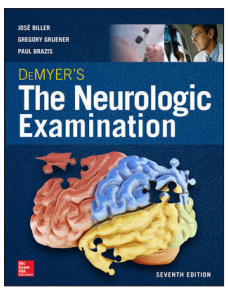
A modern twist on the traditional neurology textbook



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DeMyer's The Neurologic Examination: A Programmed Text, Seventh Edition
José Biller, Gregory Gruener, Paul Brazis
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The ability to perform a thorough and precise neurological exam is a learned skill which is in no small way sharpened by years of trial and error, perplexing clinical findings, and missed diagnoses. Performing and interpreting an extensive neurological exam not only has the potential to save lives, but is also a skill that many primary care providers do not possess, instead often passing the responsibility on to a neurologist. However, many medical students and resident physicians who wish to improve their exam skills often do not have exposure to neurological patients to hone their exam skills, and thus largely rely on educational resources that provide in-depth and comprehensive information in the absence of formal neurological training. Additionally, medical students interested in pursuing a career in neurology, physical medicine and rehabilitation, or even primary care might wish to sharpen their skills and knowledge in the absence of a neurology preceptor.

The need for an educational neurological resource for these interested practitioners has remained largely filled by often dull, thousand-page textbooks that usually focus more on pathology than on the exam process. However, the seventh edition of *DeMyer's The Neurologic Examination: A Programmed Text*, authored by José Biller, Gregory Gruener, and Paul Brazis, now provides a comprehensive tutorial for performing and interpreting the clinical neurological examination which is different from all other texts on the topic. This exceptional reference text offers a multidimensional approach to most key topics in neurology by integrating smartphone-accessible videos via quick reference (QR) codes, quizzes, additional published literature, clinical tips, and case discussions, making it a substantial improvement on previous editions which were missing this level of reader interaction. This text not only provides the learner with a thorough tutorial of the clinical neurological examination, but regularly incorporates laboratory findings, patient history, and neuroimaging, which guide the learner not only through the process of a detailed neurological exam, but also encourage the reader to anticipate and interpret the findings. The combination of easily accessible audio and video features allow the learner to watch specific examination procedures, listen to patient histories, and view clinical findings which supplement the text and allow readers to approach content from a platform that best suits their learning style.

This book is organised into fifteen chapters, each integrating the same multidimensional learning approach with the content, and each chapter building on the knowledge and skills learned in the one prior. The progressive nature of the content might, however, make it difficult for readers looking for a quick-reference textbook, as topics progress in complexity from beginning to end, rather than following an alphabetical order. For example, the first chapter begins with the basics of examining the head and neck, and their general structures, while the second reviews basic clinical neuroanatomy. Later chapters discuss progressively more complex topics such as cranial nerves, somatosensory, mental status, and finish with neuroradiology, laboratory testing, and formulating a formal neurological diagnosis.

What truly helps this text stand apart from others on the topic is the nearly 100 immediately accessible QR-coded video and audio files that give the reader rapid access to material not found in any typical neurology textbook. For example, if a student or clinician wishes to read about specific types of spinal cord lesions, not only is this easily found and well discussed in the text, but readers can also instantly pull up videos on specific spinal cord lesions, patient interviews, physical exam findings, and even how to perform parts of the exam. Prior to publication of the seventh edition of *DeMyer's The Neurologic Examination: A Programmed Text*, learners had to rely on user-created videos that were posted online and often of poor quality or uncertain accuracy. The short pathology-centred and exam-centred videos offered by this textbook now validate the need for such videos while providing the necessary quality control, effectively blending new and old ways of learning and creating an educational experience that meets the demands of modern learners. Though this book is in no way meant to take the place of the hands-on training experience through a student–preceptor or mentor–mentee relationship, it provides a compromise between formal educational training and monotonous self-directed book learning.

From a medical student's perspective, the flexible and integrative features of the seventh edition of *DeMyer's The Neurologic Examination: A Programmed Text* might help fill in so many of the educational gaps experienced by students and resident physicians training for a career in neurology. It provides a dynamic learning venue for both medical students and clinicians of all skill levels and learning styles, which sets it apart from similar textbooks on the topic and from its own earlier editions. As technology quickly advances, this text might have found the perfect mix of traditional textbook and electronic media education, and sets a new standard in learning and interpreting the advanced neurological exam.

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