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Feldenkrais Practitioner

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Movement études

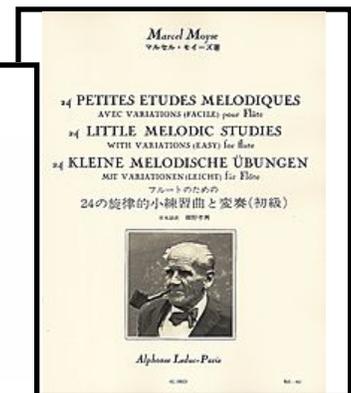
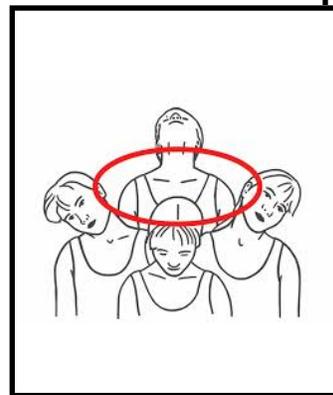
As you may or may not know, I am an adult beginner on the flute. In mid-August the National Flute Association held its annual conference in Washington DC. I was there! For three full days, I was part of a cornucopia of musical delights. It has gotten me thinking more musically than ever. Among other things, it has given me a fresh way of thinking about the Feldenkrais Method. Here is a newly-arisen formulation:

"The Feldenkrais Method is to movement as scales and études are to song."

In relating music and movement, I am equating song with physical activity. The activity can be a special interest such as running, bicycling, swimming, judo, ice skating, singing or playing an instrument. And it can be an activity of daily living such as walking, standing, sitting and sleeping.

What Feldenkrais does is break these large movements into their component parts. At the level of component parts, the diverse activities have a lot in common.

For instance, in a group class or individual session we might explore movements of the head. Because -- a freely moving head is important for all activities. We could begin in standing: **Move the head comfortably in a circle.** Circular movements are useful because they develop freedom of action in all directions.



Then, most likely, you would lie down. Lying down is good because you no longer have to maintain your balance. Lying on your back with your legs bent and feet on the floor, you are asked to do a circle with the head. You do so and say to yourself, *"This is easy."* And then the same kind of circle with the pelvis; *a little trickier*. Then, matched circles with the pelvis and head. *"This is getting complicated!"* Then you are asked to make an asymmetry -- one leg bent and the other long -- and continue the circling movements. While doing so, notice which side of the circle becomes easier. Exchange the legs, and compare. *"This takes paying attention!"*

By exploring these structured combinations you arrive at -- the same benefit that musicians do by playing scales and études. You become more versatile in the fundamental moves and, thus, more at ease in the songs.