

Irish Examiner. Sunday 21st July 2013. LIFEstyle magazine

Q. Can you explain what Feldenkrais is? I recently met a man who was most enthusiastic about it, and took the time to explain it all to me, but I'm afraid I still don't quite understand how it works. I would also like to know where I can find a practitioner.

A. The Feldenkrais Method was developed by Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-1984). It is very gentle, enabling you to release holding patterns and increase flexibility and coordination. By working at such a subtle level, your brain and nervous system are engaged to help change the way you relate to your body.

Feldenkrais benefits people of all ages and levels of mobility— from professional athletes to people with severe injury or disability. It is all about using minimum effort to achieve maximum efficiency. Or as Moshe Feldenkrais put it: "To make the impossible possible, the possible easy, and the easy, elegant."

In an ATM (Awareness Through Movement) group class, you are first assisted in gaining a sense of awareness of your body before being guided through a series of gentle floor-based movements to help re-integrate your movements. Your body organisation changes after performing the series of movements to help permanently improve posture, breathing, balance and co-ordination.

The FI (Functional Integration) individual sessions are aimed to meet specific needs where a practitioner uses his or her hands to guide your body through a series of subtle movements to provide sensory feedback regarding the way your body is moving.

* For more or to find a local Feldenkrais practitioner, visit www.feldenkrais.ie online.

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Irish Examiner. Sunday 25th August 2013. LIFEstyle magazine

Q. I am at my wits' end. I have tried everything to ease my back pain with little or no effect. A friend has suggested Feldenkrais therapy. Do you know of this therapy, and would you recommend it?

A. The Feldenkrais Method may well be the answer to your prayers, particularly when you have exhausted other options. Developed by Moshe Feldenkrais, this method is designed to help increase flexibility and coordination by releasing holding patterns.

This technique is very gentle, but since it engages your brain and nervous system, it is surprisingly effective. It can help with musculoskeletal issues that are long-standing, injuries, or repetitive strain conditions.

Pain, strain, stiffness, and tension are released through a rediscovery of the natural movements of the body. The outcomes are significant, with individuals who have suffered from chronic pain for around two years finding relief after just five lessons. It also improves emotional and mental wellbeing.

* For more information or to find a local Feldenkrais practitioner, visit www.feldenkrais.ie online or email info@feldenkrais.ie.

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