The fourth edition of the *Essentials of Orthopedic Surgery* is directed to students who are beginning their study of the musculoskeletal system. This would include medical students and residents interested in orthopedic surgery, physiatry, rheumatology, emergency medicine, family medicine, and general internal medicine. Each chapter has been updated to reflect current material and we have tried to keep to a standardized format as much as possible. Every topic is presented from a practical point of view.

Decision making for each topic is highlighted. Algorithms are the key for each chapter and each decision point is based on either a standard or a guideline in the literature. We hope that when students are confronted with a specific clinical problem these algorithms will allow them to formulate both a diagnostic and a treatment plan.

We have enjoyed working with our publisher, Springer, and especially with Katharine Cacace and Flora Kim who have guided this text to publication.

Finally, it has been a wonderful and stimulating experience to work with all the members of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at Georgetown University Hospital. The department has added several new members since the last edition, and their contributions bring a new perspective to our work. We are proud of the contributions which everyone has made to this effort.

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