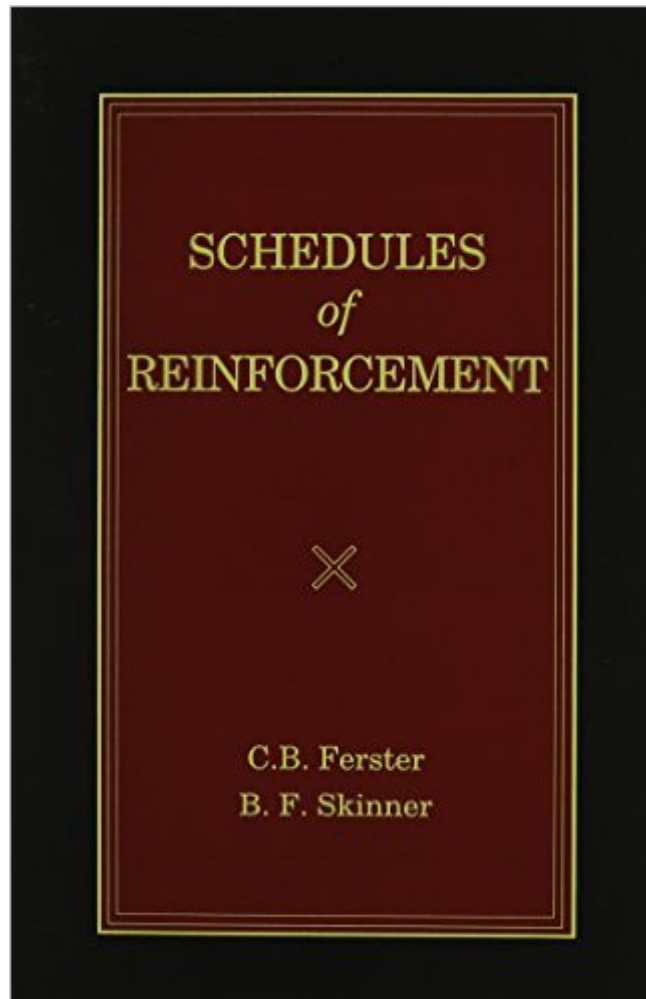


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Schedules Of Reinforcement (B. F. Skinner Reprint Series)



Book Information

Paperback: 758 pages

Publisher: Copley Publishing Group (May 1, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 087411828X

ISBN-13: 978-0874118285

Product Dimensions: 1.5 x 5.8 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (3 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #980,820 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #367 in [Books > Medical Books > Psychology > Movements > Behaviorism](#) #531 in [Books > Science & Math > Behavioral Sciences > Behavioral Psychology](#) #13089 in [Books > Textbooks > Social Sciences > Psychology](#)

Customer Reviews

This book is amazing. It was at the time, and likely still is the most comprehensive and detailed research into schedules of reinforcement ever done. The detail and the jargon make it hard going in places, and the almost fanatic obsession with quantizing everything is a little aversive.

Nevertheless, if you persist in gleaning the main ideas from this book, and convince yourself of their importance and correctness, using the detail, you will be richly rewarded with a completely new understanding of the wonderful research that behaviorists have performed, and the sometimes startling results. Highly recommended even for persons with only slight familiarity with behaviorism.

The contingent relationship between actions and their consequences lies at the heart of Skinner's experimental analysis of behavior. Particular patterns of behavior emerge depending upon the contingencies established. Ferster and Skinner examined the effects of different schedules of reinforcement on behavior. An extraordinary work, *Schedules of Reinforcement* represents over 70,000 hours of research primarily with pigeons, though the principles have now been experimentally verified with many species including human beings. At first glance, the book appears to be an atlas of schedules. And so it is—the most exhaustive in existence. But it is also a reminder of the power of describing and explaining behavior through an analysis of measurable and manipulative behavior-environment relations without appealing to physiological mechanisms in the brain. As an exemplar and source for the further study of behavioral phenomena, the book illustrates the scientific philosophy that Skinner and Ferster adopted: that a science is best built from

the ground up, from a firm foundation of facts that can eventually be summarized as scientific laws. Hope this helps.

Most of psychology is easy to avoid, since it is as close to science as Dr. Seuss. While Skinner can feel like he is going off on a tangent now and then, his analysis is on the mark. Some people argue that he tried to reduce things too much - maybe these people feel that Skinner is hurting their Ego. While I could try to tell you that you should read the book and judge for yourself, I have to remember that you have no choice. You will or you won't read it, not because of your "free will" but because of your history of reinforcement.

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