative. It might also have been interesting to have looked at some of the experimental research on the use of stem cells in managing disc degeneration in axial back pain, although neither technique is anywhere near clinical applicability at this stage.

Most of the chapters present details of surgical techniques and each author has reviewed what evidence there is in the literature. A particularly useful feature of the book is the coloured diagrams which illustrate key issues. I would recommend this book to the specialist rather than the generalist; spinal fellows and junior specialists will find it a useful handbook for non-mainstream techniques, and the established specialist will dip into it and find some technical tips and tricks of use in day-to-day practice.

J. O’Dowd

Operative orthopaedics: the Stanmore guide
Edited by T. Briggs, J. Miles and W. Aston

The Stanmore guide provides brief instruction aimed at junior trainees, covering elective orthopaedic surgical procedures. Each topic is approached in a clear and consistent fashion, providing evidence-based surgical options and useful references. The small size of the book, however, prevents comprehensive descriptions of each topic.

The first chapter on the use of anaesthesia in orthopaedic surgery acts as a revision tool for the junior orthopaedic surgeon but lacks some basic details, such as dose, guidelines for local anaesthesia and some of the local infiltration techniques used to ease rehabilitation after orthopaedic surgery. Each chapter begins with a discussion of the range of motion, upon which the optimal positions for arthrodesis for each joint is defined. There are useful sections on ‘consent’ and the risk of complications. The tumour section, as one would expect, is written concisely in a logical fashion.

This is a well-written albeit brief guide to operative orthopaedics. It constitutes an ideal introduction to elective orthopaedic surgery for the junior trainee and a very useful revision tool for those senior trainees who are approaching the ‘exit’ exam. In particular, the *viva voce* questions and the sections covering consent and risks in the structured approach will be extremely useful for the trainee facing an oral exam.

R. S. Jones

Complications in knee and shoulder surgery: management and treatment options for the Sports Medicine Orthopedist
Edited by R. J. Meislin and J. Halbrecht

This is a beautifully illustrated hardback book, which is aimed at sports surgeons who specialise in the knee and shoulder joints. The contributors have focused on modern problems, making this book topical and adventurous. For example, they discuss meniscal repair, meniscal transplantation and modern modes of cartilage transplantation. They have also addressed non-core conditions by including a chapter on miscellaneous complications such as arthrofibrosis, post-operative infection, bone marrow oedema syndrome, broken metallic implants and portal problems. The shoulder is comprehensively covered in a series of short, detailed and well illustrated chapters. Each chapter is appropriately truncated and includes a commentary at the end to add practical detail and some editorial wisdom. The ‘pearls’ in particular are helpful. The index is rather brief but nevertheless affords the reader the opportunity to find the most significant topics without difficulty.

This book really is a primer for the registrar at the end of training or the young consultant who is faced with complex knee or shoulder cases in sports medicine. It is up-to-date, easy to read, well-illustrated and covers the important topics that trouble us. I recommend it without reservation for every unit that is committed to arthroscopic sports surgery.

F. Haddad