

Why and How to Read This Book

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ACID-BASE CAN BE EASY!

Acid-base equilibrium is a pivotal topic in the biomedical sciences and clinical medicine. Studied by literally millions of people it is often perceived as difficult. This may be because the commonly taught approaches to acid-base physiology are confusing and illogical. Although these methods are mathematically correct, many will recognize the frustrations that come with learning and applying them. They frequently can give rise to circular reasoning and tiring discussions. But worst of all, these methods seem to need adaptations or plug-ins to be of use in situations that are slightly more complex than standard.

The late Peter Stewart's legacy is to have taught thousands of us that acid-base physiology does not need to be difficult at all. We are very grateful to his widow, Babette Stewart for granting us the copyright to his classic textbook "How to Understand Acid-Base".

Using only high school algebra, Stewart demystifies acid-base physiology; and he does so in a very clear and concise style. We have greatly enjoyed his book and decided to leave it like it is. It has become the first part of the book you are holding (Chapters 1-9) and we are sure you will like it too!

FOR THOSE THAT ARE NEW TO THE STEWART APPROACH

Naturally you should start with Stewart's classic text in Chapters 1-9. You will find it is easy to read. The most important advice for you is to, at least temporarily, forget what you already know about acid-base physiology and medicine. Opponents of the Stewart approach frequently point out that the method is difficult to understand because it requires many calculations. This is not our experience at all. In fact, most difficulties in understanding and accepting the value of the Stewart approach stem from wanting to compare or relate it to the more traditional teachings. This will inevitably lead to confusion and more circular reasoning. Therefore we encourage you to start with a blank slate. You will be rewarded!

FOR THOSE THAT ALREADY KNOW ABOUT THE STEWART APPROACH

Surely, you are welcome to re-read Stewart's original text to freshen up your memory. However, you may want to jump straight to the second part of our book: "Quantitative Acid-Base Physiology and Chemistry" (Chapters 10-17). The last 25 years of advances in quantitative acid-base physiology have been reviewed for you by top researchers and clinicians.

Alternatively you may want to proceed directly to the last part of our book: "Clinical Applications of Quantitative Acid-Base Medicine" (Chapters 18-30). This section takes Stewart to the bedside by providing practical means to use the approach. In addition, there are different chapters for virtually all fields of medicine which you can either read consecutively or use as a reference for your specific clinical scenario.

ENJOY!

The Stewart approach has been subject of fierce discussions and vitriolic debates. For us this means that the subject is important to many. It is not our intention to start another controversy. We just want you to better understand the subject and we think that the Stewart approach will certainly help to achieve this goal. Interestingly, quite a few medical textbooks now think the same, introducing the Stewart approach as the method of choice. This strengthens our belief that this book is for everyone that has anything to do with acid-base.