

ABSTRACT

The Feldenkrais Method of teaching and learning of awareness of movement has been receiving increasing interest from growing numbers of physiotherapists, medical practitioners, psychologists, athletes and performing artists and the general public. The approach is being used for the management and prevention of pain and movement dysfunction, and for the restoration of fluency and efficiency in posture, gait and as an approach in general or specialised skill acquisition. Self-reports and case studies provide some insights into the effects and influences of such an approach, however there is virtually no scientific evidence to support these interpretations. One of the suggested effects of the somatosensory learning approach is that a person's "sensory capacities may be greatly heightened, along with their ability to interpret and organise their movements" (Wildman, 1986).

This thesis examines the effect of training on three psychomotor tests. The aim of the investigation is to discern changes in performance of subjects who trained for one month. One group of thirteen subjects was involved in a program designed to enhance awareness of movement and posture. Another trained group of seven subjects undertook a resistance exercise program using free and fixed weights.

Three tasks were used to evaluate perceptuomotor acuity. Two tests measured the accuracy of directing a limb to a given position, and one test measured the accuracy of estimating weights. A comparison was made between subjects' performance on these tasks before and after their training. The performance of the trained groups was compared to a group of ten normal control subjects, who abstained from all physical training during the experimental period.

Results from these three tests indicate improvements in performance in one of the tests for the resistance trained subjects after training. The results do not indicate that training in the Feldenkrais Method influences performance on any of these three tests of perceptuomotor acuity.