WHAT IS REFLEXOLOGY?

Reflexology is the practice of applying pressure to points on the feet and hands, usually the feet, to stimulate the body’s own healing system. The name ‘reflexology’ may come from the fact that reflexologists believe parts of the body are reflected on the feet and hands, or it may come from the concept of a reflex action. A reflex action occurs in a muscle or organ when it is activated by energy from a point of stimulus on the body. In reflexology the point of stimulus is on the hand or foot.

Reflexologists believe that applying pressure to these reflex points can improve physical and mental health. Depending on the points chosen, therapists can use the modality to ease tension, reduce inflammation, improve circulation and eliminate body toxins. Reflexology is a safe, effective form of treatment, which practitioners use to stimulate the body to heal itself.

They do this by working on the physical body to encourage healing at the physical, mental and emotional levels. And, although the therapy involves no conscious effort on the patient’s part, it encourages the body’s healing system to search for its point of balance or ‘homeostasis’.

How does it work?
No one knows exactly how reflexology works beyond the physical act of stimulating nerve endings in the foot.

In a healthy body the brain is constantly sending out and receiving messages along the pathways of the nervous system. Good communication is necessary for good health. But sometimes the pathways get blocked and messages cannot get through. Reflexology may be able to operate by stimulating the autonomic reflex system to clear blockages, so that the communication lines stay open and the body, mind and emotions stay healthy.

We know that there are over 70,000 nerve endings on the sole of each foot which, when stimulated, can send messages along the pathways of the autonomic nervous system to all areas of the body and brain. Pressure applied to nerve endings can influence the body systems, including the circulation and lymphatic system.

Improvements in circulation and the lymphatic system result in improved body functioning because nutrients and oxygen are transported more efficiently round the body and toxins are eliminated more easily. Through this physical reflex action, reflexology can stimulate the body’s energy to improve general wellbeing and effectively clear out congestion. Reflexologists access the energy through zones.
The body is divided into ten vertical zones or channels, five on the left and five on the right. Each zone runs from the head right down to the reflex areas on the hands and feet and from the front through to the back of the body. All body parts within any one zone are linked by the nerve pathways and are mirrored in the corresponding reflex zone of the hands and feet. By applying pressure to a particular point, known as a reflex point or area, the therapist can stimulate or rebalance the energy in the related zone. For example, the left kidney, which is in zone two of the left-hand side of the body, is reflected at the same point in zone two of the left foot.

If an energy blockage occurs on a zone, it can affect several body parts within that zone, causing more than one symptom of ill health. For example, someone with a problem in the left kidney can sometimes develop problems in the left eye because the eyes and kidneys are both linked by the energy in zone two.

**The Feet as a Mirror of the Body:**

It is sometimes easier to envisage the reflex areas on the feet if you think of how the shape of the feet relates to the body’s shape. Reflexology, like auricular therapy is a form of holography, the belief that small parts of the body can be used to treat the whole. The body is believed to be mirrored in the shape of feet, so that if you were lying down with your feet together, heels resting on the floor and toes pointed toward the ceiling, the shape of your feet would match the outline of your body. Think of it in terms of a miniature body being superimposed on the soles of the feet, with each foot reflecting half the body.

• The toes correspond to zones in the head and neck, covering the head, brain, eyes, nose and teeth.
• The soft fleshy balls of the feet reflect the lungs, chest and shoulders.
• The section from the ball of the feet to the middle of the arch covers the area from the diaphragm to the waist.
• The area from the middle of the arch to the start of the heel relates to the waist and pelvic area.
• The heels themselves relate to the left and right pelvic area and the sciatic nerve.
• The inside curve of each foot mirrors the curves of the spine.
• The outsides of the feet, starting from the top and working down, relate to the arms, shoulders, hips, legs, knees and lower back.
• The ankles cover the pelvic area and reproductive organs.
What happens in a consultation?
Your therapy room should be warm and comfortable and may have pleasant music playing in the background. Treatment length of appointments varies from one practitioner to another. The first appointment will probably last for about 90 minutes to allow for consultation time, but subsequent appointments are usually 60 minutes.

You will ask questions about the client and why they have come:
- You need details about medical history, including childhood illnesses, accidents or operations.
- You will need to find out whether the client is under the care of a doctor or receiving drug treatment for an illness or any chronic (long-term) condition.
- You will also want to know about the client’s lifestyle, their work and leisure activities, diet, drinking and lifestyle habits.

To carry out the treatment the client will lie on a treatment couch. Their shoes and socks or tights should be removed and the feet disinfected and inspected. Reflexologists often say that feet tell the body’s history, so do not be surprised if you pick up on past health problems.

The therapist usually begins and ends a treatment with some relaxation technique to relax the diaphragm, free the ankle and loosen the joints. You will work over all the foot, before giving specific attention to any problem areas. If the client feels pain or tenderness in a certain area, it is an indication of a blockage or imbalance in the corresponding organ or body part. You should spend time working on these areas to eliminate these blockages.

For most people, the treatment is relaxing rather than painful, although various sensations can be experienced. It is normal, for example, to feel a tingling sensation in the arms and hands. This is a good sign as it points to increased circulation.

Afterwards they may feel tired, or completely revitalized, each client is different. The appointment usually ends with you making a follow-up appointment for a week later. Some people’s symptoms seem to get worse before they get better, especially if they are fighting an infection or overcoming a painful condition.

How many sessions are needed?
The number of treatments a client needs depends on their problems, the duration, and whether or not they have been suppressed by drugs. The effect is usually accumulative: the client may feel more relaxed, in control, or enjoy improved sleep after the first treatment and this can then give the incentive to continue.

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**Which problems can it help?**
Reflexology is a good all-round ‘whole system’ therapy for people of all ages. However, it works well for any conditions that need to be cleared or regulated, for example: digestive and menstrual irregularities, stress and fatigue, aches and pains and inflammatory skin conditions such as eczema. Studies have shown impressive results when reflexology has been used to aid pregnancy, and help childhood problems, such as glue ear.

**Is it safe?**
Reflexology by a qualified therapist is safe for everyone. It can be a wonderfully relaxing treatment during pregnancy as it relieves back pain, nausea and heartburn. If someone is in the early stages of pregnancy, you should tailor the treatment to suit their needs. Children can also benefit from short reflexology sessions, infants’ feet just need gentle stroking. Self-treatment is safe for minor ailments, but is not recommended if you are pregnant, diabetic, epileptic or receiving medical treatment for a serious illness.

**Clinical Studies:**
In several clinical trials reflexology has been proven as an effective treatment for work-related problems and other ailments.

From 1990-93, 235 of the 1450 postal workers in Odense, Denmark were given reflexology. A typical course consisted of 8-10 half-hour treatments every week. The reflexologist treated symptoms of overwork such as neck and back strains, headaches, sinusitis, sciatica and gastrointestinal problems. Of those treated, 73% reported a good result – 25% had some improvements and 2% felt it made no difference. A teacher of ergonomics was also employed to teach correct lifting. The two approaches together reduced the number of sick days per employee from 11.4 to 8.5 days per year.

In a London study in 1995, 37 pregnant women completed a course of ten reflexology treatments to help with childbirth at least 20 weeks into pregnancy. For the group the average length of first stage labour was only five hours (compared to a normal 16-24 hours), the second stage was 16 minutes (compared to a normal 1-2 hours). Only 2.5% of the women required an epidural (compared to an average 20%) and only 5.4% needed an emergency caesarean (compared to an average 13%).

In a 1993 study, ear, hand and foot reflexology or a placebo treatment was given to 35 women suffering from PMS. Each woman kept a symptom diary for two months before, during and after, half-hour reflexology treatments. Thirty nine symptoms were assessed on a four-point scale. The women given reflexology treatment had an average 63% reduction in their PMS symptoms and discomfort, the placebo group had a 25% reduction.
Elderly people, in particular, often find it helps them to come to terms with modern living. They're constantly anxious - about the speed of life, about today’s high prices, about living alone, about their health and about dozens of things that the rest of us take for granted.

All these stresses can be helped by reflexology treatment, as was proved in a Manchester hospital in 1990, where a group of elderly patients, all suffering from stress, were divided into three groups. Group 1 received no treatment at all. Group 2 had an hour’s counselling each day. Group 3 members were given an hour’s reflexology treatment a day. At the end of eight days, all three groups were asked to assess their anxiety levels on a scale from 1 to 10. Group 1 recorded stress levels higher than before. Group 2 claimed that counselling had slightly eased their concerns. Group 3, who had received reflexology, showed a marked decrease in anxiety.

Reflexology can help teenagers suffering from examination nerves, calm excitable children and soothe fractious babies. Children and babies are particularly receptive to the therapy.

**The Four Stages of Healing**

Reflexology can have immediate benefits but, if the client is ill, recovery takes time. Reflexology therapists have identified four stages in the healing process:

**Relief:** The first few treatment sessions relieve pain, reduce tension and sedate stressed nerves. They do not necessarily solve the problem, but ease the symptoms so that you feel better.

**Correction:** When the pain has been relieved the therapist can work on the underlying cause to prevent the problem’s return. Correctional work involves retuning muscles, decongesting a sluggish lymphatic system, or freeing knotted or scarred fibres.

**Strengthening:** This is important in a badly damaged area. Weaknesses at the injury site can mean recurring problems in the future. For example, sports injuries can cause problems long after they have healed if the tissues around them have been weakened by the injury and a long period of recuperation. Massage can strengthen the surrounding tissues enabling them to provide adequate support when the injury has healed.

**Maintenance:** This is both the final stage of healing and the first step in preventative care. Therapists recommend regular reflexology treatments to keep problems at bay and prevent any annoying health problems from becoming major health issues.
REFLEXOLOGY TECHNIQUES

There’s much more to reflexology than simply having your feet massaged. In this context, the word “massage” is used loosely and refers to several specialist techniques. During treatment, you will use your thumb and fingers, or a wooden tool. In fact, one of your hands will have a mainly supporting role around the ankle, to ensure the client’s comfort during the treatment.

In actually treating the sensitive reflex points, only one thumb will be used, bent at an angle of 45 degrees with the pad against the skin. You will apply pressure with the side and end of your thumb, maintaining the bent position. When moving from one point to another, it is rocked gently on to its tip, and then stretched out to the next point. It is always in contact with the skin, but you will notice that no pressure is used when the thumb is moving. This technique is known as caterpillar or thumb walking.

**Finger walking** is a similar technique, but it is carried out by the side of the index finger and you will use this on bony areas like the ankle.

The tips of the fingers or thumbs are used for the rotation and micro-rotation techniques. Using pad of finger or thumb, use circular movements (rotations) to work reflex point.

You can clench your fist and use the knuckles of one hand to knead the foot. In this technique you should apply the flat side of your clinched fist on the arch area of the sole of the foot. At the same time, you should exert pressure on the top of the foot with the other hand. This kneading motion produces a toning effect on the entire arch area.

Another relaxing movement involves flexing the foot. To do this, you will hold the toes of one foot with your left hand, while pressing into the reflex point with your right thumb. You can then gently flex the foot backwards and forwards, so that your thumb rhythmically works the point.

Using your thumb pad you can apply pressure to reflex point, rotate first then press and hold for up to 2 minutes. This pressure point technique is helpful for acute pain and has a calming effect.

Problem areas have a tightness or a grainy feel. For instance, if a patient is a smoker with a bad cough, the ball of their foot (the lung area) may feel taut, as if there are tiny granules under the skin.
CONTRA-INDICATIONS

The majority of clients who attend for a reflexology treatment, do so in order to maintain good health. Such individuals do not appear to exhibit any adverse symptoms after the application of the varying massage techniques, which constitute a normal treatment. However, there are some clients with medically diagnosed health problems, who will require special and serious consideration to be taken by the practitioner, before engaging upon any massage based therapy.

**Thrombosis**
As reflexology improves the circulatory system, this may in fact facilitate and increase the tendency for a blood clot to travel through that system. Consequently, it is in the client’s best interest that treatment be withheld, until approval is given by a medical practitioner.

**Acute fevers**
Whilst suffering from fever, the body is continuously and tirelessly endeavouring to return itself back to balance. Therefore it is not advisable to disrupt this natural healing process by performing a massage based treatment.

**Pregnancy**
The uterus point on the foot must not be pressurised or stimulated. Peppermint and lavender oils are contraindicated for pregnancy.

**Infectious Diseases**
Treatment where any disease that can be transmitted through casual contact, causing cross infection, should be avoided. Especially tinea or open wounds and sores. Broken bones should also not be worked on.

**Lymphatic cancer**
As reflexology increases the circulatory system, it is therefore stimulating the lymphatic system. It is advisable for the client to seek medical advice.

“Proceed with Caution...”
Please obtain medical advice before commencing treatment on;
   a) heart conditions
   b) epilepsy
   c) heavy medication
   d) inflammation of the venous system
   e) diabetes
   f) High blood pressure
BENEFITS OF REFLEXOLOGY

1. Soothes nerves.
2. Relaxes Muscles
3. Pain is reduced or eliminated
4. Improves Circulation
5. Increased oxygen and nutrient supply to cells.
6. Increased toxins are eliminated
7. Chemical factories work more efficiently.
8. An increased sense of wellbeing is felt
9. Client feels rejuvenated
10. Safe nurturing touch.

THE BODY SYSTEMS

Practitioners of complementary and orthodox medicine alike recognise that if the body is to be healthy, then it must be free from stress. When you have a reflexology treatment, you will swiftly appreciate that one of the most valuable benefits gained from it is relaxation, giving you renewed peace of mind. Your physical body too needs to be released from tension.

To achieve this complete harmony, all your body systems and reflexes need to be relaxed. This is where reflexology comes into its own. It can realign the physical as well as the mental processes, and thus free the whole body system from stress. Let’s consider where reflexology can help.

The Central Nervous System
Points to work:
Brain, Sinuses, Eyes, Ears

The brain and the spinal cord together form your central nervous system (CNS) and are housed in the skull and the spine. The CNS controls all basic bodily functions, such as breathing, heart rate and body temperature. These are systems over which we need have no control.

Through evolution, we have handed over the operation of them to our brain. It acts like an extremely complex computer that receives, sorts and interprets the messages delivered to it by nerves from every part of the body. Then it reacts to these signals by sending out its own messages to the various parts of the body.

For example, if you are cold, the temperature sensors in the skin send their message to the brain which reacts by sending messages to the muscles. These then start an involuntary movement that burns up energy and thus generates heat - it's called shivering.
Activities over which we do have control, including movement and speech, are also managed by the brain. Within the head, too, are some of our sensory areas which are associated with brain function, such as the nose, the palate, the eyes and ears. If the brain and CNS are not working correctly, then at least some of the associated functions will be impaired.

The Circulatory System
Points to work:
Heart

The circulatory (or cardiovascular) system is made up of the heart and thousands of blood vessels, permeating the whole body. Every cell of the body must have a continuous supply of blood carrying oxygen in order for it to survive and function properly.

The heart beats unceasingly to keep pumping this essential blood to all parts of the body. In order to maintain this supply, it will continuously contract and expand something like 2,500 million times in an average lifetime. In everyday terms, this means that the heart pumps about 100,000 litres of blood through the system every 24 hours. The average body contains only six litres of blood. This means that the blood circulates the body 1,000 times per day or once every minute and a half. Should this blood supply be stopped for any reason, then life-giving oxygen will not reach the tissues and most will die very quickly.

The Digestive System
Points to work:
Mouth, Oesophagus, Stomach, Pancreas, Liver, Gall Bladder, Small Intestine Colon, Rectum, Anus

The digestive system consists of the alimentary canal and various other associated organs. It goes from the mouth through some 35 feet of intestine to the rectum. Everything eaten and drunk passes through this system by waves of muscular contractions. As it goes, it is processed and absorbed, for building, repairing or nourishing the body. The remaining unusable portion of our food then moves on down through the digestive tract to the last part of the intestine, where water is removed before it is expelled from the body.

The Endocrine System
Points to work:
Pineal, Hypothalamus, Pituitary, Thyroid, Thymus, Pancreas, Ovaries, Testes Prostate, Uterus, Adrenals

The endocrine system consists of a collection of glands which secrete chemicals called hormones. These are essential to the normal functioning of the body. They include the pancreas, the adrenal cortex, the ovaries (in women), the testes (in men), the pituitary gland, the thyroid and parathyroid glands.
The hormones produced by these glands are responsible for many of the bodily functions over which we have no control. These include growth, metabolism, sexual development and function, and response to stress. Any increase or decrease in hormone production affects the process it controls and will inevitably lead to disease of one kind or another.

**The Lymphatic System**

**Points to work:**
Spleen, Appendix, All lymphatic reflex points

The lymphatic system is closely connected to the blood circulatory system as it too carries fluid around the body. Like the blood system, it is circulatory. Lymph is a milky fluid made up of proteins, fats and white blood cells, and is carried in the lymph ducts. Functionally, it is also connected to the blood system, as its role is to collect any fluid that has escaped from the body tissues.

Once collected, this is then returned to the blood system. At the same time, the lymphatic system collects and filters out any harmful bacteria found. Lymph is vitally important to maintain the functioning of the immune system.

**The Musculo-Skeletal System**

**Points to work:**
Spinal reflex, Shoulder, Arm, Hip, Leg, Knee

Muscles are bundles of elongated cells that create movement by contracting and relaxing. Skeletal muscles (the body contains more than 600) are described as ‘voluntary’. That is, they are under the voluntary control of the brain. Smooth muscles are concerned with movements of the internal organs as in digestion and in childbirth, and are not under our control. Cardiac muscles are found only in the heart. They contract about 100,000 times a day in order to maintain the flow of blood through the circulatory system.

**The Reproductive system**

**Points to work:**
Uterus, Ovaries, Prostate, Testes

In women the reproductive system consists of the ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus and vagina. The ovaries produce eggs once a month. These are either fertilised by the male sperm or are expelled as part of the menstrual cycle. Plus secondary sexual characteristics such as facial hair and the depth of the voice. Any dysfunction of the ovaries will not only disrupt the normal cycle but will also produce an imbalance in many other parts of the body.

In men the reproductive system consists of the testes, prostate gland, vas deferens (the tube that carries the sperm from the testes) and the urethra (the tube that carries the sperm and urine down to the penis) in addition to
sperm, testes generate the male hormone testosterone that produces the male sexual characteristics. These include body bulk, facial and pubic hair, and depth of voice.

**The Respiratory System**  
**Points to work:**  
Mouth, Nose, Throat, Trachea, Bronchioles, Lungs, Diaphragm

The respiratory system is another term for the breathing apparatus. Its purpose is to extract oxygen from the air as you inhale, and pass it to the bloodstream. As you exhale, the waste product (carbon dioxide) carried by the blood is exchanged and expelled. The air inhaled passes through the nose or mouth to the lungs, and thus into the bloodstream. Inhalation and exhalation are facilitated by the chest muscles and the diaphragm.

**The Urinary System**  
**Points to work:**  
Kidneys, Urethra, Bladder

The principal function of the urinary system is to maintain the volume and composition of body fluids within normal limits. One aspect of this function is to rid the body of waste products that accumulate as a result of cellular metabolism, and because of this, it is sometimes referred to as the excretory system.

The urinary system maintains an appropriate fluid volume by regulating the amount of water that is excreted in the urine. Other aspects of its function include regulating the concentrations of various electrolytes in the body fluids and maintaining normal pH of the blood.

In addition to maintaining fluid homeostasis in the body, the urinary system controls red blood cell production also plays a role in maintaining normal blood pressure by secreting the enzyme renin.

**Nervous System**  
**Points to work:**  
Brain, Spinal Cord

The nervous system is the major controlling, regulatory, and communicating system in the body. It is the center of all mental activity including thought, learning, and memory. Together with the endocrine system, the nervous system is responsible for regulating and maintaining homeostasis.

Like other systems in the body, the nervous system is composed of organs, principally the brain, spinal cord, nerves, and ganglia. These, in turn, consist of various tissues, including nerve, blood, and connective tissue. Together these carry out the complex activities of the nervous system.
**Immune System**
**Points to work:**
Lymphatics, Thymus, Spleen

The immune system is the body's defence against infectious organisms and other invaders. Through a series of steps called the immune response, the immune system attacks organisms and substances that invade our systems and cause disease. The immune system is made up of a network of cells, tissues, and organs that work together to protect the body.

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**ARCHES OF THE FOOT**

The bones of the foot are arranged in two arches which enable the foot to support the weight of the body, provide an ideal distribution of body weight over the hard and soft tissue of the foot, and provide leverage while walking. The arches are not rigid. They yield as weight is applied and spring back when the weight is lifted, thus helping to absorb shocks.

The **longitudinal arch** has two parts. Both consist of tarsal and metatarsal bones arranged to form an arch from the anterior to the posterior part of the foot. The medial (inner) part of the longitudinal arch originates at the calcaneus. It rises to the talus and descends through the navicular, the three cuneiforms, and the heads of the three medial metatarsals. The lateral (outer) part of the longitudinal arch also begins at the calcaneus. It rises at the cuboid and descends to the heads of the two lateral metatarsals.

The navicular, three cuneiforms, and the base of the five metatarsals form the **transverse arch**.
FOOT INJURIES

The bones composing the arches are held in position by ligaments and tendons. If these ligaments and tendons are weakened, the height of the medial longitudinal arch may decrease or “fall.” The result is a flatfoot and is characterized by lateral deviation of the foot.

Causes include excessive weight, postural abnormalities, weakened supporting tissues, and genetic predisposition. A custom-designed arch support (orthotic) may be prescribed to treat flatfoot.

Clawfoot is a condition in which the medial longitudinal arch is abnormally elevated. It is often caused by muscle imbalance, such as may result from poliomyelitis.

A bunion (hallux valgus) is a deformity of the great toe. Although the condition may be inherited, it is typically caused by wearing tightly fitting shoes and is characterised by lateral deviation of the proximal phalanx of the great toe and medical displacement of metatarsal I. Arthritis of the first metatarsophalangeal joint may also be a predisposing factor. The condition produces inflammation of bursae (fluid-filled sacs at the joint), bone spurs and calluses.

Shinsplint syndrome refers to pain or soreness along the tibia, specifically the medial, distal two thirds. It may be caused by tendonitis of the tibialis posterior muscle or toe flexors, inflammation of the periosteum (periostitis) around the tibia, or stress fractures of the tibia. The tendonitis usually occurs when runners run on hard or banked surfaces with poorly supportive running shoes.

The condition may also occur as a result of vigorous activity of the legs following a period of relative inactivity. The muscles in the anterior compartment (mainly the tibialis anterior) can be strengthened to balance the stronger posterior compartment muscles. Patients who do not respond to RICE may be given local injections of corticosteroids or may have to undergo minor surgery to release pressure in the soft tissues around the bone.

Stress Fractures are partial fractures that result from the inability to withstand repeated stress owing to a change in training, harder surfaces, longer distance, greater speed, or an existing pathology. Such fractures can occur in the bodies of lumbar vertebrae, sacroiliac joint, pubic symphysis, iliac crest, femoral neck and body, fibula, lateral malleolus, and metatarsals.

About 25% of all stress fractures involve the fibula, specifically the distal third. With all stress fractures, running must stop temporarily and immobilization may be needed.

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Plantar fasciitis and heel spurs are problems that can develop in the area of the heel on the sole of the foot, causing chronic pain and interfering with the ability to walk normally or comfortably.

The plantar fascia is a band of fibrous connective tissue that, lying atop the cushioning layers of fatty tissue that constitute the bottom of the foot, extends from the heel bone to the ball of the foot. Stress from mechanical problems, injury or overuse can cause the plantar fascia to become inflamed, creating pain. Plantar means the bottom of the foot; fascia is a term for this kind of fibrous connective tissue that is found throughout the body; fasciitis refers to inflammation of the fascia tissue.

A heel spur is a calcium deposit — that is, a growth of bone — that can develop on the bottom of the heel bone where the muscles of the foot connect to the bone. This boney protrusion, which tends to resemble a hook or spur that points forward, can result from extended strain on the foot's muscles and ligaments, from the prolonged stretching and inflammation of the plantar fascia (that is, from plantar fasciitis), and from repeated tearing of the membrane that covers the heel bone.

The Relevance of the Feet and the Spine in Reflexology

The feet are extremely important to the general health of our body, and because of certain similarities, the reflexology theory considers there to be a relationship between the body and the foot. For instance, there are 26 bones in each foot and there are 26 bones in the adult spine. Further, the vertebral column has four natural curves when it is viewed from the side: the cervical curve is rounded forwards, the thoracic curve is gently curved convex towards the posterior, the lumbar spine is also curved convex forwards creating a hollow, while the sacrum curve is like that of the thoracic curve, convex towards the posterior.

The foot appears to have four natural curves also, almost imitating the line of the spine. So the curves and the bones of the foot are designated in reflexology as representing the curves and the bones of the spine. From this, particular areas of the foot are considered to represent areas of spinal innervation that correspond to those bones.

The following four curves or divisions of the feet represent the four body divisions as follows (the two feet symbolize the whole human body including the limbs, not just the torso).

Observation of the feet
By looking at the body and comparing it with the feet or hands we get a complete picture of the size and shape of the person. The term ‘mirror image’ when applied to the feet or hands is misleading as this implies that the representation is seen with the right side of the body appearing on the left.

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foot or hand and the left side of the body on the right foot or hand. The term ‘microcosm’ fits the description much better, as the feet and hands represent all the characteristics and attributes of the body. Each organ or part has its corresponding area on the feet, hands or ears.

If the person is short and rotund the feet will show these characteristics also, while if the person is tall and thin this will also be seen in the feet. Even the length of the toes are exactly like the proportions of the neck. If there is an imbalance on one side of the body this is immediately duplicated in the foot.

The phalanges (toes and fingers) correspond to the cranial cavity, which houses the brain and all its principal parts. Each toe or finger should be in the same plane when you look at the person, if one toe or finger is higher than the opposite partner, that corresponding eye is also set higher on the face. If the little toe or finger curves in towards the fourth toe and third finger respectively is somewhat tucked under, it invariably reflects an imbalance in the shoulder area.

The metatarsals in front of the ball of the foot correspond to the thoracic cavity, the upper trunk between the neck and the diaphragm, housing the lungs, heart, oesophagus and their associated structures.

The abdominopelvic cavity is represented by the foot between the ball and the heel. It is divided into two parts: the first, between the ball and the mid-foot, signifies the diaphragm down to the umbilical area, containing the organs of digestion: the stomach, liver, gall bladder, pancreas, spleen and a small portion of the small intestine. The second, from the mid-foot to the heel, represents the central and the lower portion of the abdominal cavity to the pelvic cavity containing the small intestine and most of the large intestine. (There is a slight overlap of the three cuneiform bones into the abdominal cavity.)

The tarsals (the seven bones of the ankle) correspond to the pelvic cavity, which contains the genitourinary tract and the last portion of the large intestine.

So there are four natural divisions of the foot and we can also divide the hand into four parts. In addition, specific lines on the foot are believed to represent lines on the body.

These are as follows:
- **Shoulder or neck line** – this divides off the phalanges, and the head-related and neck muscle areas.
- **Diaphragm line** – this includes the distal point of the metatarsals and metacarpals, covering the upper part of the body: the chest, lung and the breast, also heart and upper back muscles.
- **Waist line** – the waist line is measured on the foot from the fifth metatarsal tuberosity (the protuberance at the proximal base) on the lateral aspect. On the hand it is measured from just below the fifth metacarpal on the ulnar side. This is found when the fist is clenched to form a transverse crease. The area between the waist line and the diaphragm line covers the middle section of the body: the liver, gall bladder, kidney, adrenals, stomach, pancreas, spleen and solar plexus.

- **Heel line** – the waist line down to the heel line covers the intestinal areas, also the bladder, pelvic and buttock areas. It is found in line with the medial malleolus encircling the heel to the lateral malleolus. On the hand, it is taken from the trapezium bone and the proximal point of the first metacarpal where the muscles bulge at the base of the thumb (thenar eminence), to the middle of the hypothenar eminence on the ulnar side.

As an example for diagnosis, you can examine the fifth metatarsal notch to assess the waist line. If there is a greater proportion of the foot in front of this imaginary line it denotes that the person is long waisted, but short in the leg; if the reverse is true, this denotes that the person has very long legs. If the medial malleoli at the lower end of the tibia are not level it indicates a low lumbar problem.
Spinal Column & its Functions

7 Cervical Vertebrae

1. C
2. C
3. C
4. C
5. C
6. C
7. C

12 Thoracic Vertebrae

1. D
2. D
3. D
4. D
5. D
6. D
7. D
8. D
9. D
10. D
11. D
12. D

5 Lumbar Vertebrae

1. L
2. L
3. L
4. L
5. L

Sacrum

Coccyx

The vertebrae and nerves of the body:
The area in the body to which these nerves travel:
Problems which may arise if one of these nerves is
trapped by a vertebra:

1. C
2. C
3. C
4. C
5. C
6. C
7. C

1. D
2. D
3. D
4. D
5. D
6. D
7. D
8. D
9. D
10. D
11. D
12. D

1. L
2. L
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Sacrum

Coccyx

Centre of Wellness

Spinal Column

& its Functions
'Back-up' or Cross Reflexes, or Zone-Related Reflexes

'Back-up' or cross reflexes are used when it is unwise to pursue a normal treatment on the primary area because of an injured limb. It is important to know which reflex should be worked in order to aid a specific problem. Reflexes are used as an addition to treatment on the primary areas. Such points are related to the primary areas for a particular organ by an anatomical or physiological connection.

The body works as a complete unit at all times. So whenever there is any congestion or tension in any part of a zone this will often travel throughout the zone, and will affect any organ gland or function within it. Such congestion often travels up or down one side of the body.

The Chinese empirically observed how one part of the body can affect another, and how each area or limb of the body is related with a corresponding part. With such connected areas, if either is out of balance it may affect the other, but it also becomes an area of referral if one of the areas is too painful to work on. The corresponding area in the same zonal pathway would be less painful to use but equally effective. It may also be the distal point on the meridians.

According to the TCM (Acupuncture) theory of treatment, it is often considered more suitable to work the distal point, the furthest point away from the problem. For instance, B-60, which is on the outer ankle, half way between the (lateral malleolus and the lateral edge of the foot) is suitable for back, neck and shoulder problems; it is also ideal for wrists and shoulders as the cross reflex point. This is also evident with ST-41 (the front of the ankle), which is used extensively for all joints, mainly the ankles, but again is a cross reflex point that can be used for wrists. There are a number of such areas complementing each other, and in each case you can work on one to act on the other.

The specific connections are as follows:
- The shoulders and hips correspond
- The palms and soles correspond
- The hands and feet correspond
- The fingers and toes correspond
- The wrists and the ankles correspond
- The forearms and forelegs correspond
- The knees and elbows correspond
- The upper arms and thighs correspond

These areas are often referred to as cross reflex or referral areas, and sometimes as areas of assistance or back-up reflexes. These correspondences relate to the ten equal longitudinal lines running the length of the body, between the tips of the fingers to the head and to the tips of the toes, or vice versa.
**Interpretation of painful reflex points**
During treatment, it is important to know how to understand and interpret painful points and how they may show that they are areas of dysfunction. These may relate to a number of factors, including incorrect behaviour patterns, medication or food, or stress.

An understanding of each individual client’s needs for treatment is also necessary. These include the correct amount of time, the right pressures and how to adapt them accordingly, use of specific relaxation techniques. With regard to pressure, the practitioner should be able to decide how much pressure should be applied to the detoxifying and eliminating reflexes, specifically when the areas for the liver and the kidneys are tender.

**Reactions to expect during treatment**
These are many different responses that may arise during a treatment. Some of these changes can at times be so subtle that some people are generally unaware of them, so you need to be observant. It is extremely rare, however, for a person to have an adverse reaction to treatment. Reactions may include:

- Sweating of palms of hands or soles of feet (often a release of tension)
- Coughing
- Laughing (release of emotions)
- Crying (release of emotions)
- Sighing deeply (release of emotions)
- Twitching or tingling in the limbs (normal reaction to nerve stimulation)
- Sudden cramp (normal reaction to nerve stimulation)
- Electric-type shock up the zone and sometimes also on the opposite side of the body (normal reaction to nerve stimulation)
- Warmth in the corresponding area being treated (normal reaction to nerve stimulation)
- Feeling of movement or crawling in the corresponding area being treated (normal reaction to nerve stimulation)
- Great fatigue (natural outcome of treatment)
- Overwhelming desire to sleep, or just close the eyes (natural outcome of treatment)
- Disappearance of all pain and discomfort (this may only last a day but as each treatment session progresses the time span between the return of the discomfort lengthens)

**Reactions that may arise between treatments**
The responses that may arise as a result of treatment can again sometimes be so subtle that some people are generally unaware of them. Therefore when evaluating each treatment session it helps if the patient is asked to give a report of any slight fluctuation in the body. Many of these signs are positive signs that the therapy is working, and are all part of the healing process. This
is not the same as a healing crisis, as many books state, but a natural outcome of treatment.

- Symptoms may be slightly exacerbated for 24 hours (this indicates the treatment is working)
- General aches and pains the following day after treatment
- Skin rashes
- Spots or pimples
- Great fatigue for approximately 48 hours
- Flu-like symptoms
- Increased wind or flatulence
- More ease and frequency of bowel movement
- In women, menstrual blood becomes more red, and usually more profuse
- Much better moods
- Improved sleeping patterns
- More energy
- Relief from pain
- Joints appear more mobile
- In case of respiratory tract infections, mucopurulent (yellow or greenish) sputum becomes clear

*Note:* We do not know how any person’s body will react or respond to the stimuli of reflexology. The reactions outlined are just a few of the many responses one might expect. A reaction is not a cause for worry; it is a positive sign that the therapy is working. Sometimes these reactions are due to the body not having dealt with the release of toxins from the system; the congested area (a painful or tender reflex) when stimulated reacts by releasing that congestion into the system.

Many patients have no adverse reaction, just a steady cessation or withdrawal of symptoms. This is the body’s way of dealing with this input of energy. Out of the many thousands of treatments that I have given, I can count on one hand the reflexology treatments that did not agree with people. Most people respond within approximately three to six treatment sessions in some way.

In some cases there may not be a complete cessation of symptoms, but certainly a response is felt and there is measurable relief. This is not a miracle cure; however, many long-term and extremely chronic problems respond over a period of a few weeks. Acute problems, especially those of the musculature and skeletal system, are often instant.

Remember, sick people do not become ill overnight, so people who are on heavy medication or those who have been unwell for a long period of time need to be treated gently and with care, as medication and illness can be debilitating to the body, causing physical changes in the efficiency of the detoxifying and eliminating organs.
Medication may accumulate in the body because the liver cannot process and break down these substances. If the kidneys are not performing at peak efficiency they in turn cannot eliminate these substances quickly enough and they may re-enter the bloodstream. If there is an accumulation of medication in the tissues the patient may get a marked response as their systems are unable to deal with an additional release of toxins due to the outcome of treatment. The strength of any reaction will be in proportion to the force of the treatment. However, as a speculative comment, in China a course of reflexology treatment is over ten consecutive days, with a wonderful response from most treatments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISORDERS</th>
<th>POINTS TO WORK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arthritis</td>
<td>Lymphatics, spine, shoulder/arm hip/leg, liver Urinary tract, Adrenals, Solar plexus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>Solar plexus, Adrenals, Respiratory System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bladder problems</td>
<td>Kidney, Ureter, Bladder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constipation</td>
<td>Solar plexus, The Digestive system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>Pituitary, Thyroid, Liver, Adrenals, Metabolism Pancreas, Kidney, Eye reflexes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eczema</td>
<td>Lymphatic system, Kidneys, Colon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>Hold hypothalamus until fever has subsided them work the whole of the foot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glaucoma</td>
<td>Eye/ear, head, neck and kidney reflexes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headaches</td>
<td>Brain, Solar Plexus, Eye, whole of the head reflex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney disorders</td>
<td>Kidney, Ureter, Bladder, Lymphatic system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung disorders</td>
<td>Solar plexus, Whole of the respiratory system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menstrual Disorders</td>
<td>Solar plexus, Ovaries, Ureter, Lower back reflex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nausea</td>
<td>Digestive tract, stomach, liver reflexes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Setting The Atmosphere
The service area should be well ventilated. Setting the atmosphere includes the way the client is treated and prepared before the treatment starts. You should explain exactly what oil and products you will be using and why, and what areas you will be massaging.

- The room temperature should be adjusted according to client and treatment needs, as the client should be warm but not overheated.
- Music is optional and will depend on the client’s preference and the policies of each workplace. Don’t assume that all clients will want music playing.
- The same oils that are being used for the massage can also be burnt during the treatment. Take care when using burners and never leave a naked flame unattended.
- Soft lighting helps to set a relaxing atmosphere.
- Speak softly and sparingly to the client during the treatment. If the aim of the aromatic massage is to relax the client it is unlikely they will want to engage in or respond to a lot of unrelated conversation. When telling the client what you are about to do or instructing them on their positioning, be clear and concise.
- Be prepared to adjust techniques and the level of intensity to suit the individual’s needs. Listen for the client’s responses, both positive and negative and look for nonverbal signals, such as tensing or grimacing.
- Remember that each client is an individual and not all clients will respond in the same way.

Performing the Massage
Rhythm, repetition and variation are at the core of all high quality massage therapies. While you may have a routine planned before starting the treatment you may need to adjust it according to the client’s response. The pressure or firmness of touch should always be decided in consultation with the client. If the pressure is too light it may tickle the client and annoy them. If the pressure is too firm it may cause the client discomfort. Each client will require a different pressure and this may change with different sessions with the same client.

It is important to monitor the client’s response throughout the treatment. Massage techniques should be evaluated and adapted as required throughout the service.

The movements, sequence and transitions should be smooth and you should never stop the massage and think, ‘What comes next?’ If you need to think about the next movement then maintain contact with light effleurage while deciding what to do next. It is important for the client to feel constant touch and the flowing movements of the massage.

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Before you massage anyone, you should be as relaxed as possible, both physically and emotionally. Posture, body weight and weight distribution are essential for good massage techniques.

- Distribute your body weight evenly on both feet.
- Try to keep your shoulders relaxed rather than drawn up to your neck.
- To protect your back, try to keep it straight and bend at the knees.
- Sit on a stool if it is more comfortable for you.
- Keep your body close to the treatment table.
- Never sit on the massage table when the client is on it.

**Assessing the Treatment**

You should seek feedback from the client during the performance of the reflexology which will allow you to make any necessary adjustments to ensure treatment outcomes are being met. You should also spend a little time with the client after the treatment to discuss and note the outcomes so that any unexpected results can be explained and future treatments can be recommended.

By discussing future treatment options you show the client that you are interested in their total care. You may also advise a continued course of reflexology as a one-off treatment may not achieve any long term benefit. If you are dealing with an established client it will be helpful to assess and recommend ongoing treatments regularly. Clients can become bored with receiving the same treatment each visit and the massage or treatment offered may need to be adjusted to suit changes in the client’s condition or preference. By showing an interest in the client and recommending appropriate treatments you encourage repeat business.

**Providing after care advice**

It is important that the client follow the recommended after-care advice as this will reinforce and enhance the massage treatment performed in the salon.

Aftercare may include advice on:
- suitable products eg. Tiger Balm, Heat Bag, Eye Pillow
- future treatment plan
- lifestyle changes eg. Drink more water.....

**Record of treatments**

At the completion of every treatment a record of the massage treatment must be recorded. This should include the following.

- duration of treatment
- intensity you used
- problem areas you found
- products and equipment used
- client feedback to treatment
• any immediate adverse effects
• recommended changes for next treatment
• products purchased.

This information will enable you to prepare for the next treatment and adjust the treatment plan if necessary. It also provides you with guidance for consecutive treatments which may require an increase in treatment duration and intensity.

If it is the first treatment of a course it may be necessary to make some notes of the existing condition to enable a comparison after the final treatment. If a course of treatment is being undertaken an accurate record of the number of treatments is important to ensure that the Reflexologist is aware at what stage the treatment is currently at. Accurate records also assist other Reflexologists who may be treating the same client.
REFLEXOLOGY
CLIENT HISTORY SHEET

NAME:_____________________________DATE:_____________
ADDRESS:_____________________________________________
TEL NO:____________________________DOB:_______________
OCCUPATION __________________________________________

Do you have the following conditions:
Thrombosis:_____________________________________________________
Heart problems:____________________________________________________
Epilepsy:_________________________________________________________
Diabetes:_______________________________________________________

Are you pregnant?________________________________________________

Problems with the lymphatic system:_________________________________
Operations on the feet:____________________________________________
Osteoporosis:____________________________________________________
Varicose veins:___________________________________________________
Skin conditions:__________________________________________________
Medical History:
_____________________________________________________________

Allergies: _______________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________

Current medication if any:__________________________________________

Current treatment: Traditional/Natural Therapies
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

Practitioner:_____________________________Date:____________________

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