

## The Feldenkrais Method® Helps People with Persistent Pain

A recently published Australian study (Connors, Pile and Nicholls, 2010) asks the question: "*Does the Feldenkrais Method make a difference?*"

The 48 people in the study were all experiencing persistent pain. The results revealed a decrease in pain, an improvement in physical functioning, and improved wellbeing, after an average of only 6.5 one-on-one sessions.

Further support for the *Feldenkrais Method* comes from recent advances in our understanding of neuroplasticity, dynamic systems theory and mechanisms of persistent pain.

So, how does the *Feldenkrais Method* make a difference? The key is a unique system of movement education developed by Moshe Feldenkrais D.Sc., which he started teaching in 1954.

Feldenkrais Practitioners use two modes of practice:

- individual hands-on sessions addressing specific issues (called Functional Integration® – FI)
- group classes – verbally guided movement lessons (called Awareness Through Movement® – ATM)

In both forms, the aim is to assist clients to understand their particular habits of thinking, feeling, sensing and acting.

In the words of the founder, Dr Feldenkrais: "*The aim is a body that is organised to move with minimum effort and maximum efficiency, not through muscular strength but increased consciousness of how it works.*"

For clients with chronic pain, learning how these elements can contribute to their current difficulties with pain, posture and movement assists them to find new options to move with more comfort, freedom, and awareness.

The result is a reduction in the incidence and/or severity of their pain through better habits and self-management.

Most people with long-term pain benefit from individual FI sessions and may progress to ATM classes. When people attend an FI session for the first time, they are usually pleasantly surprised. A Feldenkrais Practitioner helps the client to find comfort and ease in everyday functional activities.

Rather than focusing on what the person cannot do, the focus is on what the person can do well, and expanding this ability to other areas and movements. For people with persistent pain, this approach can be a refreshing change.

The other surprise is the subtlety and gentleness of the hands-on techniques. Clients often ask: *"How can something so gentle have such a big impact?"*

In all sessions, the Feldenkrais Practitioner works with the client, not only to reduce pain, but also to improve the activities that are important to that person, whether that is rolling over in bed, sitting through a day at the office, playing with grandchildren, or playing a round of golf.

This approach recognises the complexity of persistent pain and how it impacts in a very personal way on people's lives.

For more information visit the AFG website For Pain Management page at [www.feldenkrais.org.au](http://www.feldenkrais.org.au) or to find an accredited Feldenkrais Practitioner telephone **FREECALL 1800 001 550**

**Other Information and resources:**

The *Feldenkrais Method* was developed by Dr Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-1984) The Method is taught and practised worldwide with the legacy of Dr Feldenkrais' work overseen by the International Feldenkrais Federation.

Feldenkrais Practitioners undertake training over 4 years, which is accredited by the Feldenkrais Training & Accreditation Board.

\*To find research (including this study) go to the AFG website/Resources/Research