

Become a Better Rider: Improve Your Posture, Balance & Flexibility in an Unmounted Workshop

Feldenkrais Method® for Equestrians with Mary Debono, GCFP

Date: September 30, 2017
1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Location: Fallbrook Community Center,

Do you wish you had effortless, elegant posture – both in the saddle and out? Do you want to improve your flexibility, vitality and coordination? Improve your balance and skill in the saddle? Walk or run with ease and grace? Learn how to sit up tall without straining? Sit more comfortably?

Would you like to learn gentle hands-on techniques to help improve your horse's athletic performance, release tension and improve equine well-being?



Mary Debono is coming to Fallbrook to teach a group workshop on September 30.

Why Feldenkrais® and Mary Debono?

Feldenkrais uses gentle movement and directed attention to develop better body awareness and coordination. If you have aches and pains, stiffness, posture issues, or want to improve the ease at which you ride your horse, then you will really enjoy what you learn in this workshop!

Riding Instructors: this “off the horse” work can help your students improve their own body awareness when riding. Riders: this supplements (not replaces) your riding lessons!

During the **workshop on Sept. 30**, Mary will teach three Awareness Through Movement® (ATM) sessions, which are gentle movement sequences designed to improve awareness, flexibility, coordination and balance.



Previous participants reported great improvement in the comfort and flexibility of their necks, backs and hips. Many also discovered that they've been sitting crooked and can now sit balanced for the first time in years! Enhanced confidence and vitality are common too.

As a life-long horsewoman and Certified *Feldenkrais*® Practitioner, Mary has helped riders:

- Replace force with “feel”
- Eliminate back, neck and knee pain
- Improve posture, flexibility and coordination
- Feel their seat bones evenly and effectively use this essential weight aid
- Return joy to the horse-human partnership
- Ride in a manner that encourages relaxation and suppleness in the horse



Many people believe that a supposed weakness or bad habit must be "overcome" through some rigorous, forceful routine. One of the most rewarding benefits of *Feldenkrais* is the realization that improvements in ease of movement can be learned in a pleasurable instant. Flexibility, coordination, and power then increase automatically.

Questions? Email Mary at mary@debonomoves.com.

Click here to read Mary's article on how the Feldenkrais Method can help riders.
It was published in Equine Wellness Magazine, Vol 9, Issue 2.

What People Are Saying About Mary Debono:

“Mary Debono is skilled at making both you, the rider, and your horse feel better than you ever have. Through exercises, workshops and hands-on technique, Mary teaches ways to be more balanced and flexible, whether you have two legs or four.”

– Victoria Cummings, author of *Teachings of the Horse*



“My first experience with Mary Debono’s work was after I had severely injured my back a few years ago. I had tried standard treatments — a visit to the doctor, drugs, chiropractic and physical therapy. I was in such pain I could not stand up and had to navigate life in the “C” position. Sciatica set it and nothing helped. I was considering acupuncture when a fellow equestrian recommended Mary. She was so enthusiastic about how Mary had changed her life that I made an appointment.

*“My back started improving immediately... Mary taught me how to move more efficiently so that I would not stress my back. To me, **Feldenkrais** has been nothing short of a miracle.*

“Mary also works on my dressage horse and he loves to see her coming. He can move much more freely after she works on him.

*“Mary’s all-day **Feldenkrais** workshops are amazing. As an athlete, I believed I had to live with a certain amount of low-level pain. Mary has taught me that I don’t have to endure any pain, that it is possible to be active, athletic and not have back pain! I could not recommend Mary more highly. She has changed my life!”*

– Kate Shuster, USDF Gold Medalist and dressage judge

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*“Mary Debono’s work has helped me tremendously regarding body awareness and coordination. Due to the newfound ways of moving my body, I have been able to ride differently, but also use my body in a more beneficial way on a day-to-day basis. ...Overall, the **Feldenkrais** work with Mary Debono has enriched my movement on and off the horse. I hardly have any back and shoulder pain anymore.”*

–Lientje Schueler, international FEI dressage competitor and clinician



“If you missed the Chapter-sponsored clinic with Mary Debono, you missed a GREAT clinic! Mary’s clinic on November 5 was a sell-out and hugely rewarding for the participants. Mary taught attendees about biomechanics and new ways of moving to break old habits. Gentle exercises were used to interrupt ingrained patterns of movement that may be unwittingly leading to asymmetrical movement or even pain.

“There were many “aha” moments as people unlocked resistance and discovered a new range of motion for their bodies. At the end of the session, bodies felt better aligned, and people were more tuned in to how they moved, and how their movement habits influenced their life and their riding! Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and demand for this clinic was so strong, that we may try to hold another.”

– California Dressage Society

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“The morning before I was to ride with a well-known dressage clinician, Vicky introduced me to your Feldenkrais® Awareness Through Movement® lessons (exercises). We did one of your exercises that you created specifically for riders. “It was amazing. I was so glad she had shared that with me, as I managed to get my hip into a position I know I could not have managed without those exercises. It was fateful!

“My little Morgan has a lot of inherited problems. One of which is, if he gets a little out of balance, he RUNS. So this time when he bounded off, I was determined to not brace, but in the past even that doesn’t always work, but with the help of your exercises, I managed to get my outside hip in place, and in one stride, literally, he was doing a lovely light collected canter I could begin pirouette work from.

“Sorry for the long story, but it was dramatic, and then when we were working half pass, I was also able to get my outside hip in the right place and got some respectable half pass work as well. So I owe a huge thanks to Vicky for the introduction and a huge thanks to you for doing the work!”

– **Brenda Aloff, dressage rider, internationally-known dog trainer and award-winning author**



“Hi Mary! I just wanted to let you know that yesterday I rode for the first time after your session. It was fantastic! Just like I was hoping it would be! My trainer said that I was super centered. I could trot and canter, since my balance was there again. You are really amazing! I cannot thank you enough.” – Kristiina Lehtonen, Finland

Mary Debono’s Background and Training

Mary knows the pain of growing older. When she was a computer analyst working in Manhattan and Princeton, Mary suffered from carpal tunnel syndrome that resulted in nerve damage. Surgery and physical therapy offered no relief and her painful hip and stiff back were getting worse. Like a lot of people, Mary thought she had to expect increasing discomfort with each passing year. What’s amazing is that although a few decades have passed since that day, Mary feels younger now than she did back then. So, what changed?



Mary began to study holistic approaches to health, most notably the *Feldenkrais Method*[®]. She learned that when we stay stuck in our habitual ways of thinking and moving we get physically stuck too. When Mary released the habits that kept her stuck in unhealthy patterns, she learned to move, think and act in different ways.

Mary began feeling younger by the day. Her aches, pains and limitations vanished. Grateful for her own transformation, she was eager to help others feel better too. She loaded her Appaloosa on a horse trailer and headed across the country to San Diego, California. There she enrolled in a four-year program to become a Certified *Feldenkrais*[®] Practitioner. For the past 25 years, Mary has been helping animals and their people move well despite challenges such as injuries, arthritis, hip dysplasia, aging and anxiety. Her clients have ranged from severely disabled dogs and cats to world-class equine and human athletes.

Mary travels internationally to teach people how to accelerate learning, rebalance mind and body, and deepen the human-animal bond. Mary wrote her award-winning, Amazon #1 bestseller, [Grow Young with Your Dog](#), so that dogs and humans all over the globe could benefit from her experience.

In addition to teaching canine and equine workshops internationally, Mary maintains a busy private *Feldenkrais Method*® practice in the beautiful coastal town of Encinitas, California. Her unique work has been shown on TV News and in newspapers and magazines. Mary was a featured presenter at the CHA (Certified Horsemanship Association), NARHA (now PATH Int'l), and regional *Feldenkrais* annual conferences.

Mary and her *Feldenkrais* Practitioner husband, Gary Waskowsky, have created [videos](#) that are popular with equestrians and other athletes wishing to improve their flexibility, coordination and posture.

Mary welcomes interviews as well as inquiries for speaking and teaching engagements. She can be reached at Mary@DebonoMoves.com. Her website is www.DebonoMoves.com.

Please consider [signing up for Mary's newsletter](#) to receive **free articles and videos** on how you and your animals can grow younger with each passing day!

Questions? Please email Mary@DebonoMoves.com.

www.DebonoMoves.com