Preface

Proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF) is a philosophy and a concept of treatment. The PNF philosophy is timeless, and the concept is a continuous process of growth. This fourth edition of our book, with a complete review and full-color figures and photographs, better user-friendly layout, and integration of the latest developments, aims to support this growth. The first chapter is new and describes the position of the PNF concept within the current holistic treatment spectrum.

PNF has been one of the most recognized treatment concepts in physical therapy since the 1940s. Dr. Kabat and Margaret (Maggie) Knott started and continued to expand and develop the treatment techniques and procedures after their move to Vallejo, California, in 1947. After Dorothy Voss joined the team in 1953, Maggie and Dorothy wrote the first PNF book, published in 1956.

At first, mostly patients with multiple sclerosis and poliomyelitis were treated with this method. With experience it became clear that this treatment approach was effective for patients with a wide range of diagnoses. Today, patients with neurological, traumatic, as well as orthopedic symptoms are treated with this concept.

The 3- and 6-month PNF courses in Vallejo began in the 1950s. Physical therapists from all over the world came to Vallejo to learn the theoretical and practical aspects of the PNF concept. In addition, Knott and Voss traveled in the United States and abroad to give introductory courses in the concept.

When Maggie Knott died in 1978 her work at Vallejo was carried on by Carolyn Oei Hvistendahl. She was succeeded by Hink Mangold as director of the PNF program. Tim Josten is the present program director. Sue Adler, Gregg Johnson, and Vicky Saliba have also continued Maggie’s work as teachers of the PNF concept. Sue Adler designed the International PNF Association (IPNFA) Advanced and Instructor course programs.

The authors acknowledge their debt to these outstanding people, and also to all members of the International PNF Association (IPNFA), and hope that this book will encourage others to carry on the work.

Developments in the PNF concept are closely followed throughout the world. It is now possible to take recognized training courses in many countries given by qualified PNF instructors. There are other excellent books dealing with the PNF method, but we felt there was a need for a comprehensive coverage of the practical tools in text and illustrations. This book should thus be seen as a practical guide and used in combination with existing textbooks.

This book covers the procedures, techniques, and patterns within PNF. Their application to patient treatment is discussed throughout, with special attention on mat activities, gait, and self-care. The emphasis within this book is twofold: developing an understanding of the principles that underlie PNF, and showing through pictures rather than with words how to perform the patterns and activities. Skill in applying the principles and practices of PNF to patient treatment cannot be learned only from a book. We recommend that the learner combine reading with classroom practice and patient treatment under the supervision of a skilled PNF practitioner.
Movement is our way to interact with our environment. Such interactions are directed by the mechanism of motor learning. Integration of motor learning principles includes a progression from hands-on to hands-off treatments; it includes goal-orientated functional activities and independence. Based on the untapped existing potential of all patients, the therapist will always focus on mobilizing these reserves to reach the highest level of function. Especially in the first and cognitive stage of motor control, the therapist’s manual facilitation will be a helpful tool in reaching this goal. This includes goals on the level of body structures as well as on the activity level and the participation level (ICF).

This fully revised fourth edition includes a description of how the principles of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), and aspects of motor learning and motor control (from »hands-on« to »hands-off« management), are applied in modern PNF evaluation and treatment. The chapter on »Activities of Daily Living« has been expanded with new color photos and more in-depth text instructions. The new design and layout highlight the clearly structured way in which the philosophy, basic procedures, and treatment patterns of PNF are presented. Thus, this textbook provides a systematic and easily accessible guide to learning and understanding PNF as a practical tool and using it to full effect in patient treatment.

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We are also grateful to all our colleagues, PNF instructors, and members of the IPNFA, for their cooperation, their sharing of knowledge, their teaching, and for proceeding with this concept.

But most of all we are devoted and grateful to our patients; without them this work would not be possible.

To Maggie Knott, teacher and friend.
Devoted to her patients,
dedicated to her students,
a pioneer in profession

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