

# FMT eases pain. Ask an ex-boxer!

I started boxing during sophomore year in high school, long before I decided to become a Physical Therapist," reveals **Yoshinobu Fujii** ("Yoshi"), the newest Certified Functional Manual Therapist (CFMT) at VARDAN. "I turned professional and boxed competitively before becoming a PT..."

His ability to assess his skill set both as practitioner and recipient makes Yoshi a valuable addition to the Functional Manual Therapists' team at VARDAN. As a former professional boxer he utilizes FMT's principles to deal with sports-related problems.

As he recalls, "I had no knowledge of bio-mechanics so I could not relate the

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live efficient

pain I had in my back and other places to specific causes or triggers. Understanding the body better helped me to exercise properly and move correctly." In short, he became "kinesthetically aware".

This awareness of the science of the body and its movements gives him an edge. "As an athlete, I can understand a sportsperson's mentality, empathize with their issues and goals." Trying out tools he learnt as a PT in his own training helps him devise specific plans for sports-inclined patients at VARDAN.

"Many sports call for a repetitive action like throwing or serving. I know how motion can develop into a dysfunction or how dysfunction can affect motion," he says. "Using FMT I not only treat the mechanical restriction, but also address the neuro-muscular and motor control dysfunctions."

As Yoshi says with a chuckle, his life turned completely: from being a professional boxer—to a highly trained CFMT – whose goal is to heal! And he tells **Reshmi R Dasgupta** in detail about his journey to VARDAN New Delhi, and FMT...

## How were you drawn to Functional Manual Therapy™ (FMT)?

One of my internship mentors as a PT student was Brent Yamashita, DPT, FFFMT, FAAOMPT. I was fascinated by his dynamic

*His experience as a former professional athlete in the US gives Yoshinobu Fujii a special insight and edge using Functional Manual Therapy™(FMT) techniques at VARDAN*



The team of expert therapists at VARDAN: Passionate about helping you function at full potential

treatment approach that was not taught in PT school, like focusing on function, not just pain! I started my career working with Brent Yamashita and was introduced to FMT and started taking IPA courses. Even now, every time I retake IPA courses, I am drawn even more to this approach of FMT developed by Gregory Johnson, PT, FFFMT, FAAOMPT and Vicky Saliba Johnson, PT, FFFMT, FAAOMPT of IPA, USA.

## What is special about the approach?

FMT allows me to see, evaluate, understand and treat dysfunction in a systematic, functional and very effective way.

## How is it different?

FMT focuses on whole body function – looking at the body as an interconnected dynamic system and not treating just the pain. The treatment approach is very organized and progressive, focusing on the mechanical, neuromuscular and motor control dysfunctions. In addition to what the Johnsons developed, the IPA classes integrate the concepts from many different

approaches so there are influences of other philosophies and treatment techniques that are refined by the Johnsons' clinical experience.

## You are the first Japanese-origin CFMT at VARDAN. How does your Japanese background influence your approach to FMT, if at all?

In Japan they really focus on evaluation. From what I have read in Japanese textbooks and learnt from Japanese physical therapists, properly identifying the nature of the symptom is heavily emphasized. Being Japanese as well as a CFMT, I combine that approach along with IPA's dynamic clinical approach and treatment techniques.

## Within FMT, what are your specialization areas?

As Functional Manual Therapists we are trained to treat all areas of the body, but I am particularly interested in the pelvic girdle and the shoulder girdle, which in fact are linked. The pelvis is one of the

most important parts of the body. It is the center of the body and the base of the spine, and the trunk core muscles around the pelvis are crucial for any movement. So pelvic girdle dysfunction can impact the whole body.

The shoulder is also a very complicated joint. In shoulder dysfunctions, it is important to assess the shoulder joint itself, but also the scapula, clavicle, rib cage, thoracic spine, cervical spine and the trunk. I also learnt - from the Japanese specialists- their approaches of evaluating and treating the shoulder. Shoulder dysfunctions can be challenging to treat, which is probably why I am drawn more to it.

## What are the problems you normally encounter in these two areas?

Shoulder impingement is a common problem that we see. Symptoms can be due to an overuse and/or poor use of the shoulder; affected by the inefficient function of the aforementioned regions of the body. We may develop poor habitual movement patterns and postures from our daily bi-

ased movements; at work, carrying heavy bags on one side, sleeping improperly on sides, and sitting in a poor posture or on bad chairs in workplaces, etc.

Problems with the pelvic girdle can be due to trauma such as falls, accidents – from the impact due to sudden braking, pregnancy, from poor habitual movement patterns and postures, as well as inactivity/deconditioning.

## How is the FMT approach to dysfunction in these areas different from other therapies, apart from the fact that no machines are used for treatment?

In FMT, we believe that all patients present with three components to their dysfunction – mechanical, neuromuscular and motor control.

Mechanical dysfunction is related to any restrictions in muscles, joints, soft tissue, as well as neurovascular, lymphatic and visceral structures.

In neuromuscular dysfunction, we deal with the muscle's inability to initiate contraction, and the lack of strength and endurance.

And the motor control dysfunction is the inability to function in a coordinated manner using the efficient mechanical and neuromuscular components.

Whatever the problem that a patient may present, the approach is organized and progressive in this manner. We should not be just treating the pain, as there is always a reason for it. FMT insists we find the cause of the pain. Pain, in fact, is the weak link in the body and there are usually some areas in the body that are working inefficiently perpetuating this weak link. Therefore, the external stresses acting on the body do not get absorbed and distributed throughout the system; instead they always go to your body's weak link. Focusing on treating just the pain does not address the actual cause of the pain, and in FMT we always try to find the cause through the mechanical, neuromuscular and motor control components.

## What then is the goal of FMT?

The objective is to help people attain their highest function. Efficient mobil-

ity of all structures is the goal for mechanical dysfunction, and getting the muscles to fire properly with efficient strength and endurance is the goal for neuromuscular. Putting these into action for daily function and utilize it effectively is the goal for motor control. The goal is to get people to live their lives in an optimal, pain-free way!

## How are the Indian physical therapists at VARDAN different from those treating elsewhere?

The Indian therapists at VARDAN have all been trained in FMT by the founders of FMT as well as primary IPA faculty flown in from the US for their training. They receive regular mentoring by US CFMTs at VARDAN so that they are constantly learning and upgrading their skills. They have taken all the required courses in becoming a Functional Manual Therapist and have done much review and testing in each of the FMT courses. They are an amazing group of therapists to work with and most of all; they have the passion to make patients better.

**Yoshinobu Fujii (PT, DPT, CFMT)** is a Certified Functional Manual Therapist at VARDAN, a wellness initiative by The Times Group in association with the Institute of Physical Art, USA

**Functional Manual Therapy™ (FMT)** is a comprehensive approach to physiotherapy, which identifies and facilitates your existing potential through an in-depth examination and treatment of your mechanical capacity, neuromuscular function and motor control. Discover your potential to have less pain and function better with FMT!

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