

HAND-BOOK OF MANLY SPORTS

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Hand-Book of Manly Sports by George H. Benedict

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GEORGE H. BENEDICT

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MANLY SPORTS**



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INTRODUCTION.

In presenting this little volume to the public, the object of the author is, to convey a practical knowledge of those exercises which are most beneficial and popular; selecting only such as require inexpensive apparatus and which can be used in an ordinary room or yard.

It will be found also, that they are such as combine, to a considerable extent, exhilaration of the mind, with invigoration of the body.

Being well aware of the difficulty of teaching anything of the kind on paper, the author has aimed to give a *comprehensive* and reliable manual of the advanced science of these exercises, with a simplicity of language, and common sense system of practice which will be readily understood; relying more on the number, style and character of the engravings than verbosity, self-adulation or the recital of victorious encounters.

A great desire exists among those interested in physical culture, to acquire a correct knowledge of these beneficial exercises, and we hope that this record of personal experience, may add something to the general information on the subject. It may perhaps be the means of saving beginners, from the difficulties which beset our own course when entering upon the practice.

EXERCISE.

We do not fear contradiction, in asserting that manly sports, mirth, pastimes, and active exercise, are the physical laws of nature; and that without due regard to them, man cannot attain the perfection of his nature. The union of health, strength and beauty in the human form is considered the greatest of all blessings, and these can only be obtained by a judicious exercise of all the powers of the mind and body, acting in harmony. In fact, exercise within proper limits improves and develops the muscular system, regulates the functions of the organism and refines the senses; giving increased strength, improved digestion, steady nerves, and cheerfulness. It will give grace to the carriage and increase the powers of endurance. Exercise is as necessary to good health, as food or air, and we believe that without the stimulus of exhilarating exercise, perfect bodily health is as impossible as moral or mental vigor.

HEALTH.

Persons in health are apt to think of illness as something disagreeable, but about which they need not trouble themselves, until it troubles them. Having full confidence in the doctor and his prescription, future disease has no terrors. Health can be preserved by exercise alone. Drugs are not wholly useless, but excepting in cases of contagious diseases, it is better to direct our efforts against the cause, rather than the effect. In a work of this kind it is only possible to but briefly notice certain essentials to the care of health.

DIET. Late hours and late meals should be avoided. Simple food, without spices or stimulants, should be regularly taken, and in moderate quantities.

PURE AIR. Health requires that we breath the same air once only. Thorough ventilation of the house and place of business, and especially the sleeping rooms, should be attended to.

CLOTHING. An equal temperature of the body should be maintained by exercise, or clothing which should be adapted to the season of the year and include proper under-clothing. The feet should always be protected by warm stockings and shoes.

THE BATH. The body should be kept perfectly clean. A soap and water bath should be taken at least once a week. This is a valuable adjunct to health, as it prevents the accumulation of impurities discharged through the pores of the skin.

The elementary principles of health are, pure air, perfect cleanliness, well-cooked food, and plenty of sun-light.

BOXING.

There is no exercise that will so surely cultivate activity, endurance and strength, as boxing. Besides being an excellent school for the nerves and temper, it also develops the body, gives symmetry to the parts, and grace to the movements.

Boxing has been called brutal; those who hold that view look only at the worst aspect of the means; being an expert boxer does not tempt one to bully or fight, any more than being an expert penman would tempt a person to commit forgery. Our experience has been, that the best boxers are generally men of great forbearance under provocation, and we are satisfied that the knowledge of boxing, renders men not quarrelsome, but forbearing; for they feel that it is "glorious to possess a giant's strength, but cowardly to use it like a giant." It is in many respects the best of all exercises; every muscle in the body is used; head, arms, legs and feet are all called into play; your tools are always with you; and we may say that this is the only exercise requiring rapidity and strength combined.

In entering upon the practice of the "Art of Self Defense" the pupil will be benefited by reading carefully the following suggestions.

Secure the services of an active, even-tempered, companionable opponent, as near your own height and weight as possible, and provide a set of good boxing gloves. In regard to the latter, the white gloves used by professionals are best, as they are not apt to scratch the face or blacken the eyes, which the cheap buck-skin almost invariably do in heavy sparring.

When sparring always keep the arms in the proper position; never drop your hands until out of distance.

THE ARM. The movements of the arms should be light and free when not hitting, even then the muscles should not be compressed unless the blow reaches its mark. Cultivate quickness; endeavor to make the hand reach the object aimed at in the straightest possible line and without any intermission of time between the thought and the blow. Use the weight of the body as much as possible, in preference to the strength of the arms. Always get your blow to its mark even if you receive a counter in return; it will teach you to hit quicker and guard better next time. Never flip or slap. Always hit with the back of the gloves, keeping the hand half closed.

Do not hit below the belt; it is foul.

THE FEET. Without proper use of the feet no person can become an expert boxer; for when two persons of equal science are sparring, it becomes more a matter of generalship, than science. Their feet and legs are used more than their hands, they feint, rush in, strike and get away, each one endeavoring to out maneuver his opponent.



Fig. 1.

The position of the feet should be as shown in Fig. 1. The left foot should be flat on the ground and pointed in a direct line with your adversary; the right heel must be in a line with and behind the left heel; the toe of the right foot should be turned slightly out. The distance between the feet should be from 12 to 15 inches according to the height.

Both knees should be slightly bent, and the right heel raised so that the weight of the body will rest on the ball of the foot. To advance, move the left foot forward about ten inches, follow with the right at the same distance.

To retreat, step back the same distance with the right foot and follow with the left. The space between the feet should at all times be as nearly as possible as shown in the engraving.

To avoid a rush, move the left foot about twelve inches to the right and follow with the right, or move the right foot the same distance to the left, and follow with the left, keeping the feet about fifteen inches apart, and facing your adversary. By this arrangement of steps, the right foot is always behind the left leaving you in position, either for attack or defense.

In sparring, move cautiously around your adversary. Keep the left hand and foot in advance, and after delivering a blow, work to the right, to get out of reach of his right hand.

THE HEAD. In sparring, the position of the head is very important; it should be held in such a manner, that it may be rapidly thrown to either side to avoid a blow.

The chin should be inclined slightly, the face turned to the right, so that both eyes will not be on a line with your opponent's left hand.

Keep the eyes open, and the mouth and teeth firmly closed. Never bite the lips or put the tongue between the teeth.

Look your antagonist directly in the eye, and endeavor to avoid showing by the expression of the eye and face, when you intend to hit.

A most essential feature in sparring, is a well governed "head-work," otherwise known as ducking. It is an excellent method of avoiding a blow, though it is generally used for the purpose of countering. They are, the duck to the left to counter with the left hand,