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The Art And Science Of Fencing (NTC Sports/Fitness)



Synopsis

Often thought of as an activity just for actors or an elite few, fencing is actually an ideal sport for people of all ages. Fencing develops dexterity, endurance, flexibility, grace, and overall fitness, while also allowing participants the opportunity to hone the mind's problem-solving abilities. It is easily learned and practiced by both young and old, men and women, boys and girls. It has even been molded to fit the needs of the blind and individuals using wheelchairs. This is truly a sport for everyone. The Art and Science of Fencing covers everything from the history of the sport to the specifics of fencing technique, including the psychology of fencing, types of fencing weapons, biographies of great fencers, and information on selecting a fencing school and getting started in the sport. This book is a necessity for everyone who's ever seen an Errol Flynn movie and thought "Hey, that could be me!"

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Nick Evangelista has taught fencing for more than 30 years. He is also the author of The Art and Science of Fencing.

I'm new to fencing, and have joined an excellent school. This book has given me a lot of information on what I should expect from the teachers and how to proceed with this sport. I have a much clearer understanding on what constitutes a proper teaching program, and how to proceed. I bought about 6 books on fencing to guide my progress and this should be required reading. I learned a lot from this. Author really knows what he's talking about. I wish I could study with him.

Fencing, in all honesty much like any sport nowadays, is both an art and a science. But it's the only sport that stresses it, which seems to make people talk about fencing more next to the fencing strip, rather than actually fence. The treatment of fencing offered in this book is highly superficial, lacking in actual technical and tactical insight needed in the modern (and no doubt classical) fencing world. It was a charm to read, but didn't contribute significantly to the study of fencing as a whole.

This book didn't meet my personal needs. I am looking for a book that provides explanations about technique and the author's personal philosophy about the Sport. Instead, I found the book written as if by a fencing coach giving a general outline of what fencing is about. Maybe I expected more because the other ratings were so high. The books that better met my needs were *Fencing: Steps to Success* and *Fencing and the Master*. I hope *On Fencing* by Aldo Nadi will be good too.

The Art and Science of Fencing contains a fairly basic intro and description of sport fencing, focusing on the French approach to foil. A full third of the book is dedicated to trying to sell the reader on fencing. In my opinion, if you have bought the book, you're already interested. The text was notably lacking in decent photos or illustrations. There are a couple of pages dedicated to praising the importance of drills and exercises, but there is very little actual description of suggested drills or exercises! On a side note, the author has a very narrow view of fencing, attributing that there was no "real" swordplay until the 16th century. This is admittedly a common bias in the field. However, it blatantly ignores the *fechtschules* that have documented evidence from the 1400's. The author is not working from experience or research, as describing non-rapier swords as "can openers" is highly inaccurate. Lastly, the author asserts that strength training has no place in a fencing training regime. I suggest that strength training has a place in any athletic endeavor and that it is simply a matter of tailoring your program to match your sport. Overall an average introduction for beginning fencers.

It's fun and entertaining to watch Nick try to get to fencing, technique, etc., as he just can't resist "one more story." Even when he titles a chapter "technique," it begins... but before we get to that, here's a story and some history... The past reviews on this book are now out of date. There are plenty of good books (dozens) on all levels of fencing, and even some outstanding DVDs (*LEARN FENCING - FOIL - A DVD Beginners Guide to the Olympic Sport of Sword Fighting*) is an example, which also comes in a 3 DVD set for foil, epee and sabre. These ship from UK when ordered on ,

but the shipping is fast and vendor (Russel Swords) extremely high rated and reliable, and the series is awesome. Even the older (2002) Elaine Cheris book (Fencing: Steps to Success (Steps to Success Activity Series)) is inexpensive, filled with great illustrations, and covers a wealth of detailed technique. At from 5 to 14 bucks, the Evangelista book is worth every penny for the stories alone. Sure, Evangelista is full of himself and his ridiculous pronouncements about the good old days (trying to convince us we should wait a year before picking up a foil and another year before trying a bout!) are way outdated (not only for the impatient young, but also we older fencers who don't have long enough left to live to put off the fun parts). BUT, the stories have a LOT of timeless strategy that can be applied to your current game. For example (p. 247), Nick gives a detailed account of Aldo Nadi's method of not letting even the best opponents get a single strike in. This comes down to pure aggressiveness, controlling the opponent so he only strikes from weakness, and the very modern (for a guy born in 1899) attitude of "attack, attack attack, THEN ATTACK." This is Fairbairn's knife fighting philosophy and I use it in my blade combat courses, which are about real life survival, not just sport. If you're impatient to get to the how, not just the why or deeper strategy, pass on this and get Cheris, Hutton, Agrippa, Paul Wagner, Cohen, etc. (Search with any of their names and the word fencing). BUT, if you want to deepen your game strategically, the stories here DO give timeless tips, including a few that have even been forgotten by now that will help you both on the street and in competition. I teach knife combat at blade combat dot com and have no relationship with the author, publisher or , and LP always pays for the books we review. Our recommendations are solely for the benefit of the shopper and Library procurement, with no vested interests.

Useful info.

NOT what I expected.

Good basic fencing book. I gave it to my students.

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