



Thoracic Outlet Syndrome for Patients and Non-Physicians: Explained in layman's terms for patients and practitioners

By Dr. Richard J Sanders

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This book is written in layman's terms to describe all aspects of Thoracic Outlet Syndrome which includes disorders of the nerves, veins, and arteries of the upper extremities. Discussed are the causes of different forms of TOS, their symptoms, what doctors look for on physical examination, and the various tests used to make and confirm the diagnosis. Also described are the choices available to treat TOS including surgical and non-surgical options, their limitations, and their results. In addition, this book discusses a condition closely related to TOS called Pectoralis Minor Syndrome (PMS). PMS has similar symptoms to TOS and is caused by pressure against the nerves, artery, and vein found under the pectoralis minor muscle, which lies just below the collarbone. It is important to know how to recognize both of these conditions as treatment of PMS is much simpler than treating TOS. For example, in nerve type TOS and PMS both conditions will have symptoms of numbness, tingling, pain, and weakness in the hand and arm. TOS will usually also have neck pain and headaches while PMS will present with pain or tenderness in the chest, below the collarbone, and in the armpit. When all of these symptoms are present, pain in the neck, chest, and armpit, plus headaches, both TOS and PMS may exist together. Treatment initially is physical therapy for both conditions. If surgery is indicated, PMS alone is treated with a simple, minimal risk, 20 minute out-patient procedure which usually requires only a few days for recovery. In contrast, surgical treatment for TOS is an operation usually requiring 2-3 days of hospitalization and a few weeks to recover.

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Dorothy Bernstein:

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