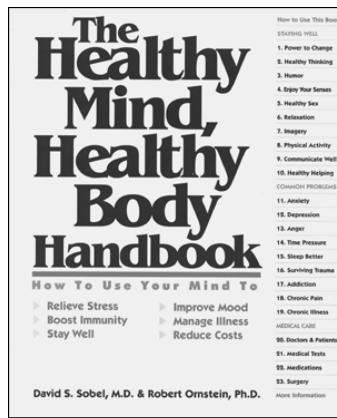


Book Reviews



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The Healthy Mind, Healthy Body Handbook by David S Sobel, MD and Robert Ornstein, PhD *Book Review by Katherine M Jakstis, MS*

The Healthy Mind, Healthy Body Handbook, authored by Dr David Sobel, a Kaiser Permanente physician, and Dr Robert Ornstein, a research psychologist, is the perfect complement to the *Healthwise Handbook*, which was reviewed in *The Permanente Journal*, Volume 4 No. 3 (Summer 2000, p 86). Whereas the *Healthwise Handbook* touches on the mind-body connection, *The Healthy Mind, Healthy Body Handbook* explains in practical, easy-to-understand detail how the power of the mind can benefit both physical and emotional health. Along with enlightening the reader about this crucial link, the authors lay out in step-by-step format dozens of exercises and techniques to help prevent health problems, lessen uncomfortable symptoms of illness, enhance well-being, and—in some cases—actually treat and cure disease.

The book is divided into three logical segments. The first section, *Staying Well*, covers such expected topics as relaxation, physical activity, and imagery and communication, but also included are the less-discussed topics of how to successfully make life changes, the role of humor and laughter in wellness, healthy sex, healthy thinking, and others. The second portion of the book, *Managing Common Problems*, deals with circumstances that can erode health. The focus in this section is on the causes of and what can be done about anxiety, depression, anger, time pressure, sleep problems, trauma, addiction, chronic pain, and chronic illness. The third part of the book, *Managing Medical Care*, addresses how a person can collaborate effectively with health professionals in order to achieve his or her optimum health potential. Topics in this section include making the most of the doctor-patient relationship, discussing and making decisions about medical tests, managing medications, and preparing for major medical interventions such as surgery.

Although clear throughout their work that “mind-body prescriptions” are not panaceas and are not meant to take the place of professional help, the authors make an impressive and credible case for employing the techniques and recommendations put forth in *The Healthy Mind, Healthy Body Handbook*. As the research cited in the book demonstrates, people who regularly practice self-help strategies need medical intervention less often. And when professional help is needed, such a person’s response to treatment—whether pharmacologic or surgical—is often better than expected and the overall outcomes more successful.

This easily digested book is for health care professionals and patients alike. It’s well-organized 284 pages are brimming with practical, easy-to-follow health-enhancing strategies that almost anyone can take advantage of. Also worth noting is that benefiting from *The Healthy Mind, Healthy Body Handbook* does not require reading the entire book. In fact, when recommending the handbook, clinicians may find it more effective and less overwhelming to direct patients to the chapters which address their personal concerns. If patients read and apply information from only a limited portion of the book, they will still be doing themselves—and possibly you, their health care practitioner—a considerable favor. ♦