



# **Practical Medical Procedures at a Glance**

**Rachel K. Thomas**



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# Practical Medical Procedures at a Glance

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# Preface



**P**ractical procedures are an integral part of many clinical encounters. They are a mainstay of good clinical care. Accordingly, regulatory bodies such as the General Medical Council now require procedures to be formally recognised and assessed as a prerequisite to gaining full registration.

The intention of this book is to provide a resource to help guide in the safe and effective acquisition of these skills. It is intended to supplement the teaching provided by a multitude of experienced clinicians – the doctors, nurses, site practitioners, professors, medi-

cal school tutors and lecturers – not to replace it. Each skill or procedure possesses protocols specific to each Healthcare Trust or region of practice which, of course, must be adhered to first and foremost.

The online representations of the procedures are included to help readers understand the practical aspects of the procedures – but, as with any skill, there is no replacement for repetition.

The suggested further reading and references are included as they have been consulted in the writing of this book, and they are valuable resources to further expand upon its contents.



# Acknowledgements

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# About the companion website



Don't forget to visit the companion website for this book:



**[www.ataglanceseries.com/  
practicalmedprocedures](http://www.ataglanceseries.com/practicalmedprocedures)**

There you will find valuable material designed to enhance your learning, including:

- Interactive multiple choice questions
- Videos demonstrating practical techniques

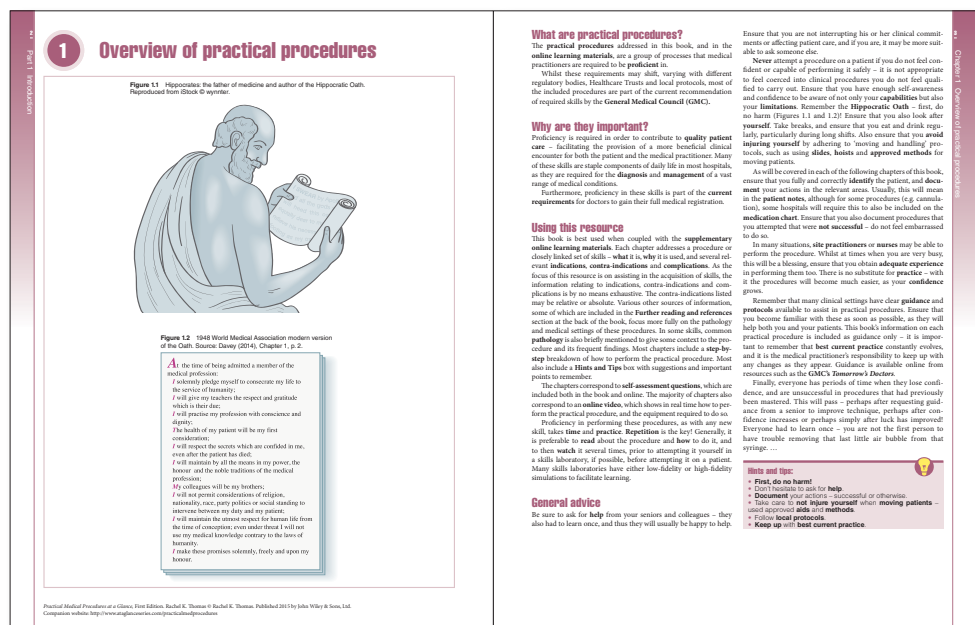
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# How to use your textbook

## Features contained within your textbook

Each topic is presented in a double-page spread with clear, easy-to-follow diagrams supported by succinct explanatory text.



Hints and tips boxes give inside information on a topic.

### Hints and tips:

- **First, do no harm!**
- Don't hesitate to ask for **help**.
- **Document** your actions – successful or otherwise.
- Take care to **not injure yourself** when **moving patients** – used approved **aids and methods**.
- Follow **local protocols**.
- **Keep up** with **best current practice**.

Did you know boxes highlight points to remember.

Your textbook is full of photographs, illustrations and tables.

## Did you know?

• Many needles now have **needle safe units** attached to the needle (Figure 3.2). This is usually a **plastic component**, which can click safely and easily over the needle after use – thus minimising the risk of needle-stick injury. If one is present, use it!

## 6 Hand hygiene and personal protective equipment

Figure 6.1 Six steps for adequate handwashing

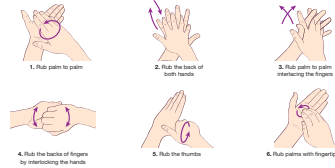
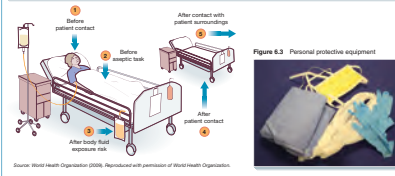


Figure 6.2 Standard practice: the 5 moments of hand hygiene. Source: Sax et al (2007), Figure 2. Reproduced with permission of Elsevier.

1. Before patient contact	Why?	Clear your hands before touching a patient when approaching him or her
2. Before an aseptic task	Why?	To protect the patient against harmful germs carried on your hands
3. After body fluid exposure risk	Why?	To protect the patient against harmful germs, including the patient's own germs, entering his or her body
4. After patient contact	Why?	Clear your hands after touching a patient and his or her immediate surroundings when leaving
5. After contact with patient surroundings	Why?	To protect yourself and the health-care environment from harmful patient germs



Source: World Health Organization (2008). Reproduced with permission of World Health Organization.

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Figure 6.3 Personal protective equipment



Multiple choice questions, at the end of the book and followed by the answers, help you test yourself.

## Multiple choice answers

### 1 Overview of practical procedures

- Practical procedures are required to deliver quality patient care. Proficiency in many practical procedures is currently a regulated recommendation by the General Medical Council.
- Practical procedures, such as venepuncture, occur every day, many times per day, in most clinical environments. These procedures can be used to help diagnose conditions, and to monitor their treatment, such as by looking at the rise and fall of inflammatory markers in blood to indicate the possible presence of infection, and the effects of antibiotics.
- Always seek senior help with performing procedures – especially in instances where you do not feel confident in performing it, you have not performed it before or you feel it may be more complicated than you feel capable of managing.
- Depending upon the local protocols of each Healthcare Trust, some nursing staff may be able to perform some practical procedures, such as venepuncture. This varies widely to ensure that you are familiar with that which is permitted in each area you work in.
- It is the medical professional's responsibility to ensure that no harm is done to the patient, as per the Hippocratic Oath. Local policies must be adhered to, as most current best practice, to ensure that optimal patient care is delivered each time.

### 2 Non-technical skills

- Communication includes many different components, and in order to communicate most effectively, it may be appropriate to use many different forms to convey meaning. Written words, actions and spoken words are all important parts of communication.
- Communicating in areas where you may be overheard is not good practice, but if it is unavoidable, ensure the patient's confidentiality is maximised. It is not good practice to use family members as translators, as in some cases the patient may not receive impartial information or may not feel able to convey their wishes openly. Effective communication is maintained by appropriate levels of eye contact and a posture that is suitably attentive and open.
- Task management involves prioritising activities in the order of importance. Other factors such as difficulty,

duration, cost or ease should not be the primary dictator of when tasks are done – they should be done in the order of importance.

Situation awareness involves many aspects. It involves modifying a workspace to gain maximum information, as well as asking questions to maximise understanding of this information. It involves observing, interpreting and comprehending this information, as well as anticipating what may occur.

Teamwork involves multiple aspects, all of which are facilitated by good communication skills. It involves allocating roles based upon each member's capabilities and limitations, after discussing and recognising these. These roles need to be respected and accepted by the team members, and for all members to then work in co-operation.

### 3 Waste, sharps disposal and injuries

- Local policies may vary in each Healthcare Trust, however, generally bins for clinical waste are yellow and clearly marked.
- Ensure that waste is disposed of in the correct bins. Pay particular care in respecting patient confidentiality, and ensuring that any confidential waste containing patient information is disposed of in confidential waste bins.
- Never re-sheath a needle, and always use the attached needle safe units if one is present. These help minimise the risk of an injury by protecting you from the needle. Sharps must always be disposed of in a sharps bin, ideally in a portable one that you can have with you to facilitate immediate disposal after use.
- Sharps injuries must be dealt with immediately by encouraging bleeding under running water, and washing it with soap. Occupational Health must be contacted immediately, and they generally will help with future steps such as patient testing for possible relevant illnesses such as hepatitis and HIV.
- Soiled incontinence products should be disposed of in yellow clinical waste bins, along with any contaminated products such as dressings, swabs, and gloves. Food wrappers should be disposed of in domestic waste bins, while anything with patient details on it should be disposed of in a confidential waste bin.

The website icon indicates that you can read more on a topic by visiting the companion website. / The website icon indicates that you can find accompanying resources on the book's companion website.





