

The Feldenkrais Method - Description and Benefits

The Feldenkrais Method (FM) was first taught in the 1950s by Moshe Feldenkrais, who had a doctorate in science from the Sorbonne, but studied many other subjects, including martial arts, prenatal development, cybernetics and linguistics. It has two components, Functional Integration and Awareness Through Movement. Functional Integration consists of one-on-one sessions which begin with the practitioner's assessing how the client sits, stands and moves. Then the practitioner begins to gently move different parts of their body. These movements start out small, but get larger as the session proceeds. They are never intended to be painful, because pain will inhibit movement. The client's only participation in the session is to notice how they feel when different parts of their body are moved in different ways (and of course inform the practitioner if any movement causes pain, so it can be stopped or changed). After a treatment the client may notice that they sit, stand, or move differently, or perhaps they just feel more relaxed. Awareness Through Movement is done in groups, with one practitioner and many clients/student. In one of these classes the practitioner has the students perform certain movements, asking questions throughout the class to help the students pay attention to what is happening in their bodies and how they feel as they move in certain ways. The Feldenkrais Method has many uses. It is good for people recovering from an injury because it can teach them how to move in a way that does not aggravate the injury or increase their pain. It can help people who spend a lot of time in one position, like those who work on a computer. It's good for seniors and others who may not be able to move much, but who want to stay as active as they can. It can even help people who can't move in some ways at all, because it can help improve the quality of movements a person can make. Dr. Feldenkrais believed that even if the movement is just imagined - but done slowly and carefully in the imagination - the body can learn more from it than it would from actual movements that are faster and more repetitious. And, since the Feldenkrais Method helps people get more in touch with their body, it can work with those who have pain that has no apparent cause. The increased awareness it helps people develop may give them the information they need to find the source of their problem and resolve it. FM can work with anyone, even if they have no problems, as Dr. Feldenkrais believed that movement can always be improved. For example, an athlete could use it to help them improve their game - regardless of which game they play - and a musician to improve their playing. As we go through our lives we all develop patterns of movement that may not be helpful and may possibly be harmful - if only to our psyches. The Feldenkrais Method teaches that changing the way we move can help us make changes in our lives, because movement is the best way for the mind to communicate with the body. It is always possible that some of these changes may be mental or emotional rather than physical.

About the Author

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