

Somatic Learning

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An innovative body-oriented approach for enhanced physical and mental performance that incorporates mindfulness, visualization, breathing exercises, postures, and stretches

By KIM HENRY



As brilliant as humans are, research shows that we only utilize around 10% of our brain capacity and are sitting on huge amounts of untapped potential. Imagine if we could awaken the slumbering parts of our brain just by doing a simple set of exercises for only 30-60 minutes a week, and that along with this awakening came higher levels of concentration, better visual perception, faster reactions and greater stress resistance? Welcome to Life Kinetik, a set of cognitive, visual and co-ordination exercises that promises to deliver just this.

Life Kinetik began as a way to improve athletes' abilities to reach their optimum potential but has since been proven to be just as helpful for anyone, regardless of their age or fitness level. Pioneered in Germany, Life Kinetik recently made the jump over the pond and one of the fifteen qualified trainers in all of America happens to be living in Wilmington. Cue Jill Bean Davenport who is single handedly ready to enrich the lives of both old and young alike with this engaging, accessible and meticulously researched system of exercises.

Davenport had an outdoorsy kind of childhood in Swansboro NC. She was always very active, playing both soccer and volleyball, and at 14 was sixth in the nation for the high jump. Following her interest in the well-being of the human body, Davenport trained and worked as a nurse until she married and became a parent of four children. Ever dynamic, in 2013 Davenport was integral to the setting up of a Montessori charter school in Wilmington, whose fundamental philosophy reflects her interest in somatic learning.

Then in 2015 Davenport fortuitously overheard someone talking about Life Kenetik while playing volleyball with her local team. "I've always been fascinated by ways to nurture our potential as human beings, so when I found

out about the amazing results of Life Kinetik, and that it was being launched in America, I knew I wanted to be a part of it,” smiles Davenport, with open enthusiasm.

Some of these amazing results are due to extensive research carried out by the University of Cologne in Germany. They show that students who participated in a Life Kinetik program not only improved the speed with which they processed information, but also dramatically reduced their error rates at the same time. And the good news for the 10,000 people who turn 65 every day in America, is that Life Kinetik has been shown to not only delay, but in some situations, even reverse mental decline.

So what exactly do these magical exercises consist of and what is the science behind them?

All Life Kinetic exercises combine fun coordination skills-activities with cognitive and visual instructions, so that both sides of the brain are being simultaneously challenged and stimulated. When we do certain movements, and then add in cognitive function and visual instruction, we are literally creating new synapses that inherently awaken more of our brain. In other words, we aren't stimulating brain cell growth when we simply accomplish already mastered movement such as walking, but when we throw 2 balls from one hand to another, while simultaneously switching our hands across the body, we are literally carving new neural pathways. Once “mastery” is achieved with one exercise, muscle memory takes over, so it's time for a new challenge, a new exercise. Life Kinetic has hundreds of exercises and employs the help of a whole host of props such as ropes, scarves, different colored balls and 'edu's' which are like small hacky sacks.

Davenport recently facilitated six weeks of sessions with the students of Island Montessori school where she was able to observe the results live and direct. “The first thing that stood out to me is how engaged the kids were – they loved it! These exercises are fun and encourage us to think in new ways. The challenges gradually build with each layer of instruction so that the students feel consistently stimulated and yet gratified by their accomplishments as they progress,” recounts Davenport. “When our bodies conquer new skills, the new neural-pathways that are created allow us to respond to an ever changing environment with more clarity and speed.” This explains why Life Kinetic has also been heralded as life changing for people undergoing rehabilitation after a stroke, for the elderly and people with disabilities.

Davenport will be holding free monthly demonstrations at the Carolina Beach Recreation center starting in September, and is in the process of setting up classes in retirement communities and schools across the county. “Life Kinetik is for any one of any age who would like to be more efficient at what they do!” states Davenport. “This means helping kids to learn more effectively, soccer players to win more consistently and the elderly to have more stability and faster reflexes.” Sounds like a win-win for everyone. 910.512.5976, www.lifekinetikusa.com