The Feldenkrais Method: A Sensory Motor Education Approach

What is the Feldenkrais Method?
The Feldenkrais method is a form of sensory motor education. It helps to restore proprioception and coordinated movement, by combining an understanding of the complexities of movement with an understanding of the learning process.

Founder of the Method
The method was developed by Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais, a physicist, engineer, and martial artist. He derived his ideas from a range of fields including anatomy, physiology, infant development, psychology, martial arts, systems theory, physics, neurophysiology, and learning theories.

Some key features
- focus on function
- introducing new movement options
- modifying habitual patterns of movement
- enhancing kinesthetic awareness
- engaging the whole body
- ease not effort
- creating an environment that enhances learning
- responsive to individual needs
- enabling the client to become their own expert

Research evidence
Multiple sclerosis, pain, stroke, able-bodied:
- improved body awareness (6,7,20)
- improved mobility (1,6,18,23)
- improved stability (1,4,21,24)
- improved coordination and ease of movement (22,18)
- improved posture (13)
- improved balance confidence (5,24)
- decreased pain (2,14,15)
- decreased fatigue (20)
- improved sleep (20)
- reduced anxiety and stress (10,11,12,15)
- improved self efficacy (15) and health locus of control (20)
- improved self image (15)
- decreased medical costs (2)
- greater recruitment of the affected part of the motor cortex (stroke) (16)

Ten case studies with SCI
Participants:
- three people with ASIA A injuries; two to five months after injury
- five people with incomplete SCI 21(3); 10(6), 12, 16 and 24 years after injury
- two people with complete SCI; 10(6) and 12 years after injury

Benefits reported included:
- improved proprioception (10/10)
- improved coordination and ease of movement (10/10)
- improved posture and stability (9/10)
- decreased pain (9/10)
- decreased pain (9/10)
- improved well-being (6/10)
- increased feeling of confidence (5/10)
- improved breathing (2/10)

References