

SENSEABILITY

A Quarterly Newsletter of APPLICATIONS OF THE FELDENKRAIS METHOD®



Issue #2 -- Applications in Sports

In his early years, Moshe Feldenkrais was very active in sports and became one of the first European Judo experts. It was an injury in sports that led to his developing the FELDENKRAIS METHOD. This background was influential in the development of many AWARENESS THROUGH MOVEMENT® lessons - falling, rolling and balancing to name a few. In this issue, we present applications in a few of the many sports that have direct benefits from using the FELDENKRAIS METHOD. Athletes, recreational or competitive, can realize how " *...to make the impossible possible, the possible easy, and the easy elegant.* "

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Competitive Running

When **Sharon Starika de Moyano** (<smoyano@sciti.com>) talks to people about the benefits of the FELDENKRAIS METHOD, the most convincing story she tells is her own. Sharon had been competing in triathlons for four years when, in 1984, she was hit by a large truck while riding her bicycle. The collision broke her left shoulder, pelvis, femur and ankle, and destroyed muscle groups in her left leg and shoulder. She underwent nine surgeries over the course of the next year, including skin grafts, to repair the enormous damage caused by the accident.

Sharon's doctors told her she would never be able to compete again, and that she probably would not be able to run. But all that changed about a year after her accident when she learned about FELDENKRAIS and began having daily FUNCTIONAL INTEGRATION and AWARENESS THROUGH MOVEMENT lessons. The results were remarkable. In only three months, Sharon was not just running, she was back in training. Most impressive of all, she was pain-free.

After her recovery, Sharon competed in European triathlons, and knocked an astounding 20 minutes off her pre-accident time in the marathon run of more than 26 miles.

"I learned how to use myself really efficiently," she explains. Today, Sharon still runs five to 10 miles a day in the hills of La Jolla.

Having seen firsthand what the Method can do for people in pain, Sharon decided to take the four-year FELDENKRAIS professional training program from which

she graduated in 1991.

"One of the things I love about the Method," she says, "is that it allows people to continue to do the things in life that they love to do."

These days Sharon schedules her running around a busy schedule as a popular FELDENKRAIS Practitioner at the Reese Movement Institute in San Diego, California. She gives local workshops for runners, triathletes and other athletes. "I like to show them how to improve their performance and how not to injure themselves."

An easy-to-read self-improvement book, Running with the Whole Body includes eleven FELDENKRAIS lessons in a 30-day program that **Jack Heggie** offered. (<JackHeggie@aol.com>)

Golf

Many people look forward to a retirement of endless hours on the green. For some, the dream turns into disappointment. They develop repetitive injuries, others can't seem to improve their averages; still others discover that bending, swinging, even walking have become a pain instead of a pleasure.

Although golf is not an aerobic sport, it still requires using the whole body. Many golfers have found that the FELDENKRAIS METHOD can improve their game and restore their enjoyment of the sport. **Duffy Waldorf** finished fifth in this year's Masters, and second in the Greater Greensboro/Chrysler Classic. He is ranked 27th in the PGA's Top Money winners of '96. He recently commented that

"The FELDENKRAIS METHOD has allowed me to play pain-free golf, without worrying about injury. It puts me in control of what I want to do by allowing me to get in touch with the 'mind-body' connection. I've re-learned more efficient patterns for playing golf."

Ski with Balance, Control and Ease

FELDENKRAIS PRACTITIONER **Margaret McIntyre** (<marg@maui.net>) works with many recreational skiers on the slopes of Vail, Colorado through her "Integrated Skiing" program. She consistently sees back and knee problems as well as a tendency for skiers to tire easily on the slopes. She feels that most skiers think that skiing is all in the legs so she teaches them how to use their trunks (pelvis, ribs, shoulders) to gain balance, control, fluidity and speed.

McIntyre also works with professional skiers. She teaches "wellness" programs for ski instructors through Vail and Beaver Creek Schools which are leaders in the ski school industry. She has recently expanded into

snowboarding through her work with brothers Brian (national Champion) and Kevin Delaney (International Champion).

Jack Heggie's Skiing with the Whole Body is an interesting, easy-to-read guide to better skiing. It has sixteen exercises that develop better balance and control. His section on *The Moving Mind* clarifies how the FELDENKRAIS METHOD has such a powerful impact on skiing.

Olympic Rowing

Carrie Edwards, who had won six national gold medals in rowing between 1990 and 1993 began seeing FELDENKRAIS Practitioner **Ofer Erez** (<ofer@healthetc.to>) in Walnut Creek, California, because she was unable to continue her professional training. She had been diagnosed with tendonitis in both her forearms. Her pain was quickly relieved and she was able to continue training without recurring injuries. She continued her FUNCTIONAL INTEGRATION lessons in order to continue improving her abilities. In addition, some old injuries surfaced and were cleared up during those sessions.

"... I am now training for the next Olympic events with no major obstacles relating to injuries. As extra benefits I have noticed that my running has become easier, my performance on exercise machines has improved and my recovery time is easier and shorter. All this without additional training."

Just prior to the 1996 Olympic trials she said to Ofer, "I truly believe that I was in the best physical condition of my rowing career and I owe a lot of that to you."

Ofer believes that "an athlete who receives FUNCTIONAL INTEGRATION lessons regularly may expect to be relieved of current injuries, prevent the injuries that are usual to their particular sport and improve their performance."

Olympic Kayacking

FELDENKRAIS Practitioner **Debbie Ashton** (<dnaashton@cs.com>) was hired by the Olympic Committee to work with kayakers preparing for last summer's Olympics in Atlanta. The kayakers who worked with Ashton experienced a sense of lubrication in tired joints and reduction of pain and discomfort even after grueling hours in the Ocoee River.

Debbie has a new videotape entitled *Fluid Moves* which includes 6 lessons and interviews with Olympians and their coaches on how FELDENKRAIS affects performance.

Horseback Riding

Horseback riding, like other sports, demands coordination, timing and direction. The FELDENKRAIS METHOD lends itself beautifully to improving equestrian skills for many reasons. **Bill Hutchinson**, a FELDENKRAIS Practitioner in Massachusetts, has been working with riders, helping them to learn how to ride better.

He says, "Many riders get caught in the trap of struggling with their horse, showing him 'who is boss' -- which is counter productive." FELDENKRAIS lessons show the rider how to be with the horse, as a single, intelligent unit.

Horses respond to messages or directives from the feet, legs, back, arms and hands. These signals must be precise. Often riders give mixed messages which confuse the horse. For instance, the rider must learn to deliver a message with only one leg with no participation by the other leg or hip. In FELDENKRAIS lessons, the rider learns how to be more focused and precise.

Riding is a time-consuming sport; most people demand short cuts to achieve the results of dedicated equestrians. "This is exactly what the Method offers," says Hutchinson.

The two hottest items in equestrian training in recent years are fully grounded in kinesthetic awareness. The first is **Linda Tellington-Jones' T.T.E.A.M.® Work**. Linda says her methods were enriched and given form by her participation in a FELDENKRAIS training.

The second is Sally Swift's *Centred Riding*. Sally developed her approach after studying with a variety of experts. She teaches riders a variety of effective awareness techniques.

Hutchinson teamed up with dressage judge and *Centred Riding* instructor Beth Jenkins to teach a five-week seminar for equestrians on 1985 -- and never looked back. Each class is two hours; in the first hour, Beth reviews videotape footage of certain riding techniques. In the second hour, Bill leads them through an AWARENESS THROUGH MOVEMENT lesson specifically designed to help them better achieve what the videotapes are demonstrating. Their New England classes and seminars have continued to expand each year, and a number of articles have appeared in equestrian and horseman magazines.

About the FELDENKRAIS METHOD®

The **FELDENKRAIS METHOD** is an educational system that develops a functional awareness of the self in the environment.

Moshe Feldenkrais Ph.D. (1904-1984), physicist, engineer, martial artist and educator, developed the **FELDENKRAIS**



METHOD by studying the direct relationship between bodily movement and the ways we think, feel, learn and act in the world.

AWARENESS THROUGH MOVEMENT® (pictured at left) is the group lesson form in which students explore movement

sequences according to the verbal directions of the teacher.

FUNCTIONAL INTEGRATION® is the private lesson form combining instructive touch and movement with verbal cues.

These lessons help students become aware of old habits and provide choices for more efficient action.

GUILD CERTIFIED FELDENKRAIS PRACTITIONERS^{cm} must complete 800-1000 hours of in-depth training over a three to four year period in a Professional Training Program accredited by The FELDENKRAIS GUILD.

The **FELDENKRAIS GUILD®** is an international organization of practitioners which maintains the professional standards of practitioners and provides a range of informative materials to the public.

For more information, please contact your **GUILD CERTIFIED FELDENKRAIS PRACTITIONER** or The FELDENKRAIS GUILD at (800) 775-2118.

Please Note:

The **FELDENKRAIS METHOD** is an educational system. It is not a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Consult your physician if you have pain or difficulty with movement.

WHEN WORKING OUT

If you train for competition or for your own general fitness, the FELDENKRAIS METHOD includes some familiar principles. **Bruce Richmond**, Certified Athletic Trainer and Guild Certified FELDENKRAIS Practitioner, (<bruce@pbest.com>>) offers these helpful pointers on how to improve faster and get better results from your workout:

Differentiate: Avoid the "no pain, no gain" myth. There is a big difference between progressive overload and injury. An injured body develops inhibitions and compensations that restricts learning of skills.

Customize: Your body will learn in its own way, influenced by your own physical traits and your unique history. Don't expect that your body will be able to do each exercise exactly the way your coach could, or the book you read described.

Focus: A casual workout will bring casual results. Know the purpose of each exercise, whether it's to strengthen, stretch, or develop muscles or to improve your coordination or balance. Be sure that you are doing what you are intending to do.

Refine small movements: Each sport has small movements and skills that are its integral parts. Even drills can often be broken down into more specific portions. Create routines which allow you to refine each small movement, so that your body knows each one backwards and forwards, literally!

Allow the body to learn naturally: Start each exercise with its simplest movements, using repetition to anchor the pattern of movement. Gradually add the more complex or intense elements. Don't feel you have to rush.

Increase your Precision: Attend to the details of your skills - your breath, the shifts in your weight, the stretch through various muscles and the corresponding contraction of other muscles. Awareness is the difference between "going through the motions" and really experiencing the skills. Coordination developed through the use of awareness with precise movement is recalled in a competitive situation.

Rehearse Mentally: Use your imagination to refine your skills. Being able to create your ideal performance state (including thoughts, emotions and muscles) enables you to regain control in a sport setting.

Rest: Your body integrates what it learns during rest periods. Take care to give yourself adequate time. You'll be surprised how much better you can do after a little break.

Make your training a habit. If you choose a convenient time, you will be able to abide by regular exercises. If you make it difficult, you will soon find a-hundred-and-one alternatives instead. Occasionally break the regularity. Do not make your habit a compulsion.

- Moshe Feldenkrais

Further Reading

Awareness Through Movement by Moshe Feldenkrais. Harper & Row, 1992.

Running With the Whole Body, by Jack Heggie. Rodale Press, 1986.

Skiing With the Whole Body, by Jack Heggie. North Atlantic Books, 1993.

The Tellington Touch by Linda Tellington-Jones. Available from FELDENKRAIS Resources at (800) 765-1907.

Tapes

FELDENKRAIS in the Water: by Debbie Ashton. **Videotape.**

Available from The FELDENKRAIS GUILD, (800) 775-2118 unless noted otherwise.