The Unstable Elbow
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The field of elbow surgery has continued to advance tremendously over the last two decades. Instability represents one of the most frequent clinical problems in elbow surgery. Traumatic elbow injuries oftentimes carry an element of instability. Chronic instability can be the result of traumatic injuries, throwing sports, or developmental disorders (coronoid hypoplasia, distal humerus varus malunion). Surgical techniques to reconstruct the various elements involved in elbow stability have improved substantially. However, salvage procedures are still occasionally required when instability surgery goes wrong.

Although isolated pieces of information about various aspects of elbow instability can be gathered from scientific manuscripts, it is difficult to find a single source that provides an updated, comprehensive review of the unstable elbow. Dr. Tashjian has definitely accomplished that task in his book. The Unstable Elbow covers the basic science underlying elbow instability, the evaluation and management of both acute and chronic instability, and salvage procedures such as arthroplasty and arthrodesis for persistently unstable elbows.

Dr. Tashjian has become a very active academic shoulder and elbow surgeon. I have had the pleasure of getting to know him personally through interactions in various meetings, and I have read a number of his publications. He has a great writing style and the innate ability to compile and summarize large collections of data into meaningful manuscripts. With a list of peer-reviewed articles close to 100, and experience in various teaching courses, some specifically on elbow instability, Dr. Tashjian has the required perspective on elbow instability to serve as Editor of such a great monograph.

The lead authors for all chapters in this book are true experts in elbow surgery. Dr. Tashjian created a comprehensive table of contents and assigned the various chapters of his book to individuals with sound knowledge, backed up by their own original research. I could not think of a better group of individuals to summarize the state of the art in elbow instability.

In times of quick access to information, mostly through internet-based tools, the foundation provided by a solid book that, when read from beginning to end, will establish an ample frame of reference on a given subject is simply priceless. Hopefully, the content of this book will enable many orthopedic surgeons around the world to help so many patients unfortunate enough to suffer from elbow instability in one form or another.
I feel honored to have been asked to write this Foreword for Dr. Tashjian’s book on *The Unstable Elbow*. I am familiar with the extraordinary amount of work and effort required to complete a monograph like this one, and I would like to personally congratulate Dr. Tashjian and his fellow authors in creating a wonderful book.

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Preface

The understanding of elbow instability has exponentially grown over the past 25–30 years. Very limited knowledge existed prior to that point even with regard to the basic anatomy and mechanics of the various elbow stabilizers. Most injuries were treated conservatively except for highly displaced fractures or grossly unstable joints, and often there was no set algorithm or strategy in treating these injuries leading to unpredictable results. With anatomic and mechanical studies defining the critical stabilizers of the elbow and a more concentrated focus on clinical outcomes and developing protocols for treating certain patterns of elbow instability, the results of nonoperative and operative treatment have improved. Recent refinements of injury and fracture classifications and identification of new injury patterns have increased the percentage of successful results in these often challenging cases. With such a rapid growth in knowledge, it can be extremely challenging for surgeons to have a full understanding of what is the most “up-to-date” treatment for these injuries. Most often this requires searching through the literature and arriving at a conclusion based upon the assimilation of material from several articles. Up until this point, no single resource has distilled this information on the topic of elbow instability in a usable form that can be easily applied to everyday clinical use. This deficiency was the origins of the current textbook.

I am grateful to have recruited a group of experts in the field of elbow surgery to put together a series of manuscripts outlining the current treatment strategies for all aspects of elbow instability. The initial chapters focus on anatomy, biomechanics, and the most currently utilized surgical approaches for the treatment of elbow instability. The following chapters focus on the evaluation and surgical treatments of acute and chronic elbow instabilities. The authors have not only assimilated the data in the literature to make clear recommendations as to the most appropriate treatment for these injuries but also added their own personal “pearls of wisdom” in both their diagnosis and surgical management. I want to individually thank each author for putting the time and effort required to make this project a reality. I hope the readers will find the text a reference that they will return to over and over to help guide them in the management of each of these challenging problems.

Our goal with this text was to put everything regarding elbow instability “under one roof” and thereby making it an almost essential resource for surgeons treating these injuries. I think we have achieved and surpassed these goals beyond my expectations and I hope the readers feel this way as well. Finally, I hope this text is a springboard for further research on the treatment
of these injuries. The text allows a “big picture look” at the problem, and this often allows gaps in our knowledge and treatments to be identified. We hope this textbook serves you and your patients well and also provides a platform for identifying areas of treatment that need to be expanded and improved upon in the future.

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