

*Health, Strength, Grace and Symmetry, Vol. 1:
Muscular Symmetry and Fine Condition...for the more athletic more balanced woman...*
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Description List/Text Sheet Exercise Corset Book series

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Outside/Cover Corset:

Antique doll corset with corded support and busk. Dyed cording with metal tips.
Machine stitched, cotton embroidered text.

Height: 17 1/2"

Width closed: 6 1/2"

Width open: 14 1/2"

Interior Pages:

Cotton sateen fabric with digital ink jet printed images.
13 double sided pages including front and back covers.

Machine and hand-stitched stitched pages connected with cotton twill tape.

Page Height: 5 1/2"

Page Width: 6 1/2"

Sources: (partial list)

Ferris Good Sense Waist ad 1900

Ferris Good Sense Waist (athletic) ad 1900

Anderson's Physical Education: Health and Strength, Grace and Symmetry
William G. Anderson, 1897

The Art of Beauty. A book for women and girls. Edited by "Isobel" 1899

Beauty of Form and Grace of Vesture, Frances Mary Steel and Eliz Livingston Steele Adams, 1892

Confidential Chats with Girls, William Lee Howard, 1911

Godey's Lady Book, Jan 1858

Harpers Bazar, "The Ugly-girl papers; or Hints for the toilet", 1874

Harriet Hubbard Ayer's Book: a Complete and Authentic Treatise...of Health and Beauty
Harriet Hubbard Ayer, 1899

How to Get Strong and Stay So, William Blaikie, 1898

Individual Gymnastics, a Handbook of Corrective and Remedial Gymnastics, by Lillian Curtis Drew

The New Gymnastics for Men, Women, and Children..... Dio Lewis, 1862

The well-dressed woman: a study in the practical application to dress of the laws of health, art and moral,
Helen Gilbert Ecob, 1892

*Woman in her various relations: containing practical rules...hints on the body, mind, and character,
with a glance at woman's rights and wrongs, profession, costume, etc.* Mrs L.G. Abell, 1851

Title **Health, Strength, Grace and Symmetry**
Embroidered text **Vol. I**
outside corset front

text inside corset lining
Why should she not reduce herself to a weight which shall make her a Symmetrical Woman, and inasmuch as the only obstacle to her being a Beautiful Woman is her Superfluous Flesh.

Book Cover Muscular Symmetry and Fine Condition
Embroidered text *...for the more athletic, more balanced woman...*
book front

back
(inside book)
Women must persistently, faithfully, systematically, begin a physical reformation.
A woman may keep up a finely developed physique in good condition by the ordinary duties of her life; if those activities are carried on in obedience to natural laws.
But she must stand well and breathe properly, if she will realize the best physical results from performing useful service...
Nothing gives such elasticity to the limbs, and roundness to the form, ease and grace to the motion, as the bending, reaching, lifting, quick walking and swift motions involved in domestic exercise; and nothing gives such a healthful glow to the cheek, luster to the eyes, cheerfulness to the spirits, full and healthful play to the lungs and heart, invigorating the whole frame, preparing the system to develop in full and fair proportions, and to unfold in beauty like the fresh, blooming, and perfected flower.

Page 1 front The Art of Dress:
To be beautiful one must be healthy, and to be healthy one must be properly dressed
This system of exercise will correct drooping or distorted shoulders, malposition of the head and many other common defects.
This unique and charming costume is exceedingly comfortable and appropriate for the purpose for which it is designed.
Our eyes must be *taught* to see beauty.
To *appreciate* a beautiful form is the very first lesson we have to learn concerning perfect physical development.

back The *light active* use required of the muscles in performing the various duties around the house will add to bodily vigor, will assist in rounding out and perfecting the form, will brighten the eyes, and aid in clearing the complexion.

But any work to bring good results must be enjoyed. There must be a liking for it, and a satisfaction in doing it, which can only come from special adaptability to that work.

The kind of work that keeps a woman by herself the greater share of the day, unless she has the greatest delight and pleasure in that work, is not going to be the best thing for her health.

You can over-exercise, become too much excited over contests in the gymnasium, use up force to such an extent that your growing womanly functions become weakened and sometimes dried up!

Page 2 front Muscular strength gives beauty in repose.

What is grace?

A graceful act is one which is accomplished with directness, swiftness, certainty, and with apparent ease... Grace goes with Strength.

Grace or Beauty of Action, — is to be attained, only by means of bodily strength.

The ideal effort is to throw the arms with all the power of the person, and at the same time to maintain perfect repose of the body.

Fine physical development may also be secured by the habitual use of health-lifts, rowing machines, and other devices (of course, with intelligence and moderation).

back Training for the body is quite as important as for the mind.

The eye needs to learn quickness and exactness, the hand steadiness, the limbs graceful gesture and pose, and the whole body dignity of manner and deportment.

Always bear in mind that *Grace of Movement often excels Beauty of Form* in the power of inspiring romantic love.

And remember that any pains you take to acquire grace will not only multiply your own charms; but will establish a habit of graceful movement in your muscles..."

(unrestrained, unsystematic, exercise often develops an awkward carriage, an ill balanced figure, round shoulders, and hobbledehoy, hoydenish manners which are alike painful to see and to have.)

Men care comparatively little for erudition in women; but very much for physical beauty, and good-nature and sound sense.

Page 3 front

Exercise fails of its purpose when respiration is retarded by a stiff and rigid corset.

The wearing of corsets...adapted to one's type of figure, and having plenty of room in the bust, and not too tightly laced, need not to interfere with one's exercise.

The first sensations of a woman who has worn a corset for years, and then endeavors to go with out one, certainly is that she will flop over at the waist.

She feels as if the breastbone in her body had suddenly been taken away from her.

The benefits that occur from a healthful activity are enhanced many fold by a *grace giving garment* that imparts a *perfect outline* without distortion or distress.

Easy in any position you take, comfortable with any dress you wear.

{The ideal garment for the gymnasium!}

back

Cycling is more than sport, it combines health, business *and pleasure*.

As a recreation it is a gymnasium in itself!

It not only develops the lower limbs but extends its influence to the head, chest, lungs and stomach. It drives away headache permanently by forcing the blood from the head to the feet; it decreases the loose flesh of the heavy person, and increases the weight of thin people.

The exquisite complexions produced by outdoor exercise are proofs of its benefits physically, and it only requires a little nerve, moral courage, and a bicycle to make it an established conveyance for ladies.

Page 4 front

"The Perfect Poise"

She rides *with easy grace because every motion, every muscle is absolutely free*.

She rides without fatigue *because she enjoys perfect respiration*.

Elastic sides yield to *every motion* of the wearer.

The bust is made to give support without restriction.

Exercise properly adapted to each individual, is the great factor in "Beauty Training."

back

Poise would put the body *in exact relation with the Laws of Gravitation*.

The drilling, training and developing of the *will - powers of self-control*, must be a constant part of a girl's education.

{Will power depends upon a perfect nervous system.}

Misdirected ambition, a forgetfulness that she had only a certain amount of nervous power, an excitement which blinded her to her real condition; these were the factors which made her drive her body far beyond its powers.

Page 5 front

The Physical Reformation of Woman can be accomplished only through her own determined effort.

{We do not ask that she have the strength and stature of man;
we do ask that she have the maximum of Womanly Strength and Stature.}

Prevents the shoulders from drooping, the waist from spreading, the lungs expand with every breadth; the muscles are free in every action.

She stands erect, she moves with grace, she lives in comfort.

All heavy lifting is dangerous to the womb and ovaries during the growing periods.

*Many a foolish or uninstructed girl has made herself a girl of muscles,
but ruined her WOMANLY POWERS in so doing.*

Save all your strength and force for what Nature intended a woman to DO.

back

The Girl Who Loves Good Heath...

as well as physical perfection, finds this an ideal garment.

It yields to every motion; it neither binds nor restricts; it permits full respiration and is highly conductive to Erectness and Grace.

Any muscle, well developed, is beautiful; muscular lines are *lines of beauty* everywhere.

Dumb-bell or chest-weight exercises alone, if properly taken will soon make the chest and arms large and well-shaped, the shoulders square and firm, and the back strong and straight.

Tight clothing irritates the nerves, increasing self consciousness, and consequent awkwardness.

Page 6 front

It will broaden the chest and overcome round shoulders.

{All these results are only the natural outcome of the systematic use of muscular tissue too often neglected or forgotten.}

It gives a new impetus to the blood, and produces a clear, transparent complexion. This means form, health, strength and beauty.

It will correct imperfect bust development and fill out thin necks.

It aids digestion, dispels the blues and induces sleep. It will rest the worked brain, and above all will give the happiness and exhilaration that comes from Perfect Health.

Of course every girl should exercise, but it must be such exercises as is governed with her sexual organs ever in view.

back

Dum-bells are accessible to everybody...
...and daily use of them keeps the flesh firm and muscles strong, the waist from growing thick and dumpy, develops the bust, brings out the graceful curves of the body and gives elasticity to every motion.

No girl between 14 and 20 years of age should ever train for physical contests of any form of athletic competition.

A girl should train for her future work – Motherhood –
and for this wonderful and glorious contest
(for bringing onto the earth the best possible men and women),
she must have the highest form of nervous development, with all that this implies.

Page 7 front

How can I tell when I need rest instead of exercise?

The best sign is when you think that you ought to exercise
but don't feel like making the effort.

*Many, many a girl has become a nervous wreck because someone forced her to exercise
when she needed to be quite and at rest.*

No girl is strong, or ever will be as a woman, whose body and muscles have been
developed at the expense of her nervous system.

When the body is constricted in this device there is no desire to exercise in any way.
A movement of any kind requires far more effort under these circumstances.
She cannot bend her body...*chronic corset wearers in nearly every case become lazy,
disinclined to activity of any kind, and every muscle of the body gradually degenerates,
becoming soft and flabby.*

back

Experience shows that weak, shaky, hysterical nerves accompany soft, flabby muscles.

*"A body so healthy as to beget a sweet temper; not subject to headaches, and nervous
prostration; not exhausted by slight exertion..."*

Activity is not only the Law of Life and Health, but it is a part of youth.

The moment one ceases to be active, the moment a woman allows her muscular system
to stagnate, is the moment she begins to age speedily.

Since physical weakness handicaps woman's activities, bars the way to higher education
and hinders the development of many noble traits of character, it follows that an important
step *in the Attainment of True Womanhood* lies in the direction of physical reformation.

Page 8 front

A short, brisk walk before the first meal of the day is a wonderful tonic and flesh reducer; and should the weather be unfavorable, some brisk indoor exercise should always be substituted before stays are put on.

We must in all our exercises strive to develop the whole system symmetrically. This can only be muscles in correct proportion.

The ribs of the body form a complete corset. They give shape to the body, and cannot possibly be improved upon, if the body is given proper use. *If the muscles are developed, strengthened, beautified, this part of the body would be as symmetrical and as beautiful as any other part.*

back

Ladies beginning gymnastics after marriage, or, say, thirty years of age, should most carefully guard against overstrain; and young girls during a year or so before puberty, and two years succeeding that period, must on no account be permitted to “over do it,” or attempt any exercises of feats likely to tax their strength to its limit.

{In the case of those accustomed to wear corsets, a lightly boned corset-bodice having a flexible *whalebone* busk, if any.}

Appropriate exercise for the waist will soon reduce superfluous fat, and healthy muscle will take the place of the corset in supporting the bust and giving uprightness to the figure.

One object of physical training is to keep down or reduce superfluous flesh.

Page 9 front

To those who do like housework, it is a very good way of developing and sustaining Health, Strength and Beauty of Body.

{But it must be performed in a free, easy costume.}

The movements must in no way be restricted. Absolute freedom in dress is essential in order to derive actual pleasure and benefit. A woman should be able to move and exert her strength without the slightest possible hindrance.

When possessed by the spirit of enjoyment, absolutely free to move unhampered by undue and tight clothing, and with a copious supply of pure air coming through widely opened windows, *the woman who is adapted to it will find pleasure and actual benefit from ordinary household duties.*

back

Physical culture reaches muscular economy as well as muscular development. No more muscular force should be expended than is necessary to accomplish a given act.

Muscular power is wasted by rigidity of muscles as well as by superfluous motion, and both these forms of wasting power are common among women, because of their excessive nervous development.

{They work and even rest under the high-pressure system.}

The secret of the Power of Muscular Relaxation is in the mind. If we dismiss from our hearts all unworthy anxieties, all feeling of hurry, we shall learn the economy of muscular and nerve power.

In the discovery of herself, woman must learn that a life of intellectual and moral equality demands physical equality.

Page 10 front

Every school-girl could be *daily* practiced in a few simple exercises... *invigorating her circulation, strengthening her digestion;* giving every muscle and joint of her body *vigorous* play; and so keeping her toned up, and strong enough to be free from much danger wither of incurring serious disease, or any of the lighter ailments so common among us.

There is commonly a want of fullness in those muscles of the shoulder which gives its graceful slope. This is developed by the use of the skipping rope, in swinging it over the head, and by battledore, which keeps the arms extended, at the same time using the muscles of the neck and shoulders

{As to her *usefulness*, no matter where her lot is to be cast, it will be *increased*; and, it is not too much to add, her *happiness* and that of those around her will be greatly *enhanced* through all her life as well. }

back

...while this is all well enough for young girls; is it not too late for *full-grown* women to attempt to get the same benefits?

This girl was young and plastic; and, with proper care, could be moulded in almost any way; but the woman already has her make and set; and these cannot readily be changed.

For even if a woman had one hour's training, and one hour's exercise in the open air every day, without corsets it would not atone for the ten to fourteen remaining hours in which the corset is worn.

Page 11 front

Special means are essential to special growth.

Throwing quoits and sweeping are good exercises to develop the arms, there is nothing like three hours of house-work a day for giving a woman a good figure, and if she sleeps in tight cosmetic gloves, she need not fear that her hands will be spoiled.

There should be an effort to maintain the normal pose in every activity; when this is impossible, a frequent return to normal attitudes, a deep breath, and the stretching of cramped muscles will rest the body and counteract the tendency to physical deterioration.

back The woman who works steadily at employment at all sedentary and confining, is undergoing a test and a hardship which will certainly call for a strong constitution, a good condition, and a brave spirit as well; *or the strain will surely break her down, and bring to her permanent weakness.*

If so many hours must be spent in labor; then *let her secure ten or fifteen minutes, upon rising, for a series of exercises in her room.*

More benefit may be gained by obtaining *Perfection of Form and Ease of Execution* in a few exercises, than by doing a larger number carelessly, or with strain.

Back Cover/Page 12 [“Physical Perfect” Ferris Good Sense Corset Waist ad. - *printed image*]
front (inside page)

Embroidered text try to obtain....
Muscular Symmetry and Fine Condition.

Back [printed image of woman with broom]

Embroidered text Tamar Stone © 2007
