

FOR PAIN-FREE MOBILITY, HAND IT TO FMT

Functional Manual Therapy is for everyone motivated to live efficient

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Pete Rumford's handshake is a dead giveaway. As a Certified Functional Manual Therapist (CFMT), this American's hands are his most sensitive and accurate diagnostic and healing tools, and his strong, confident grip shows that they are in prime working order! And that means he is all set to spearhead the unique hands-on, hands-only technique of Functional Manual Therapy™ (FMT) in Mumbai, after its dream debut in New Delhi at VARDAN. With a doctorate in Physical Therapy and years of experience, Pete is ideally suited to lead the Times of India Group's FMT initiative in Mumbai. Delhi Times caught up with him to find out what makes FMT — the system developed and perfected by Vicky Saliba Johnson, PT and Gregory S. Johnson, PT, of the Institute of Physical Art, USA — so unique, so special and so utterly different from any other physical therapy available in India:

What sets FMT apart from all the other types of physical therapies available so far in Delhi?

FMT is not just a treatment technique; it is a system of clinical reasoning that guides the FM therapist to treat the whole 'person', not just the whole body. A FM therapist recognises that pain and barriers to efficient movement stem from muscle and joint dysfunctions, as well as from inefficiencies in the functioning of the nervous system. We then use our hands to identify and treat muscles, joints, nerves, viscera and other structures to get the body back to functioning optimally.

So, a Functional Manual Therapist's hands are his or her most sensitive diagnostic as well as healing tool?

Yes! When we first look at the history of a client's symptoms, we begin forming hypotheses to guide our examination and diagnosis. It isn't until we use our hands to palpate (feel) the patient's tissues and perform various functional tests that we really know what the dysfunction is. Our ability to 'sense' with our hands is significant, and this is a large part of the training to become a CFMT, a process which can take up to 10 years post degree. My hands have proved my mind wrong on multiple occasions!

As people come with all sorts of aches,

pains and mobility problems, what is the main objective of FMT?

The primary objective of FMT is to create the ideal physical environment so that each patient can be treated and trained in efficient and safe body mechanics to prevent recurrence of pain. We treat mechanical dysfunctions (joints, muscle, etc), enhance neuromuscular control (the ability of the right muscles to fire at the right time) and train patients in strategies that allow their core to fire automatically, which we call CoreFirst™ Strategies.

We do not want a patient to be dependent on us, but independent! Chronic poor posture and body mechanics play a huge role in persistent low back pain, neck pain, shoulder pain, and the list goes on... So, the idea is to teach patients to manage their bodies in the best way possible.

No pain, discomfort or lack of mobility is too insignificant for FM therapists to analyse and alleviate?

Pain is often a clue that there is a dysfunction. It isn't the only clue, but most of us are 'clue-less' until we hurt. Pain is our brain's way of telling us that something is wrong — that something is threatening us. That being said, the location of pain is not always the location of the problem either!

Because of the intricacy and interconnectedness of our bodies, often pain in the shoulders, arms, legs, etc, has its source — or at least a major contribution — from the spine and nervous system. For instance, I've had clients with knee pain that responded best to treatment of their tailbone or coccyx, which is a very important structure, as it is the lowest attachment site of the nervous system.

So, opting for FMT makes sense not merely for professional cricketers or energetic filmstars — whose bodies would naturally be very stressed — but even say, those who want to be fit for the next golf round, go on a trekking holiday or want post-surgery rehab?

I've treated patients from the ages of 5 to 95, so I can confidently say that FMT can potentially benefit just about anyone of any age! People have come to me with goals ranging from playing professional soccer to walking around the block or driving to work without pain. FMT is for everyone 'motivated to live efficient'. But it is a two-way street. You get out



Pete Rumford

what you put in.

Often, even after the root cause of the pain has been dealt with, the memory of it stays on in the body and mind, and delays or hinders full recovery... How do FM therapists deal with that?

When someone is in pain, especially chronic pain, a process called 'central sensitisation' may occur. The central nervous system (brain, spinal cord, nerves) causes changes to occur that protect us. This is a great and useful alarm system, but it can become over-protective, and more annoying than helpful. When pain persists for a longer period of time than it takes for tissues to heal, or else it continually worsens, spreads, or is unpredictable, the pain is likely due to central sensitisation. Education is critical for all patients. Understanding the concepts I've mentioned is the starting point to taming the nervous system and its contribution to your pain, and ultimately achieving a more efficient and mobile body.

Are patients always kept in the loop about what is happening? How?

One of our greatest tools is education and empowering patients through self-discovery. We always explain what we are doing and why we are doing it, so that patients can move ahead in an informed way. In fact, we see physical therapy as part of an interdependent healthcare system focussing on the patient.

So, FMT basically helps people attain the best physical condition possible and maintain that level?

As FM therapists, we don't want to simply return you to a 'normal' state of function. All of us have untapped existing potential and our goal is to help you discover and achieve your optimal potential... So, come on over and let FMT improve your life!

To schedule your appointment, sms VFMT to 58888 or email vardan@timesgroup.com. For more information log on to www.vardan.in

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