

**T E X A S**  
**M A S S A G E C E U**

Melissa Wood, ND, MTI, LMT

Continuing Education E-Book



**T E X A S**  
**M A S S A G E C E U**

## **BENEFITS OF REFLEXOLOGY**

**FOR TEXAS LICENSED MASSAGE THERAPISTS**

**12 CE HOURS**

***Approved By Texas Department of Licensing & Regulation (TDLR)***

# Benefits of Reflexology

## for Texas Licensed Massage Therapists

### 12 CE Hour Continuing Education Class

**Class Objective:** This online class is developed to educate Licensed Massage Therapists on all of the benefits of incorporating Reflexology into massage routines. It is my hope that this material will be interesting, educational and a valuable resource to assist you with your massage therapy clients, and to help you maintain a long and rewarding career in the massage therapy industry.

### COURSE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Participants should be able to:

1. Understand the fundamentals of reflexology, including its history.
2. Explore the anatomy and physiology of the human body, focusing on the reflex points and zones corresponding to various organs and systems.
3. Learn how reflexology promotes relaxation and stress relief, and its potential benefits for overall well-being.
4. Examine the evidence-based research supporting the efficacy of reflexology in reducing pain, improving circulation, and enhancing immune function.
5. Gain practical skills in reflexology foot mapping, and client assessment.
6. Discuss the integration of reflexology into holistic health practices and complementary therapies.
7. Explore the ethical considerations and professional standards for practicing reflexology, including client confidentiality and informed consent.
8. Develop strategies for effectively communicating with clients about reflexology treatments, including discussing potential benefits and managing expectations.
9. Identify contraindications and precautions for reflexology treatments, ensuring safe and appropriate care for clients.
10. Reflect on personal experiences with reflexology and develop a plan for incorporating reflexology into professional practice or self-care routines.

## About the Author



My name is Melissa Wood, and I am a Naturopathic Doctor, Massage Therapy Instructor and Licensed Massage Therapist located in Sherman, Texas. I have been studying alternative and natural medicine for over 25 years.

My mission is to enable everyone on this planet to be healthy and to be actively involved in their health and healing. My goal is to offer information that will provide you with new insights that are useful in your path to wellness. I envision a time when everyone will seek out herbs, essential oils, vitamins, minerals, nutritional supplements and whole foods (not processed food!) to help heal themselves, as these are very powerful tools for enhancing your health and well-being.

### **APPROVED MASSAGE THERAPY INSTRUCTOR**

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## Disclaimer

I am a Naturopathic Doctor (N.D.), Massage Therapy Instructor (MTI), Licensed Massage Therapist (LMT), and an Approved CE Provider in the State of Texas. I am NOT a Medical Doctor (M.D.). I have been trained in holistic and natural therapies for the body and do not diagnose any medical condition, nor prescribe any medications. Should you need immediate medical or psychiatric assistance, please telephone 911 or seek immediate treatment at a hospital emergency room. Nothing listed within this e-book class should be considered as medical advice for dealing with a given problem. You should consult your health care professional for individual guidance for specific health problems. It is understood that the author is solely responsible for the content of this work and is **NOT** responsible for your usage of said information either personally or professionally with your clients. In addition, you should ALWAYS encourage your clients to see their health care professionals for help with any medical issues they are having.

I encourage you to make your own health care decisions based upon your research and in partnership with a qualified healthcare professional. The use of this information, suggestions, recommendations, products or services should be based on your own due diligence and you agree I am not liable for your success or failure.

Melissa M. Wood, ND, MTI, LMT



# Benefits of Reflexology

## for Texas Licensed Massage Therapists

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## Preface

As Massage Therapists, you are in a unique situation to advance the health of your clients. Giving you the tools to help you help others is my passion and my lifelong goal.

This class addresses what reflexology is and the many hows and whys of reflexology (how reflexology works; how it benefits others; how it can help you grow your business; why you should use it with your clients, etc.).

This class cannot teach you the intricate techniques that must be learned hands-on from a professional reflexologist. According to the NCBTMB, online classes are highly restricted on the instruction of techniques without “the application of professional therapeutic touch.”<sup>1</sup> No amount of written verbiage can replace the physical learning necessary to perform the precise reflexology strokes needed to be fully effective. Keep this in mind as you pursue your continuing education renewals and be very skeptical of any online class offering to teach you hands-on techniques.

As is the goal of continuing education, this course will enhance your depth and breadth of knowledge with the goal that everything in this class will be to your benefit and to the benefit of your clients to help them live a healthier life.

Let's get started!

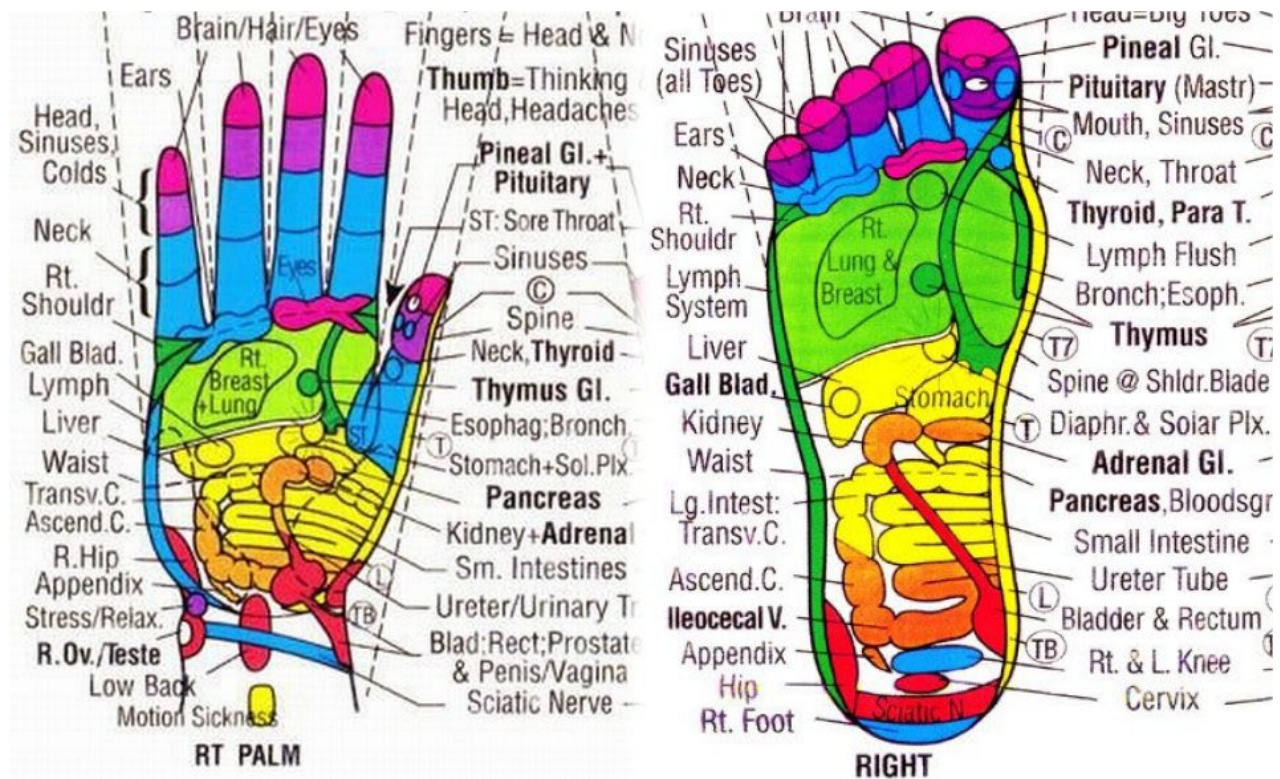
# Chapter 1: Introduction to Reflexology

## What is Reflexology?

Reflexology is a method of activating the healing powers of the body using the application of pressure.

To be more specific, reflexology is a non-medicinal treatment method that focuses on specific spots on the surface of the body – mainly the palms of the hands and soles of the feet – which are strategically pressed to appropriately influence the organs within the body, relieve pain, stimulate circulation and bring balance to the body.

Also known as pointed pressure therapy, zone therapy, shiatsu, acupuncture without needles, concentrated massage and even contact therapy, reflexology is interesting not only as a therapy but because the palms and soles represent a replica of our internal organs.



With a rich history in ancient therapy, reflexology is not synonymous with regular foot massages given to release stress and tension. Unlike regular massage, reflexology requires no lotion or massage oil. Instead of gentle, gliding, relaxing strokes, reflexology is specific fingertip movements with certain amounts of pressure applied to precise places. Furthermore, a reflexologist bases his/her entire treatment time on the feet (or sometimes hands) to address the requirements of the organs.

As a holistic approach that works to seek and maintain the right balance in the body, reflexology works with the body's energy flow to optimize physical function and stimulate self-healing.

Simply by applying pressure on specific pressure points you can learn how to help the body become more balanced as it is an extremely effective way of balancing the body!

### So, Does Reflexology Really Work?



In today's society, we are more dependent on chemically laden drugs, surgical procedures and psychotherapy sessions to heal ourselves. But considering all the side effects these “modern-day” options have to offer, there has never been a better time to find out what alternative therapies can do for us and what benefits we can offer (and receive) with the power of human touch.

Countless people are learning about the benefits of alternative treatments and healing therapies and are accessing their benefits for their specific

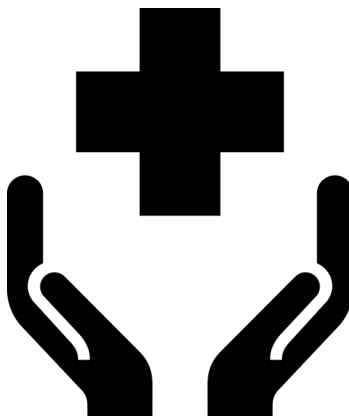
condition. Reflexology is a welcomed therapy for many people as the feet and hands are easily accessible and there is no need to undress.

Reflexology has been correlated to the following benefits:

- Induces relaxation and reduces stress and anxiety
- Increases circulation of blood flow to deliver oxygen and nutrients throughout the body
- Reduces pain from illness, injury and/or surgery
- Elevates the participant's mood and outlook on life

Unfortunately, despite the research, many people directly associated with conventional medicine do not yet accept the findings.

Holistic health experts who know reflexology, how well it works, and the facts it's based on, recognize the multiple benefits your clients will gain from this therapy.



## Reflexology and Medical Care

Regardless of their health situation or medical condition, going under the knife or undertaking painful therapies is the last thing anyone wants to do. In fact, even taking medicines and going to doctors is becoming a secondary option.

Your clients will appreciate having reflexology offered to them as a completely non-invasive selection. Most importantly, reflexology therapy does not require using needles or surgeries to cut and inspect internal organs in order to treat them. It only requires tweaking the reflexes present on our feet or on our palms to positively impact the internal organs without any medication, medical treatments or surgeries. If such an option is available, people will surely consider it!

While reflexology alone is not used to diagnose or cure health disorders, it is a useful complementary treatment. Keep in mind that reflexology must never be used as a substitute for medical care; but the collaboration between the two brings the foremost results.

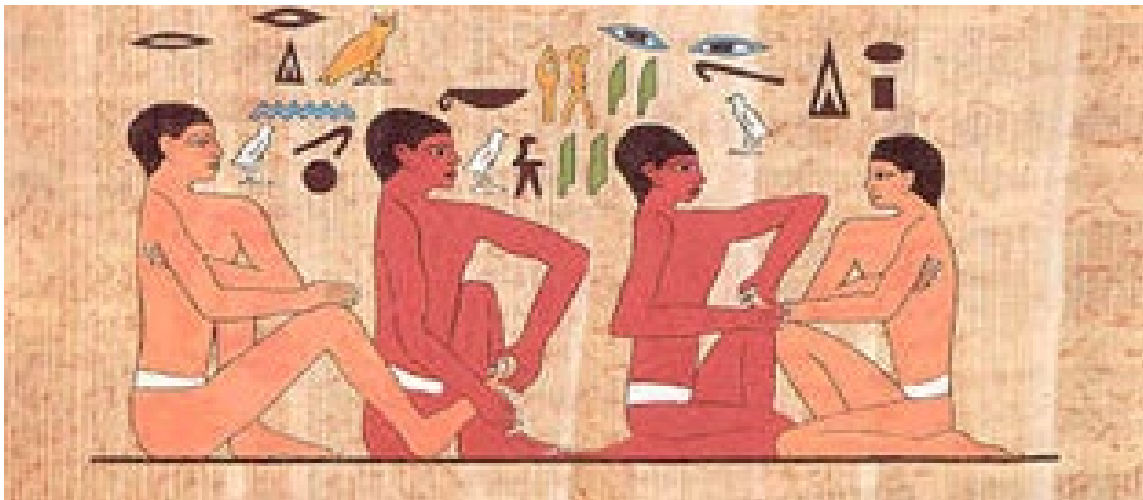
As a massage therapist, you want to help clients live the healthiest lives possible. You want to learn about their goals and struggles and deal with them accordingly. Reflexology can not only help you with your clients, it can also help *you* achieve a healthier, disease-free life, too!

## Chapter 2: The Rise and Shine of Reflexology

### Reflexology and Its Roots in Ancient Egypt and China

The methodology of reflexology, based on the scientific techniques of pressure, is one of the oldest known natural treatments.

The roots of reflexology, just like acupressure or acupuncture, lie in antiquity. Around 2500 B.C., evidence was collected in the tomb of Ankhmahor in Egypt that showed a petroglyph of a physician applying pressure with his hands to the palms and soles. Also, an inscription was found at Saqqara, a vast, ancient burial ground in Egypt which when translated suggested the following: “Don’t hurt me!” to which the practitioner replied. “I shall act so you praise me.”<sup>2</sup>



Around that same time (2500 BC-3000 BC) in India, a country where religion greatly shapes its history, it is recorded that Buddhist monks brought massage techniques to China for treating pains and other health issues by means of pressure points.

Around 1000 BC, Japanese monks studying Buddhism in China observed the healing methods of traditional Chinese medicine, including pressure therapy. This eventually started traditional Japanese massage, which grew into Shiatsu.<sup>3</sup>



By 100 A.D., Buddhist monks had spread Buddhism and reflexology across China. Reflexology was practiced as a part of moxibustion and acupuncture. Moxibustion is a traditional Chinese medicine technique involving burning of an herb called mugwort to promote healing. The heat, or infrared radiation, from moxibustion transmits through meridians from acupoints to internal organs. <sup>4</sup>

Therapeutic massage modalities spread to the western world and in 1582 Dr. Adamus and Dr. A'Tatis published the first known book about “Zone Therapy” that described methods of relieving pain throughout the body by exerting pressure on toes and fingers. A year later, Dr. Bell of Leipzig, Germany, published a booklet describing the treatment of organs through pressure points. At the time these books were published, many experts believe middle Europeans were already using some form of pressure therapy for internal healing purposes. <sup>5</sup>

### The Founders of Reflexology

But that is all ancient history! Skipping forward more than a millennium, science, medicine, and natural healing evolved, but for unknown reasons, the techniques of reflexology did not attract much attention and seemed dormant until its reintroduction in the western world.

While historical references were made to the actual therapy, the term *reflexology* was first coined in the late 1800s by a Russian psychiatrist named Vladimir Bakhterev, who studied neurology and reflexes—namely, the body’s automatic response to a stimulus (like when the pupils in your eyes constrict in bright light). His research, combined with several other scientists and doctors of the time, proved connections between pressure on the skin (the stimulus)



***Dr. William H. FitzGerald***

and the reflex response, both physically and psychologically.

British doctor and research scientist, Sir Henry Head, demonstrated the connection between the internal organs and skin. He discovered zones on the skin which became hypersensitive to pressure when an organ connected by nerves to the skin region, was diseased. <sup>6</sup>

Near the beginning of the 20th century, Dr. William H. FitzGerald--an American Ear, Nose, and Throat specialist who had worked in hospitals across Europe before returning to the United States--discovered that if pressure were applied to the nose, throat and tongue, sensations in particular areas were deadened. He called this "Zone Analgesia." <sup>7</sup>

During his research, FitzGerald also discovered that the application of pressure on the zones was not only beneficial for relieving pain, in a number of cases, but this pressure also healed the underlying cause behind the pain--resulting in much more effective and long-term results without using medicine or surgical methods for treatment. <sup>8</sup>

Although it's very clear that reflexology is associated with ancient therapies used thousands of years ago, Dr. FitzGerald is considered the Founding Father of Zone Therapy. <sup>9</sup>

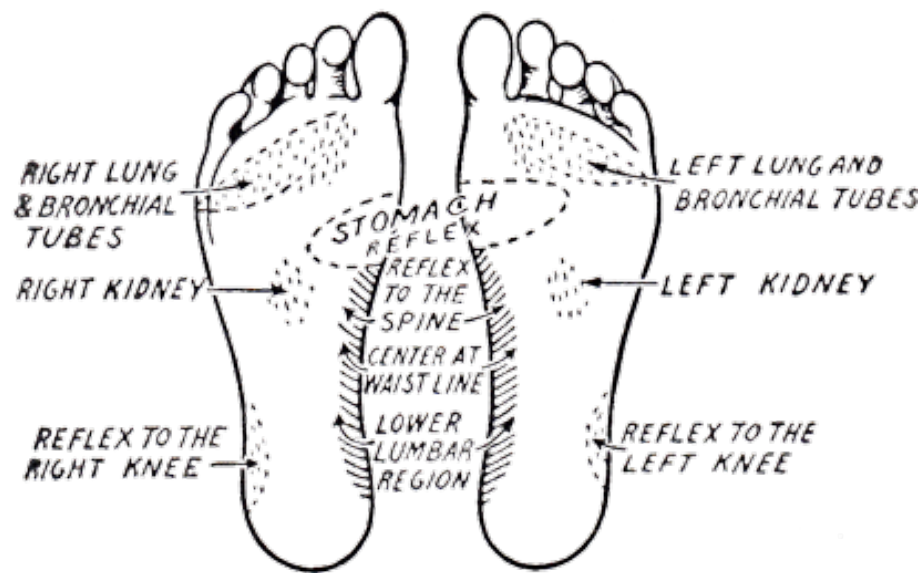
In 1917, Dr. FitzGerald co-authored a book with Dr. Edwin F. Bowers titled *Zone Therapy: Relieving Pain at Home* that described his methods for Zone Analgesia and diagramed the human body into ten longitudinal zones. Although the book was published a century ago in 1917, reflexology experts still refer to this publication acknowledging it is the basis of principles that are practiced today. In the book, the editor includes this note from a magazine editor:

*"For almost a year Dr. Bowers has been urging me to publish this article on Dr. FitzGerald's remarkable system of healing known as Zone Therapy. Frankly, I could not believe what was claimed for Zone Therapy, nor did I think that we could get magazine readers to believe it. Finally, a few months ago, I went to Hartford unannounced, and spent a day in Dr. FitzGerald's offices. I saw patients who had been*



After publishing, Ingham began touring the US and Europe teaching reflexology until she died in 1974. Her ideas were adopted by therapists and physicians around the world. The book was translated into multiple languages and has had various title additions.

All of these people together pioneered, built and maintained the foundation of reflexology as we know it. With more than 5000 years of history, reflexology is as relevant and applicable today as ever before. Capable hands are still the only tools needed to promote healing and provide lasting relief!



## Chapter 3: How Reflexology Works

### What Does Reflexology Actually Do?

To have a better understanding of what reflexology is all about and why you should learn this technique to help your clients heal, you need to know what exactly reflexology is and how it works.

*“Based on an ancient Chinese therapy, reflexology involves manipulation of specific reflex areas in the foot, hands, and ears that correspond to other parts of the body. Sometimes referred to as zone therapy, this bodywork involves application of pressure to these reflex zones to stimulate body organs and relieve areas of congestion. Similar to acupressure principles, reflexology works with the body’s energy flow to stimulate self-healing and maintain balance in physical function. This technique is used to reduce pain, increase relaxation, and stimulate circulation of blood and lymphatic fluids. It is especially useful in stress-related illness and emotional disorders. Reflexology is also convenient in cases where an area of the body is traumatized or diseased to the extent that direct manipulation is not appropriate.”*

—MassageTherapy.com<sup>12</sup>

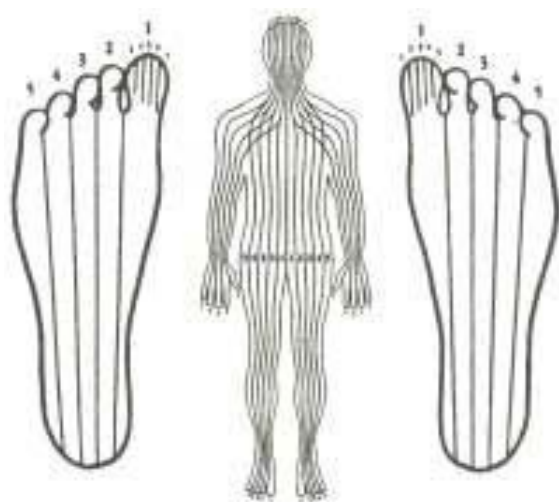
Reflexology techniques involve finger pressure, holds, rotation, kneading, rubbing and thumb- or finger-walking. In other words, the reflexologist applies pressure and "walks" the thumb or finger over different areas of the feet following a set pattern or sequence. Then, the reflexologist will continue kneading and massaging the feet using their fingers, thumbs or even special tools. (Sadly, because of strict state guidelines, specific techniques cannot be shared in an online class.)

This process stimulates the body’s natural healing processes to restore balance and improve overall well-being. The client should feel the relaxing effect through their entire body, not only during the procedure, but even afterwards.

## How Does that Happen?

From the scientific to the spiritual, there are various ways reflexology works to heal the body. Learning how reflexology works will give you the confidence and expertise needed to benefit your clients through reflexology. You will also be able to explain how reflexology works to your clients.

As every part of the body has a reflex point on the feet, the remainder of this class will focus on reflexology of the feet.



As Dr. FitzGerald and his successors ascertained, reflexology divides the body into 10 vertical reflex zones (five on each side of our body) from the top of the head to the tip of the toes. Each zone is numbered and is represented by those figures. These zones are also mapped out on the bottom of the feet. The parts of the body found within a certain zone are linked with a flow of energy within that zone, therefore they are affected by

one another.

The right foot reflexes stimulate the right side of the body, and the left foot, the left side. As the nerves on the feet are stimulated with specific pressure techniques—generally with the practitioner’s thumb and fingers—the nerve relays the stimulus through the nervous system up the spinal column to the corresponding affected area of the body.<sup>13</sup>



## Crystalline Deposits

As the feet are generally restricted in shoes that prevent natural movement of the foot, blood supply and nerve functions are also restricted. Furthermore, the feet are at the furthest point from the heart, so blood has to be pumped back up the legs against the force of gravity. When the body is diseased or otherwise inhibited, congestion—in the form of grainy crystal buildup—can form and be deposited in the feet like sand and rocks in a riverbed<sup>14</sup>. If the sediment accumulates, just like in an obstructed river, problems can arise upstream and downstream.



The crystalized deposits are caused by free radicals that are left unchecked. Free radicals can be excessively generated as a result of poor food choices, medicines, air and water pollution and even the amount of stress we experience.<sup>15</sup> In a healthy individual, who eats a healthy diet and manages his or her stress, free radicals are kept in check naturally. However,

unchecked, excess acidity in the bloodstream increases crystalized calcium, polyethylene, and urate deposits at the nerve endings.<sup>16</sup>

This congestion will impede optimal functionality of various bodily systems and will cause toxins to stagnate in the feet. When pressure is applied to these affected nerves, they may feel tender, sensitive, or painful to your client, and they may feel hard, tight, lumpy, or crunchy to you.

As a massage therapist skilled in reflexology, you can help break down the grainy crystal deposits and activate the body's own healing processes. This process of removing the debris and toxins—also known as detoxification—will lead to better circulation and help build new tissue where the stored crystals and blockages once were. This improves the body's defense and healing process, medically referred to as the immune system; however, most definitions of the immune system do not include the energy, or qi, that helps it work.



### Qi Energy

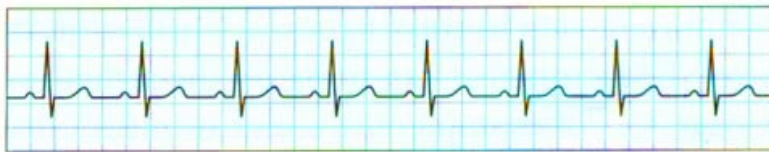
In traditional Chinese culture, it is believed that qi (also spelled chi, qi, or ki, and pronounced “chee”) is a circulating vital force found in all living things. Qi is both physical and mental. To be in good health, the body and mind must be in balance. When the qi is disrupted, if it is not brought back into balance, this disruption will eventually show up as disease in the body.

**Circulation gets mentioned often in reflexology. Circulation is the cycling of blood throughout the body. In the human body there are three types of living cells in the blood: red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets. To keep it simple, red blood cells are responsible for carrying oxygen to the vital organs inside your body. White blood cells defend the body from infections, toxins, and foreign materials and platelets are needed to build new tissue. Good circulation means that the blood flows freely and unobstructed which is integral to good health.**



With your hands, you have the incalculable power of human touch. Positive human touch does wonders to aid the flow of healthy energy. You can apply deep pressure to work on the physical and mental levels, and light pressure to work on the emotional and spiritual levels, using both to help achieve balance.

## Electrical Response



ECG tracing of a normal heart rhythm.

Some people--including neuroscientists--prefer to refer to the body's energy as bio-electrical energy, or bioelectromagnetic energy. If you've ever seen the heart test called an EKG (electrocardiogram), you've seen a graphic picture of the heart's electrical activity.

The nervous system sends messages from the brain in the form of electrical signals called nerve impulses. The nerve impulses direct every part of your being to act properly.

When the nerves are blocked or damaged this causes weakness, numbness, burning, tingling, and pain that can affect other areas of the body as well. Reflexology can gently clear nerve pathways and stimulate damaged nerves to heal and send the correct nerve signals.<sup>17</sup>

The difference between human bio-electricity and the electricity in a lightning bolt is about one billion volts. A human body can only generate between 10 and 100 millivolts. A single electric eel can produce 600 volts.



## Counter-Irritation

Another way that reflexology works is through the process of counter-irritation. Counter-irritation causes irritation or a mild inflammation of the skin to relieve symptoms of a deep-seated inflammatory process.

One way of thinking of it is that the human body repairs more rapidly when it receives an “insult” to its stability. When a reflexologist applies strong pressure on a reflex on the foot, the body registers the pressure as an irritant and alerts the immune system to react. Therefore, the reflexology performed is the stimulus—or insult—that kickstarts the immune system to flush out illness-causing pathogens. Pathogens are anything that can produce disease such as toxins, chemicals, buildup, viruses, bacteria, and fungi. Keep in mind that while “irritant,” “insult,” and “inflammation” sound like bad things that massage therapists would not want to cause, reflexology techniques are a mere moment of slight external discomfort to the body that can set off the immune system to heal long-standing internal illness.

## Lymph Drainage

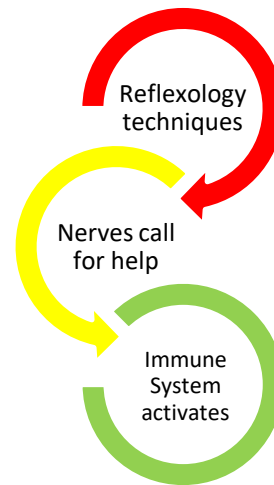
How does reflexology flush the crystalline deposits, toxins, and other pathogens out of the feet? Through the body’s lymphatic system!

The lymphatic system is part of the circulatory system and an integral part of the immune system. The lymphatic system includes a network of lymph nodes, lymphoid tissues, and lymphatic vessels that carry a clear fluid called lymph. The lymph is mostly water—about 90% water—but that other 10% contains cellular waste, hormones, excess fluid, and lymphocytes. Lymphocytes are a type of white blood cell that produce antibodies and attack pathogens. The lymph nodes filter lymph fluid as it flows through them, trapping the unwanted substances and destroying them with lymphocytes.

The most important role of the lymphatic system is to absorb or transport large molecules, especially waste and debris which are too large to be collected by veins. The process of clearing the waste fluid from the tissues is known as lymph drainage.<sup>18</sup>

## Hormones

In Reflexology, hormones are triggered to help the body heal itself. Hormones help transmit the electrical signals within the nervous system. Endorphins are the “Rockstar” hormone that helps us overcome stress and pain, helps with recovery from injuries, and improves immunity.



When pain is recognized, the brain triggers the release of endorphins, which act as mood-control to diminish the perception of pain, acting similarly to drugs such as morphine and opiates. Once the feelings of pain are masked, continued secretion of endorphins leads to feeling euphoric and blissful, thus giving us the “hurt so good” feeling. Humor and laughter also help to create endorphins, that’s why laughter is good medicine! Other feel-good hormones are also released with touch and your own voice as you talk with your clients. These include oxytocin (the bonding hormone), serotonin (the gratitude hormone), and dopamine (the stay motivated hormone).<sup>19</sup>

## Psychological Power

And lastly, (but most importantly!) reflexology can greatly improve the whole body through the power of positivity! Our mind is one of the major contributors that convince our body to heal naturally. Reflexology is very effective in bringing positivity to our mind so that its impact on our psychological response is also positive. The much-required and very powerful placebo effect proves how positivity initiates natural healing. And of course, the most beneficial effect of reflexology is the reduction of stress and anxiety.

Reflexology opens the neural pathways, aiding in the free flow of neural activity which helps the body feel more relaxed. When the mind is calm, the emotions are at peace, and the body is relaxed, intense healing happens!

### All Together Now!

Seasoned reflexologists promote that all of these benefits work together to help heal the person as a whole.

To put together all of the ways that reflexology helps, a practitioner applies reflexology-specific pressure to an area of the foot—say, the little toe. The little toe is tender from crystallized buildup and stagnant toxins, so the pressure registers in the nerves and sends signals to the brain as pain (short-lived and well within pain limits!).



In this scenario, the brain immediately releases endorphins to mask the pain and triggers the immune system to try to fix the damage and restore the body to a pain-free state.

The immune system initiates inflammation—which is the body's protective response—and the little toe presents with redness, heat, and swelling. These reactions are created by the increased blood and fluid rushing to aid the site with helpful red blood cells carrying oxygen, nutrients, and lymphocytes. This increased fluid aids in circulation to flush out the harmful waste and initiate tissue repair.

As the circulation increases, the offensive debris is cleared out, the nerve endings are unblocked, and the bio-electrical nerve impulses can once again communicate clearly.

The endorphins calm the sensation of pain, the inflammation goes down and the toe goes into recovery, rebuilding new healthy tissue where the blockages once were.

The endorphins continue to bring “feel-good” sensations and the body is returned to a better-balanced version of itself. The person’s body is functioning better, so the qi is flowing more freely. The toe—and the corresponding areas of that zone—will be improved. For example, in this scenario of the little toe, it corresponds with the same side ear which could help issues like tinnitus.

The reflexology feels good and the body and mind become relaxed and happy. All of this together improves the body’s health as a whole—just from a little pressure on a toe!

To recap the different ways reflexology works:

- **Crystalline Deposits** – Reflexology breaks down the crystalline deposits that tend to build up in the feet, blocking nerve endings and the flow of energy.
- **Qi Energy** – Reflexology helps balance the flow of energy to promote natural healing.
- **Electrical Response** – The body is comprised of nerves that communicate through electrical impulses. Reflexology helps unblock the nerve pathways to promote proper nerve communication.
- **Counter-Irritation** – By creating irritation or mild inflammation in one location (the soles) with the goal of lessening discomfort or inflammation in another location (the organs), the immune system is jumpstarted to provide natural healing.
- **Lymph Drainage** – The lymphatic system is part of the immune system that removes toxins and excess fluids present in the body. With the help of reflexology, more toxins and excess fluids are removed from the body, which helps it heal naturally and maintain balance.

- **Hormones** – Reflexology triggers the release of hormones by the brain which help transmit electrical signals within the nervous system; endorphins being the “Rockstar”.
- **Psychological Response** – Reflexology relieves stress and anxiety to create positivity and emotional well-being, which affects the whole body for the better.

From a scientific examination at the cellular level to the transcendent spiritual well-being of the body, reflexology can help. In addition to all the ways reflexology works, it feels fabulous—and that is reason alone to give your clients this experience!



## Chapter 4: Reflexology Benefits for Life

### What Are Your Feet Telling You?

Think about all the stress your feet go through on a daily basis. Every now and then, they need some pampering, a fact that applies to you and your clients too. They are abusing this body part – their feet – every day. Running, walking, standing and jumping...our feet are responsible for doing it all!

But reflexology isn't just about pampering your clients; it's a non-invasive far-reaching treatment to improve overall health. All reflexologists are united on this core belief that reflexology is a great alternative method to heal the body naturally and that the body becomes imbalanced when fighting illness or under stress. Ultimately, these imbalances prevent our body from fighting



diseases effectively and combating stressors that worsen our health.

Reflexologists believe our overall health begins with our feet and travels upward.<sup>20</sup> The feet have a complex anatomy. In many ways, they can tell us what is going on with our bodies—and the feet can also be the remedy!

Imagine someone giving you a nice foot massage after a long tiring day. Even the thought of it sounds refreshing!

But this is not where it ends. Remember that reflexology is not a common foot massage.



## Manage Stress with Reflexology

The most significant and obvious benefit of reflexology is that it allows you to manage and alleviate the stress your clients are feeling right away. This therapy is very relaxing and helps your clients overcome anxiety and other issues that trigger stress.

People have very different ideas with respect to their definition of stress. Probably the most common is, “physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension”. Another popular definition of stress is, “a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize.” <sup>21</sup>

Stress is difficult to avoid. It is an integral part of modern life, affecting not only high-powered business executives but also young children, women, men and the elderly. <sup>22</sup>

Stress is a normal physical response to events when we feel threatened, upset or our equilibrium is offset in some way. The body’s automatic response is the stress response, also called the “fight or flight” reaction.

When there is a perceived threat, the body responds by releasing a flood of stress hormone, called adrenaline, into the blood. Adrenaline rouses the body for emergency action and causes blood pressure to rise, the heart to beat faster, senses to become sharper and, for a brief period, stamina and strength can increase.

These reactions are life preserving, but many people live at this heightened state of anxiety all the time and that can take a physical, chemical and psychological toll on a person that impinges on every aspect of their life.





Stress is the cause of 60% of all human illness and disease. Helping people manage stress can literally save lives!

Reflexology can clear out the buildup of stress, activate the reflexes to flood the system with calming hormones, and induce deep relaxation, thereby allowing the nervous system to restore normal function and the body to seek its own homeostasis.

Yes, your clients do not always have to depend on prescription medicines to alleviate stress, especially if you offer reflexology as a part of your services!

### **Improve Overall Blood Circulation with Reflexology**

The best part about reflexology is that once one benefit is achieved—think stress reduction—many more follow! After stress, improving the circulation

of blood throughout the human body is one of the most verified and well-known benefits that reflexology offers.

Blood circulation is critical to your body's overall health and functioning. Your heart is responsible for pumping blood through blood vessels throughout your body. Blood vessels are the body's highways that allow blood to flow quickly and efficiently from the heart to every region of the body and back again. Blood transports many substances including oxygen, nutrients and wastes to help maintain the body. As mentioned earlier, the lymphatic system is also part of the circulatory system that helps filter wastes and provides the delivery for the immune system.<sup>23</sup>

Symptoms of poor circulation include tingling, numbness, cramping, throbbing or stinging pains in the limbs. Poor circulation is also the most common cause of cold feet. Over time, reduced blood flow can cause nerve and tissue damage.

When your circulatory system and vital organs work in unison, you enjoy many great benefits including:

- Increased metabolism
- Stronger heart
- Lower blood pressure
- Regulated temperature
- Accelerated healing
- Prevention of varicose veins
- Better memory

But that's not all! The human skin improves dramatically from improved blood circulation because it's better able to remove toxins like bad bacteria and fight off infections. In addition, it looks and feels warmer and healthier too. Good blood circulation also helps improve brain functioning that keeps the mind focused and sharp!

## Pain Relief and Boosting the Power of Healing with Reflexology

Reflexologists believe that different health conditions and illnesses are caused by blockages in the energy channels or qi.<sup>24</sup> One of the main reasons that reflexology is so effective is because it clears the blockages and encourages energy to flow freely.

Reflexology is also known for pain reduction and speeding recovery and healing after an injury or surgery. The pressure applied to the reflexes representing different organs, sends signals to the nervous system for balancing, along with spurring the production of chemicals such as endorphins that reduce stress and pain. The combination of improved circulation and increased nerve activity, along with balanced functioning of the metabolism, means that wounds will be able to heal faster and cells will regrow more quickly. Improved metabolism also means more energy!

In order to investigate its pain- and stress-relieving benefits, researchers at the Whiteley Clinic studied patients who received reflexology before varicose vein surgery. Patients reported significantly shorter pain duration and lower intra-operative anxiety, compared to those given the same surgery without reflexology.<sup>25</sup>

Amazingly, a number of studies have also concluded that reflexology can ease the side effects from conventional treatments of different types of cancer and even help with the pains of pregnancy, including the ones that come post-delivery.<sup>26</sup>

As a treatment, reflexology is gentle, firm and very soothing. In general, people of any sex or age—the elderly, men, women, children, teenagers and even babies—can benefit from reflexology.

## Helping the Body Release Toxins Using Reflexology

Removing toxins—also known as detoxification—is another great health benefit which can be achieved by following reflexology treatment techniques.

The benefits that your clients can achieve after detoxification through reflexology are both physical and mental. The most noticeable are, of course, the physical ones because your clients will be able to feel the difference right away. Since the toxins in our body are stored in major organs, when our bodies are detoxified, these areas are cleaned up and repaired so the organs can function at their best.



After detoxification, the functionality of the stomach and liver are also improved. Ultimately, this protects the body from a number of health conditions and diseases that can arise in the body.<sup>27</sup>

After several reflexology sessions, when detoxification is achieved, your clients will naturally feel lighter and will experience more energy. Why? As detoxification clears away free radicals that cause cell damage, the body's immune system strengthens with time. The qi energy can flow more freely, and the body will feel better.

Additionally, there are mental benefits of reflexology tied to eliminating free radicals and toxins present in our bodies that can improve the efficiency of our brain function. Released hormones will better regulate mood and emotions to enhance the feel-good sensation.

In the same vein, reflexology can also assist with sleeping disorders. For patients experiencing insomnia, this condition can be extremely troublesome to manage, leading to a buildup of stress. Your clients might complain about poor sleep, problems with focusing and concentration and chronic fatigue, all indicators that their bodies are stressed and imbalanced. When your clients come to you with these complaints, you'll already know how to get rid of those toxins by offering them reflexology to restore the body to a rested, more relaxed and calmer state.<sup>28</sup>

When your clients continue with their reflexology therapy sessions, they will naturally begin to feel better both mentally and physically, which means a great experience for them and repeat business for you!

### **Reflexology and Pregnancy – What Benefits to Expect**

Referring to the previous reflexology benefits we have already discussed—reducing stress, alleviating depression, speeding up recovery time, healing and improving circulation, etc.—a pregnant mother can certainly appreciate all of these.

Before a pregnant client comes for a massage, however, she'll probably want to learn more about reflexology so that she feels comfortable with this method of care for her and her baby. Thus, it is very important that you understand how reflexology will help the expecting mother so you can educate her.

Generally, reflexology is safe during pregnancy, provided there are no existing complications and that you are aware your client is pregnant. However, a number of reflexologists do not recommend this therapy during the first trimester. According to the Association of Reflexologists (AOR), such restrictions are imposed, keeping in mind the fears of clients that reflexology may lead to a miscarriage, which are more common during the first trimester.<sup>29</sup>

Although no studies support this, stay on the safe side and avoid providing reflexology during a pregnant mom's first trimester. Reflexologists around the world are not ready to take the risks and future allegations should a miscarriage occur.

This was further clarified by Barbara Kunz and Kevin Kunz in their book *A Complete Guide to Foot Reflexology* that a miscarriage is a reaction of the body and depends on individual cases. It seems clear from this quote that miscarriages have nothing to do with reflexology:

Under no circumstances has reflexology ever been shown to have caused the body to do something that it does not want to do.<sup>30</sup>

### **In What Situations Should Expecting Mothers Avoid Reflexology Treatment?**

As discussed earlier, there are certain contradictions associated with this alternative treatment. Reflexology is more like an exercise. It should not be done all at once. A very gradual approach should be taken that falls in the comfort zone of the client. However, if certain conditions exist, reflexology for pregnant women should be avoided altogether. These situations include:

1. Pre-term labor: Any time before 37 weeks.
2. Placenta previa – If grade 2 or 3 after 32 weeks.
3. Hydramnios – If there is too much amniotic fluid around the baby after 32 weeks.

Additionally, pregnant women with other health ailments—preeclampsia, diabetes or deep vein thrombosis—should first seek medical assistance and advice before they start reflexology treatments. Simply put, special care should be taken with pregnant women. It's important to learn as much as you can about the individual pregnancy of a





woman to offer the right treatment based on her current health. All of this and much more comes with experience and expertise.

### Importance of Touch

Due to the growth of technology in our lives, human touch has become less common and is being replaced by machines that promise to make our lives much easier. People are becoming more robotic, as handshakes are more popular than hugs. They are busy on their phones, laptops and tablets connecting with people all around the world whereas they walk past people without even greeting them.

Humans are relying more on electric blankets to keep them cozy and warm rather than snuggling up next to their loved ones. In short, overall healing is taking place through the use of electricity and not the exchange of the natural energies produced by humans.

Unfortunately, we are already aware through sufficient evidence that over-exposure to electricity is dangerous, as it dramatically increases one's risk of developing cancer and other life-threatening diseases. Even living in areas where there are high voltage pylons is said to harm the immune system.

Even physiotherapists have switched to machines and ignore the beautiful power of touch. Doctors are relying more on machines for diagnosis instead of using their hands to scan the body to find out what it's trying to tell them.

A study that measured human touch at a London orphanage where the mortality rate of babies was very high shows why human touch is so vital. In the orphanage there were very few caregivers and many, many children. So, in the main study group, people were paid to visit and spend time touching the babies, lifting them up and playing with them daily, compared to a control group of babies who also had good food, safe housing, proper hygiene, and adequate medical care, but weren't touched as much. As a result, the babies' health in the main group thrived, whereas the babies in the control group continued to have high mortality rates.<sup>31</sup> The need for touch is not just for babies but extends throughout the life span.



Touch is necessary for healthy human development. Human beings are designed to need other human beings! Touch has helped us gain a greater sense of self and proved to be one of the best ways we can feel completely acknowledged. Even as a child, the way we start to understand and perceive the world around us is mainly based on touch. It is one of the most vibrant and earliest development senses that we learn while in the womb and probably the last sense that leaves us when we take our last breath.

Reflexologists understand the importance of touch therapy, and the power it has to be effective in the art of healing. While you may use all of this information for self-application, learning about the magic of touch is information that you can share with your clients. Of course, if you are already serving them as a massage therapist, you may already be offering various touch therapies. Gaining knowledge on this subject and then sharing it with others is a great way to earn more clients.



## Importance of Being Listened To

Our bodies speak, especially to people who are trained and ready to listen to them. But before you can listen to your client's body with your hands, you must first listen to their mouth with your ears.

Just like the power of touch, the power of conversation also plays an important role in healing. A skilled therapist depends on conversations with their clients to get relevant history and understand their actual problems. Moreover, the treatment is based on the person's feelings and overall well-being, not just a medical diagnosis or a specific symptom.



Some clients could have conditions or be on medications that could interfere with reflexology treatments or cause side effects. Not knowing this could result in severe danger to the client (and a complicated legal issue for you!).

It's important to find out if he/she is under any treatment or taking any medications; including if or when dosages have changed or why a drug was stopped. Canceling out their medication (during the process of removing toxins from the body) or making them feel worse than before reflexology treatment would be detrimental to your client--and then to your business!

All of this information is important to gather before reflexology treatments are offered to a client. Once that conversation successfully helps you understand the actual problem and you find the right solution through the best alternative treatment method, it is the body's turn to speak to you.

The next communication takes place between the reflexologist and the reflexes present on the foot that represent different internal organs.

For instance, if a client has kidney problems, the reflexologist will apply certain pressure and follow a certain pattern of movements on the specific reflex on the foot that represents the kidneys. The reflexologist will be able to feel the problems on the foot. This is an important skill and it can be learned when you take a professional hands-on course. For now, it is important to understand the communication that takes place between the reflexologist and the client plays a major role on how easily the problem is detected and how to treat it.

### Time to Give Your Clients a Treat

Reflexology is nothing less than a treat for your clients! A number of people opt for reflexology only to pamper themselves, to feel calmer and relax. Not all of your clients will come with a purpose or a medical reason.



In fact, a number of clients may only approach you for a regular massage for relaxation, but now you can tell them about the benefits of reflexology and offer them an alternative massage that benefits them in many more ways, apart from helping them relax.

If your clients are coming to you for self-treatment, nothing could be better than offering them reflexology therapy. Offer the power of touch and the magic of treating inside the body without using any medicines or invasive surgical procedures.

It is important that you are aware of all the benefits so that you are able to convey them to your clients. Help your clients to select the best treatment for themselves and offer them reflexology as an option instead of just regular massages.

## Chapter 5: Reflexology and Acupressure

### Two Different Concepts and Lots of Misconceptions

The healing arts of both reflexology and acupressure are often either incorrectly represented or misunderstood. Since the benefits are quite similar, often people believe both therapies are the same.

This chapter will cover facts that will help you know the differences between these concepts very clearly. The facts mentioned here will also help you understand why reflexology stands out as an alternative treatment to massage therapy.

You may be inclined to skip this chapter, but I encourage you to read on in order to not only learn about these two methods of treatment, but to be able to explain the differences to your clients. They may be the very people who misunderstand these concepts and therefore are missing out on the benefits of reflexology.

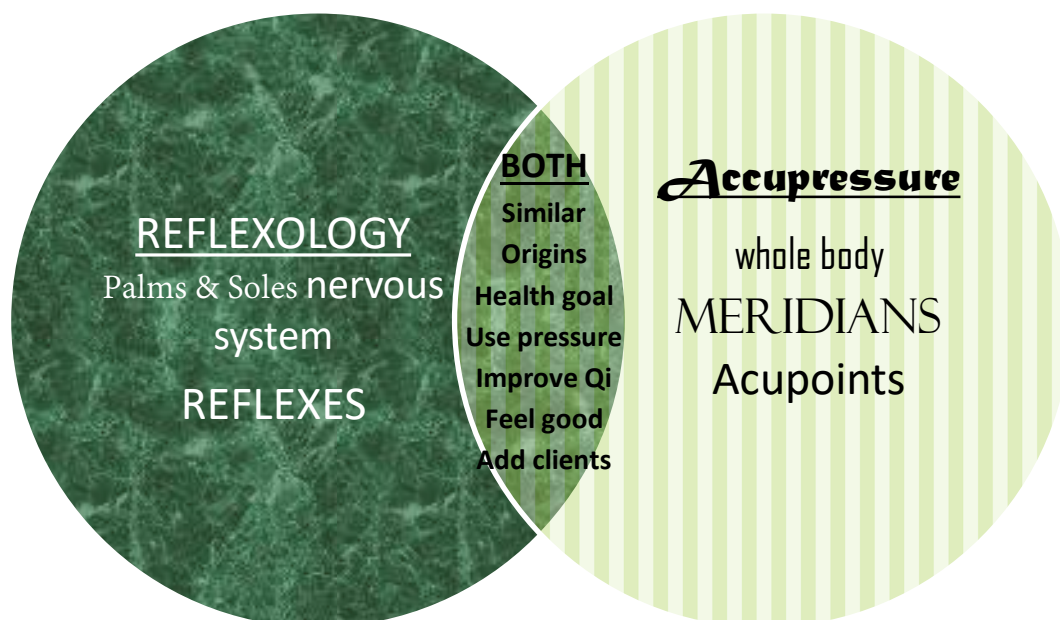
### Myth: Acupressure and Reflexology are the Same Thing

As mentioned earlier in this class, the way we practice reflexology today was introduced and developed by Eunice Ingham in the 1930s. She was a physical therapist who worked closely with the system of zone therapy, a concept that was initially developed by Dr. William FitzGerald. He found that applying pressure to reflex zone points in the feet and hands was not only great for relieving symptoms but also worked wonders in correcting the underlying cause of specific health problems. Ingham's additional research expanded on the initial concept and came to be known as the Ingham Method. Her research teaches to use deep pressure patterns instead of constant and penetrating pressure on the reflex points of the feet. While the Ingham Method is the one most practiced today, there are a number of other reflexology methods used as alternative massage therapies. However, the roots of many of them originate from the same basic method introduced by Ingham.

One well-known alternative to the basic Ingham Method—the Universal Method—was developed by Chris Stormer during the 1980s in South Africa. This method includes working on the same zones that were introduced by Dr. FitzGerald, but the techniques are much gentler. While carrying out the massage, less force is applied, and softer feel is the entire focus of the procedure.<sup>32</sup>

Often, the way you are taught to practice reflexology falls somewhere in between these two philosophies. Typically, practitioners focus on using the right amount of pressure that makes the body more comfortable while applying the pressure on the reflex points on the feet and hands. The amount of pressure and how it is applied determines the flow of energy released in the body and how it reaches the designated organs represented by the reflex points.

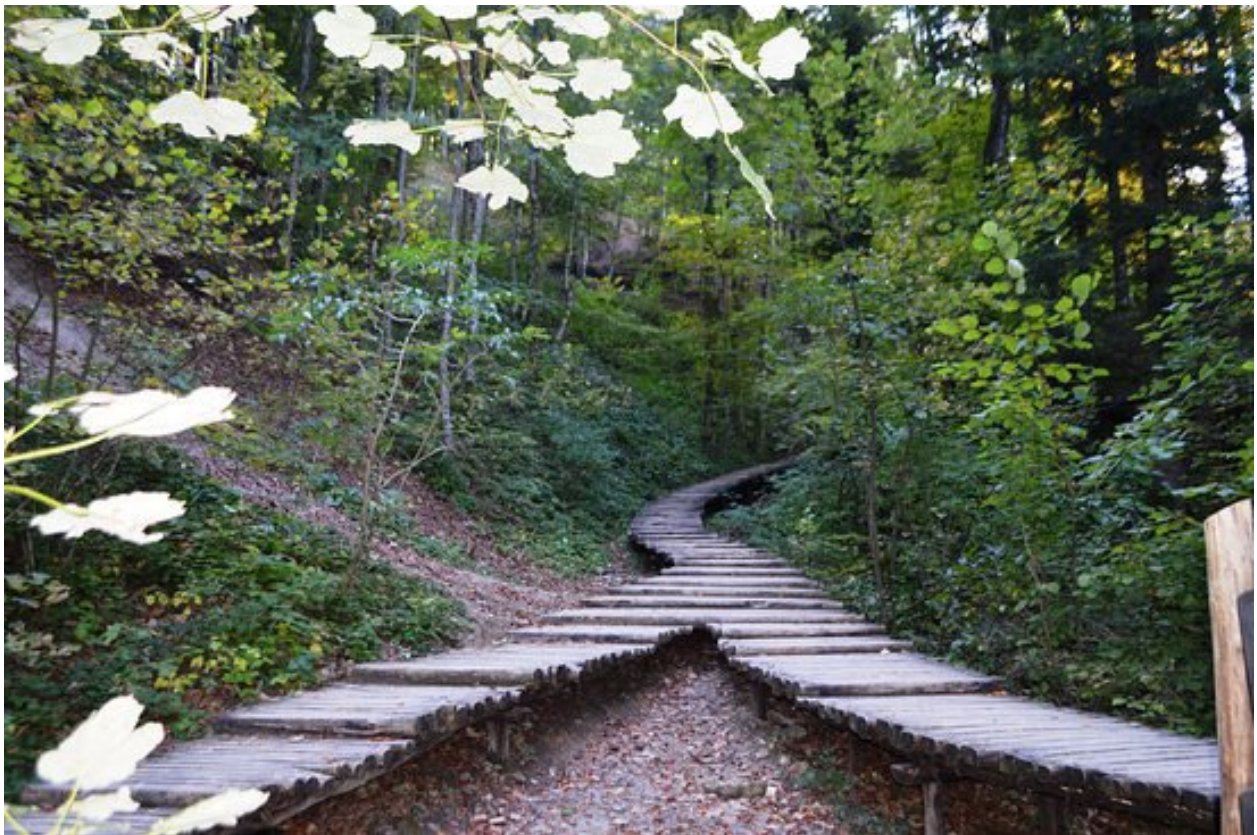
While both reflexology and acupressure have an impact on the flow of qi, the mechanisms as well as the procedures used are very different. With acupressure, you are working with the flow of qi directly in the meridian channels (energy centers). Conversely, reflexology stimulates the flow of qi through the nervous system sending healing messages to all parts of the body via neurological pathways.





You can also think about reflexology like a circulatory system. In a state of excitement, the body naturally sends signals throughout our bodies to dilate blood vessels and increase pulse rates. Exercise and other methods of stimulation also cause this type of blood flow response, but reflexology allows us to initiate this increased circulation “mechanically” using massage.

Whether you are using one system to achieve your goal or both, it is just a matter of what you are comfortable with. No two clients respond to the same treatment the very same way. So, if acupressure is working for you, it does not really mean reflexology will give you the same level of results, and vice versa.



Also, there’s nothing wrong in scheduling alternating sessions to compare your client’s response. Reflexology and acupressure are like two paths that have the same destination of holistic health. Some people claim the benefits they receive are compounded by using both techniques together because the healing from stimulation is coming from two different directions.

The more methods you offer your clients to achieve their health goals, the more your growth as a professional will be enhanced and recognized by the marketplace.

### **Myth: Acupressure Works with Needles**

The myths and misconceptions surrounding acupressure do not only involve confusing it with reflexology, but other holistic alternatives, too. For instance, some people believe that acupressure involves working with needles.

In this instance, acupressure is confused with acupuncture, a treatment that involves healing through inserting needles. Unlike acupuncture, acupressure involves no sharp instruments or needles at all.

Although both acupressure and acupuncture are guided by the principles set by Chinese medicine and other alternate treatment therapies, generally, all you need to do for acupressure is have a skilled pair of hands that can apply the right amount of pressure to the appropriate location. Both involve using acupoints to promote alterations in meridians and adopt a holistic approach to health benefits and natural healing that includes body, mind, spirit and emotions.

While these methods all have the same end goal of a healthier, more balanced client, there is nothing similar between acupuncture and reflexology!



### **Myth: The Healing Arts are Associated with Spiritual Stuff**

Unfortunately, acupressure and reflexology are often associated in the minds of some with “black magic” and “spiritual stuff”. Sadly, this misperception causes many people to forfeit the extraordinary benefits of these now long-accepted treatments.

The basic tenet of the two arts of healing—especially reflexology—is the power and value of good energy and positive thoughts. These arts of healing

have been used by people from countless backgrounds, religions and beliefs because the concept of positive energy has come to be accepted by almost everyone.

However, there are still some people who perceive this concept as quite foreign. Generally, people are afraid of things they don't understand, especially if those things claim to be beneficial in any way. For those who need visible evidence, unfortunately science still lacks the equipment that can measure vital force directly (measurements through the skin are indirect measurements due to conductivity, not direct measurements of an energy output). As is sometimes the case, it takes time for science to catch up with beliefs, so it may be a while before the scientific community gives the benefits of reflexology, acupressure, acupuncture and other alternative treatments their deserved credit.

Keeping all these reasons in mind, it is quite clear why such healing arts are often misunderstood and misjudged. However, with more massage therapists learning about these not-so-new methods, educating their clients and making them a part of their regular services, a growing number of people are becoming aware of what reflexology and similar treatments have to offer.

Trends are already shifting, and more people are accepting and receiving alternative treatments and massage therapies than ever before. Medical research on these concepts continues and the benefits of energy modalities and how stimulation has an effect on the flow of qi and our overall health is also becoming widely accepted.

Gaining more knowledge on this subject is definitely a plus for you as a massage therapist. For new clients who have these misconceptions, you now can give them detailed information on what this alternate treatment method is all about, how it originated and how it can benefit them.

The more informed you are, the more comfortable you'll be explaining these things to your clients. Therefore, it is very important that you gain as much information as you can on the subject.

## Myth: Both Techniques are Painful

Some people can be scared of healing art therapies like reflexology out of a mistaken belief they are painful.



This is one of the most common myths associated with both reflexology and acupressure. Here's the good news: They're **NOT** painful! In fact, these therapies—especially reflexology—can help you get rid of pain. It is a healing method, which not only helps alleviate pain but also fixes the core reasons that created the symptoms.

As with any great massage, stretch or exercise, initially there may be some discomfort or soreness. As the therapist, this should be framed by you as the *good pain* which is often necessary to get the blockage to flow.

However, your client must never experience real pain. This is where your role as an expert massage therapist comes in. If you learn about reflexology





techniques and procedures from a professional, there is no reason for your client to complain about any lasting pain or discomfort as a result of the therapy.

In certain cases when your client may have failed to answer your initial health questions properly or fully, certain injuries and/or illnesses your client may have could cause them to feel a little pain during the session. Make sure to tell your clients before you begin the treatment to inform you immediately if they experience any significant pain and/or if that pain extends beyond an appropriate time after the session is over. Should this problem occur, stop the session immediately and discuss what the client is feeling. Any unexpected pains should be a wakeup call for you to ask more questions.

This will help you decide whether or not you should go on with the procedure. If you determine, the session should stop, it's important to explain to your client why you're stopping or adjusting the treatment.

### **Myth: Both Reflexology and Acupressure are Fancy Names for Regular Massages**

While reflexology and acupressure are forms of massage, both employ specific and detailed approaches that make them different from regular massages, as well as from each other. These detailed approaches are based not only on the techniques but scientific foundations involving basic physiology and roots of pain.

However, the main purpose of having these massages in the first place could be the same... following a holistic approach to achieving wellness by interacting with body, mind and soul.

On the whole, reflexology and acupressure are far more detailed, refined and complex practices compared to the average massage; especially in reference to the flow of energy (the flow of qi) as well as balancing and assessing the reflex or meridian pathways.

## **Myth: The Physical Connection for Massage is created to “Transfer” Energy between Persons**

While we have already discussed the significance of body touch earlier in this class, the transfer of energy between the practitioner and the client is not what reflexology or acupressure is all about.

In fact, there’s a bigger myth to bust here. Many people believe that one person’s energy can be used to heal another person. As for reflexology and acupressure this is not the premise.

No exchange of energy takes place between the client and therapist. Rather, it is the belief that the client has everything he/she requires for harmonizing or balancing the flow of energy within themselves already. Reflexology and acupressure are simply methods to realign any misaligned energy so that balance can be achieved once again.

## **Differentiating Reflexology from Acupressure**

In addition to busting the myths between these two massaging concepts, here are more facts that will help you differentiate between reflexology and acupressure.

Acupressure is mostly a matter of working with energy centers—also referred to as meridians—of the body. There are several meridians present in our system that the massage therapist accesses. Those meridians echoed in the feet is where foot reflexology steps in. Read on to learn more.

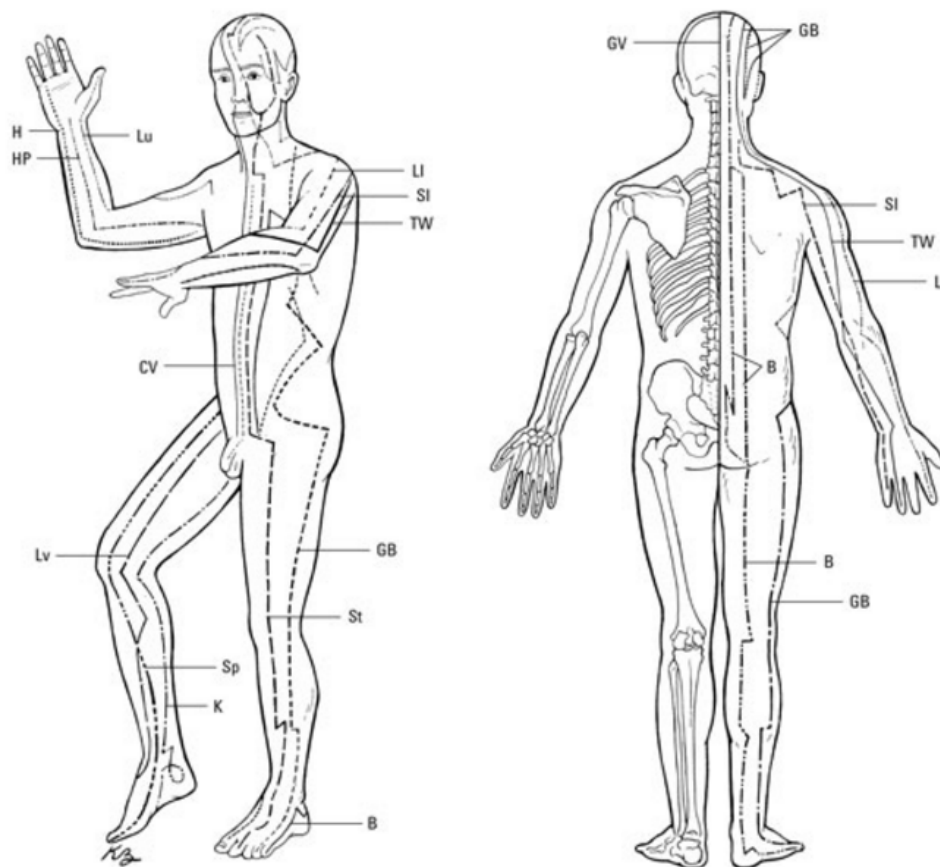
## **Acupressure Meridians**

The meridians present in our body are more like pathways. This is what channels energy throughout our body. These meridians have both the yin and yang components, depending on the direction the energy flows.

Below is a table that will help you identify the meridians, their abbreviations and complements.<sup>33</sup>

| <b>Yin Partner</b> | <b>Abbreviation</b> | <b>Yang Partner</b> | <b>Abbreviation</b> |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Lung               | Lu                  | Large Intestines    | LI                  |
| Spleen             | Sp                  | Stomach             | St                  |
| Heart              | H                   | Small Intestine     | SI                  |
| Kidney             | K                   | Bladder             | B                   |
| Heart Protector    | HP                  | Triple Warmer       | TW                  |
| Liver              | LV                  | Gall Bladder        | GB                  |
| Conception Vessel  | CV                  | Governing Vessel    | GV                  |

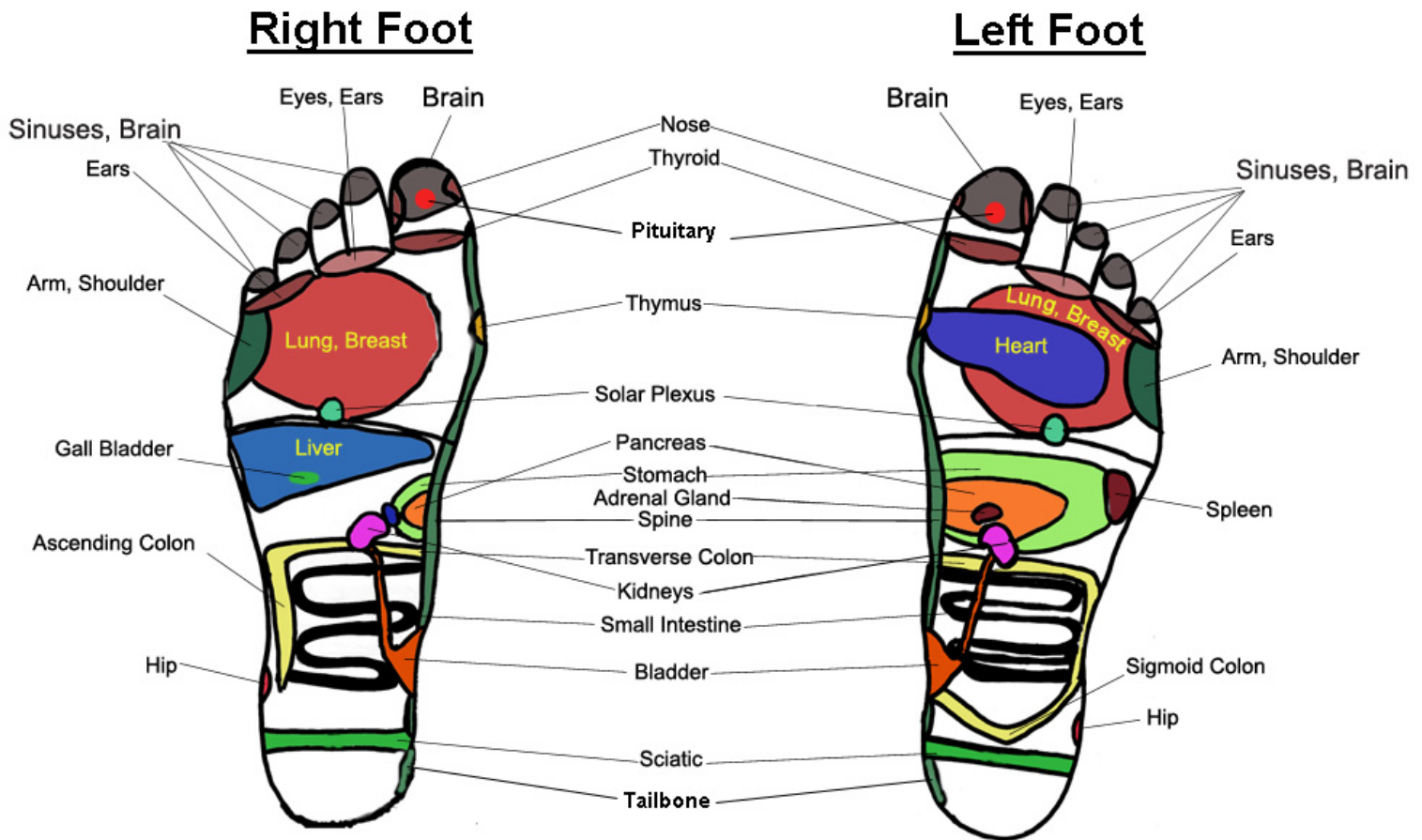
The following figure illustrates the location of the above-mentioned meridians.



## Foot Reflexology Map

Your feet contain both reflexology and acupressure points. The following are some illustrations showing both feet and the sites for reflexology.

It is important to note that the feet are not exactly the same when it comes to reflexology, although a number of characteristics are common.



Comparing the locations of the bodily pathways of acupressure and the reflexology map of the feet shows how the two concepts of acupressure and reflexology are totally different from each other. Unlike the acupressure chart, the Foot Reflexology Map shows how the reflexes are aligned from top to bottom, much the same as the body. The reflexes affecting the head are at the top in the toes, the reflexes affecting the organs are in the middle, and the reflexes of the Sciatic nerve and tailbone are near the heel.

## Chapter 6: What Conditions Can Benefit from Reflexology

Let's learn more about how you can offer maximum benefits to your clients.

It's likely that the main reason for you taking this class is to learn more about reflexology so you can offer these services to your clients. Part of that knowledge is the importance of learning about the different types of conditions that can be treated with reflexology.

### Common Ailments and How Reflexology Can Help

We have already learned about the amazing benefits of reflexology that contribute to our overall well-being and healing. What follows provides specific information about common ailments that can be treated successfully with reflexology. Remember though, that when we tell you reflexology is beneficial in treating various health conditions, this does not mean you can tell your clients to discontinue any existing medical treatments or discourage them from seeing a doctor.

### Asthma, Sore Throat, Influenza and Common Cold

Asthma is a condition that inflames and narrows the airways making breathing more difficult. An important goal for asthmatics is to improve circulation to get much-needed oxygen to the body.

Since a majority of asthma attacks are caused by stressful situations, reflexology plays a role in easing the anxiety your clients are feeling while also helping their circulation.

What makes reflexology ideal for asthmatics? For asthma clients, it's far less invasive compared to medical treatments or prescribed drugs. Moreover, the healthy environment reflexology creates within the body is great for preventing and relieving asthma symptoms.

We'll say it again though, reflexology works best *with* medical care, so even though reflexology can offer asthma relief, asthmatics should continue medical care and carry their inhaler in case of an asthma attack.

Next comes sore throats. Undoubtedly, a sore throat is one of the most uncomfortable symptoms of a cold or allergy. Reflexology can definitely relieve your clients' symptoms by reducing the duration of their colds, improving their overall immunity and balancing their entire system.

There are two reflex points to relieve a sore throat naturally using the reflexology technique. The throat point is located right on the center of the big toe and the next toe at the tip of the webbing. Using the index finger knuckle to massage this area with a pattern of digging and twisting motions can break down crystallized deposits and trigger the reflexes that correspond to the tonsils and throat to help treat sore throats successfully.

In a study done by the Wisconsin School of Medicine, reflexology massage was found to be “as effective as nasal irrigation for alleviation of chronic sinusitis.”<sup>34</sup>

Using these same techniques and a few other motions on the areas representing the nose, nasal cavities, lungs, and sinuses can help clear away mucus and relax the chest to help treat the common cold and even influenza. With reflexology, the symptoms can be alleviated, and the duration of the virus vastly shortened.





## Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Heartburn, Constipation, Hiatal Hernia, Toothache, Hiccups

Yes, all of these conditions can also be greatly improved with reflexology!

The real objective: Speed up healing by introducing reflexology as a complementary alternative treatment method.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), also known as spastic colon, is an over sensitive bowel that is not a disease but rather a collection of symptoms. IBS is a functional disorder which harms the digestive system and causes discomfort, abdominal pain, bloating, gas, cramping, diarrhea and constipation.<sup>35</sup>

Since it is not a disease, there is no cure available for IBS. However, it is possible to control the symptoms. Medicines and alternative therapy such as reflexology have been used successfully to treat IBS symptoms. Even better, reflexology can also help the digestive system regulate malfunctions caused by other underlying organs.

You can also massage some reflex points to get rid of heartburn. Heartburn



happens to most people at a certain point in their lives, especially after eating a greasy hamburger, French fries and those nachos that can be just too irresistible. Heartburn happens when some of the stomach contents are forced back up the esophagus. This is where the burning begins.

If your client experiences heartburn regularly, it is surely going to cause discomfort and

potentially worse issues. Trying some reflexology trigger points can help ease this condition. The challenge is to identify the reflex representing the



stomach, pancreas, gallbladder and intestines, then massage that area following the techniques to ease heartburn. The duration of the massage will vary, according to the individual condition of your client.

If you learn the reflexology relief techniques for constipation, it can prove to be a life saver for your clients too. Constipation is the diminished movement of the bowels. It may occur without any warning signs and can become a rather painful condition.

As the bowel contents collect, the body fills with toxins and the immune system is severely compromised, making your clients much more likely to succumb to sickness. A reflexologist can detect imbalances in the reflexes, freeing congestion, thus stimulating the digestive system to perform its functions effectively and properly. Regular removal of wastes and toxins improves nutrient absorption, circulatory functions and releases tension and stress in the central nervous system. This promotes balance and harmony in the body.

It is important to remember that reflexology is not a replacement for medical treatment. Again, it's a complementary alternative treatment to relieve the symptoms and pain associated with constipation.

A hiatal hernia is more common than you think and often affects people over age 50. A hiatal hernia occurs when the upper part of the stomach pushes up into the chest cavity. Often, a hiatal hernia isn't really treated unless it causes troublesome symptoms such as pain, heartburn, belching, hiccups, nausea, or vomiting. Relief from symptoms can be achieved from conventional methods of treatment (surgery and medication). Nevertheless, certified practitioners believe reflexology also relieves the painful symptoms.

Encouraging your clients to assess their hiatal hernia symptoms via self-diagnosis isn't a good idea and they shouldn't be completely relying on reflexology for proper treatment. Again, it is best that a proper diagnosis is carried out along with medical treatment. Reflexology can be the complimentary treatment that helps ease symptoms and speeds up recovery.

Reflexologists believe that strong emotions, anxiety and stress can impair the normal regulation of the autonomic nervous system, causing an adverse effect on those bowel functions normally carried out automatically. Reflexology aims to relax retained tension in the body's tissues and organs, and balance metabolism in those key organs involved in digestion, namely the stomach, liver, gall bladder, pancreas, small intestine and colon. -The IBS Network

When you experience a toothache, the first thing that comes to your mind is visiting the dentist immediately. Toothaches can be extremely painful and uncomfortable in the moment. But what if a toothache occurs at a time when visiting the dentist is difficult? You can always turn to reflexology for some help to minimize the pain. Reflexology should not be taken as a replacement for proper dental care but as an alternative therapy that can briefly ease pain.

For toothaches, reflexology techniques are applied to the hand, as this is where the reflexes or zones representing the mouth and/or teeth are located. The points are manipulated using the pressure applying techniques.

Hiccups can be annoying and very uncomfortable. They occur when the diaphragm abruptly contracts instead of undulating during normal breathing. Air floods the lungs and the epiglottis gets stuck. This traps the air inside causing the "hic" sound.

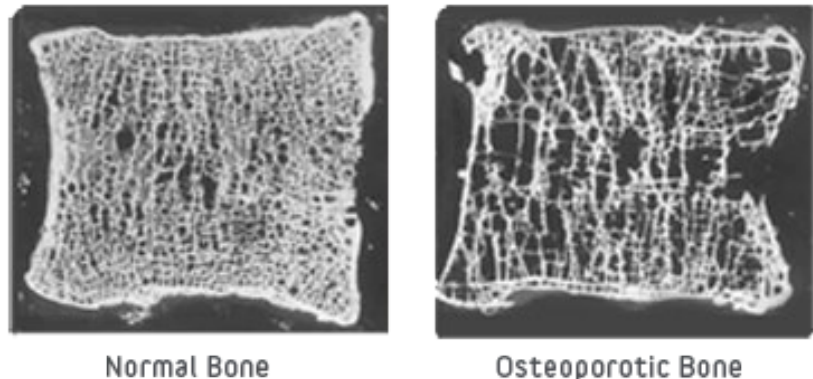
Some people say drinking water stops hiccups, while others believe that a moment of distraction will help you find relief. However, when nothing works, reflexology may help.

Locate the chest area on the feet through the reflexes and use the massage technique to help yourself get rid of hiccups. Also, it's important to remember hiccups that continue for the long-term may indicate a more serious medical issue and should be treated by a physician.

## Osteoporosis, Osteoarthritis, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Frozen Shoulder

Clients can try reflexology to relieve the pain and related symptoms of osteoporosis. Increased blood flow in the body can be very effective in better circulation of the necessary hormones to keep osteoporosis in check and helps relieve pain and stress.

Figure 1: Bone Comparison\*



\* permission to use image granted by Turner Biomechanics Laboratory.

Ideally, clients can get a good idea from the first few treatments if reflexology is relieving osteoporosis-related pain and symptoms. That would be the perfect way to decide whether you want to

suggest your client goes forward with it, or to propose a better alternative treatment therapy. The same applies for osteoarthritis, except in cases where the feet and ankles are affected.

Every reflexologist should be aware of carpal tunnel syndrome mainly because it's a very common condition. Carpal tunnel is a weakness, tingling or pain in the hand and forearm caused by pressure on a nerve in the wrist.

Hand reflexology techniques will help clients ease the symptoms and pain associated with carpal tunnel syndrome by jumpstarting the brain to send endorphins and calm the median nerve's inflammation. Reflexology can really be effective for this condition since the median nerve, which is compressed, is located right in the hand. You will not be treating the cause, just the symptoms, as the cause is generally related to other conditions such as diabetes and/or repetitive overuse.

It is important to remember stress comes along with illness. Providing hand reflexology offers a wonderful way to relieve carpal tunnel symptoms as well as stress.

When it comes to frozen shoulder symptoms, reflexology methods are non-invasive and very effective in relieving clients' discomfort. It is possible to ease shoulder pain and treat symptoms associated with frozen shoulder using the basic reflexology massage therapy. Just locate the shoulder on your foot or hand map and apply gentle pressure to massage the area to relieve pain and symptoms.

### Acne, Dermatitis, Psoriasis

Mentioning acne in a reflexology massage course might seem odd, but it can be reduced through applying pressure on the hands and feet to balance out energy in the body.

Acne is a skin condition that is generally triggered by an imbalance of hormones created in the endocrine system. Reflex pressure helps in targeting hormonal imbalances, bringing them back to their optimal levels. Reflexologists apply pressure on the kidneys, liver and endocrine system after locating the proper pressure points on the hands and feet. Applying pressure for a gentle massage on these areas clears out excess sebum (oil) from the pores of the skin.

A few minutes of massage can help you address the imbalances in the endocrine gland and to fix the acne issue. Additionally, reflexology increases the circulation of oxygen and blood flow, helping the body get rid of waste material, which is great for fresher, healthier skin.

The results may vary depending on the type of acne that people have. Some may also need attention from a professional dermatologist and should not be treated with reflexology alone. However, you can offer the reflexology treatment to speed up the healing process and help your clients enjoy acne-free skin—without even touching the affected areas!

Another skin issue which responds well to reflexology is dermatitis (the inflammation of the skin). Our skin is very sensitive and susceptible to external influences such as household cleaners and other products containing harsh chemicals. Provided that the dermatitis isn't on the feet, techniques like those outlined to treat acne can also be employed to treat this issue, as well as many more skin disorders including psoriasis, eczema, ringworms, shingles, seborrhea and erythema.<sup>36</sup>

You would be surprised how many people bring their skin issues to reflexologists. By working on the feet and applying pressure to the appropriate reflexes, one can gently ease skin symptoms and pain (if any) so that your client can, once again, enjoy healthy skin. Once you start offering your services as a professional reflexologist more clients may come to you with their skin issues.

It is important to do an assessment to determine if whether you can really help a client with his/her condition. If you find that the problem is extreme or in a state where reflexology isn't able to treat or fix it, don't hesitate to refer the client to a professional dermatologist.

All in all, reflexology is great for keeping skin in its best shape by helping to stimulate and improve the function of the organs.

### **Epilepsy, Meniere's Disease, Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis**

It is very common for people with epilepsy to try various alternative therapies and massages if they feel that the treatments they have been relying on are not working well and are not adequately managing their seizures. Alternative therapies, used along with primary medical treatments, mitigate side effects of this disease and speed up the recovery process at the same time.

Some people who have turned to reflexology for treating epilepsy have shown great results. Not only are they able to manage their condition better, it is easier for their body to respond to the initial treatment because the body is in a much more relaxed state. Also, half of the work is done when the circulation of blood and oxygen improves throughout the body. Improved

circulation supports the body in regenerating and healing itself naturally and works in line with the central nervous system to create the right balance within the body.

For those who don't know, Meniere's disease is a condition of the inner ear characterized by sudden dizziness, impaired balance, tinnitus and hearing loss. For most, it is a ringing, buzzing or roaring sound in the ears combined with dizziness and ear pressure which can be really frustrating.

Since there is no cure for the disease yet, the treatments used are aimed at cutting down the symptoms as much as possible, especially in the case of tinnitus.

By working on the neck, ear and cervical points on the feet and hands as well as the points on the sides and bottom of the toes, it is possible to control and relieve tinnitus symptoms.

Reflexology has proven to be very beneficial for Parkinson's patients, as the technique triggers a lymph drain that is effective for all the endocrine glands. For some people, reflexology can be the ultimate alternative treatment that could stop their shaking.<sup>37</sup>

Not only has reflexology helped Parkinson's patients with their shaking, it's been instrumental in fighting the depression and anxiety that comes with the disease. Many people who have used reflexology to treat Parkinson's have endorsed the amazing benefits and wonderful things it can do. This is definitely something worth introducing to clients diagnosed with Parkinson's.

Before we jump into how reflexology holds great benefits for people diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS), it's important to understand what the disease really means. MS is a disease associated with the central nervous system that disrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and body.<sup>38</sup> MS is a progressive condition which leads to scattered patches of myelin (nerve padding) in the brain and may lead to the destruction of the spinal cord.

The symptoms may range from tingling and numbness to incontinence and paralysis. Also, because emotional repression and stress are two main factors that can make multiple sclerosis worse, reflexology can be an indirect but effective way to alleviate such tensions.



### **Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Headaches, Insomnia, Exhaustion, Migraine**

As mentioned earlier, it is important to remember that reflexology itself is not a treatment to alleviate particular diseases, infections or illnesses but is instead a complementary alternative technique that relieves tension and stress that has built up in the body and is causing a disease to worsen.

Chronic fatigue syndrome cannot be directly treated with the help of reflexology techniques, but it can certainly help clients to give them more energy and to be less stressed, which will improve their overall level of



health. For clients diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome, reflexology offers a natural pathway for putting them back on the road to better healing.

As far as regular headaches and migraines are concerned, reflexology provides amazing results. Both ailments are associated with factors which eventually result in tension. Tension may cause stomach disorders and even blocked sinuses.

Other reasons for getting headaches or migraines might be an infection or related problem caused by the flu or a cold. An alternative treatment using massage can help alleviate these symptoms easily.

Using reflexology is the best way to release blocked energy in the body and encourage the organs corresponding with the reflexes to begin the natural healing process and function at their best.

A number of clients may come to you complaining about insomnia. People who don't remember what sleeping calmly feels like often prefer natural methods to get proper rest rather than relying on drugs.

The good news: Reflexology offers a natural and pleasant way to achieve the required relaxation and balance for healthy and satisfying sleep.

Reflexology not only involves a great massage, it can help clear away the turmoil and stress of daily life, so your clients can achieve restful and healthy sleep. Often, it is



working with the reflexes on the toes representing the brain that achieves your client's ultimate goal of promoting a relaxed state making it easier to sleep and unwind completely.

People won't experience reflexology benefits the same way. The results associated with the treatment of reflexology vary from person to person, but most people experience an increased sense of stress relief and well-being after receiving a treatment. As a reminder, reflexology may not be the best solution in every case. That's why it is critical to be aware of the medical history of your client prior to a reflexology treatment. Find out if they are already seeing a doctor for a particular ailment and what medications they may be taking before using reflexology so you can be assured the treatment is appropriate.

### Specialized Reflexology

If you thought the previously mentioned list of diseases that can be treated with reflexology was complete, think again. Review the following list of specialized reflexology treatments and their benefits and you'll probably be surprised what other conditions reflexology can treat.

### Stress, Depression, Anxiety Disorder

This isn't the first time we've mentioned the benefits of reflexology associated with stress, depression and anxiety disorder. In fact, these are the main underlying causes behind most diseases. After receiving reflexology, clients



experience lasting relief from this worrisome trifecta because once these are treated, the symptoms are controlled automatically.

Once your clients experience successful results for such conditions, they will be more receptive to get treatment for other conditions too.

## For Women: Fibroids, Endometriosis, Premenstrual Syndrome, Menopause, Lumps, Breast Pain, Painful or Heavy Periods, Thrush and Candida

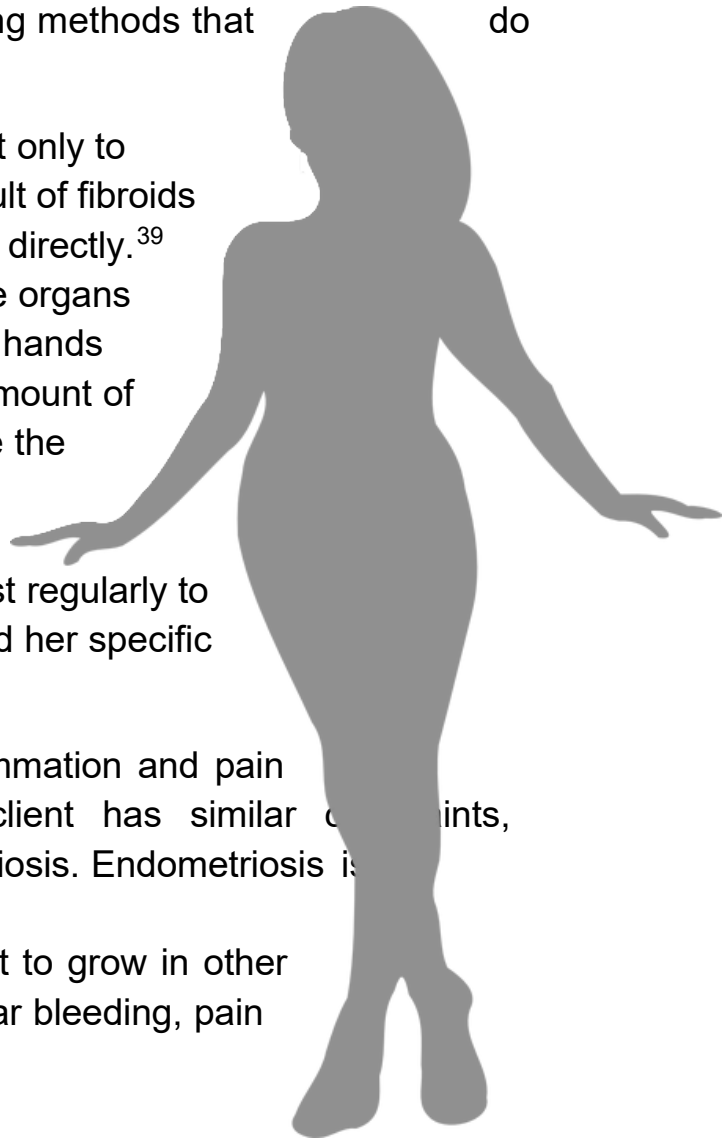
Your female clients can come with a list of health conditions that are specific to their gender. Let's check out each of these separately and learn how reflexology can help with these issues.

Fibroids are tumors that grow in a woman's reproductive system and are mostly benign. In most cases, doctors suggest removing them surgically. Because there are risks associated with the surgical removal of these tumors, for women who want to avoid going under the knife, it is very common for them to seek out natural healing methods that do not involve surgical procedures.

Reflexology can help your female clients not only to alleviate the painful cycle that is often a result of fibroids in the uterus but can also treat the condition directly.<sup>39</sup>

The reflexologist addresses the reproductive organs within the body by using the reflexes on the hands and feet for natural healing. With the right amount of regular massages, reflexology may increase the chances of shrinking the fibroids altogether. However, it is important to suggest that your client visit her gynecologist regularly to find out how much reflexology has benefitted her specific condition.

A number of women complain about inflammation and pain during their menstrual period. If your client has similar complaints, she may be suffering from endometriosis. Endometriosis is a female health disorder that occurs when cells present in the lining of the uterus start to grow in other areas of the body, which can lead to irregular bleeding, pain and, even, infertility.



Reflexology has proven to be beneficial for women diagnosed with endometriosis for a number of reasons. Reflexology stimulates the lymphatic system and the release of the natural, beneficial hormones known as endorphins. However, it is important to recommend that your client get a proper diagnosis first before trying reflexology treatments to ease her pain and symptoms.

Most of us are aware of what premenstrual syndrome (PMS) is all about. Simply, it is a set of mental, physical and behavioral symptoms with varying severity that causes disorders in individuals and in social relationships as well. This syndrome naturally occurs after ovulation.

Women often find the effects of this syndrome to be highly dominating, which has an impact on their own lives as well as the people around them. Reflexology is a non-invasive, non-drug method that can have a beneficial impact on treating the symptoms of premenstrual syndrome and even preventing them.

Unfortunately, the intensity of premenstrual syndrome can also increase due to pain caused before or during the cycle. Fortunately, reflexology can also help eliminate or at least ease that pain, reducing the severity of the syndrome and improving the mental and physical symptoms.

If your female client is going through menopause, the changes in her body are surely going to be overwhelming. At this point, she may seek your assistance and request reflexology as an alternative method of treatment.

Reflexology can help to alleviate symptoms and effectively ease the menopausal process by working on the trigger points that are connected to the pituitary glands and thyroid to balance the hormones, calm the body, and soothe the discomforts.

Touching these trigger points can help you get in touch with menopause symptoms and can even help to calm them down. Techniques used to ease the symptoms and changes associated with menopause can have multiple health benefits including improving sleep, regaining sex drive, balancing mood swings and reducing painful sex. Reflexology treatment methods can

even help to strengthen the kidneys and urinary tract by balancing insulin and cholesterol levels.

Women are becoming more and more careful about monitoring for lumps in their breasts with breast cancer becoming one of the most common diseases they will face. One in every 8 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime.<sup>40</sup>



While it's highly recommended that women who experience pain or find lumps in their breast or armpits immediately consult a doctor and get tests done to ensure they are not cancerous, clients might turn to an alternative treatment like reflexology to successfully get rid of the lump or reduce pain and other symptoms. Sometimes practitioners can even discover lumps in the breast simply by following a reflexology procedure.

Studies have been carried out showing amazing benefits of reflexology and how it helped ease the symptoms of not only pain and lumps but even for people who were diagnosed with breast cancer.<sup>41</sup> Symptoms among women, such as shortness of breath, pain and other problems associated with hormone treatments and chemotherapy, were also resolved to a great extent. All you have to do is to find the reflexes representing the breast area and apply the right techniques to reap the reflexology benefits.

Next comes painful and heavy periods. When the hormonal system is disturbed and not able to function at its best, this creates imbalances in women's bodies. Imbalanced hormones can lead to various problems, including irregular period cycles, painful and heavy periods, fibroids, polycystic ovarian syndrome, endometriosis, PMS and digestive problems. A period cycle that is well balanced repeats every 29-32 days.

Many women experience pain and discomfort in the first two days of their cycle. However, a number of women suffer from extreme pain, cramping and

malaise, with possible vomiting and nausea. It is also important to urge your client to seek assistance from a medical professional if the pain they normally experience has suddenly become severe. This could be an indication of a uterus-related condition and should be checked for proper diagnosis.

While it's important to be treated by a gynecologist, there's no reason why your client can't continue with reflexology to ease the symptoms. The uterus, ovaries, endocrine glands and all other related organs are present on the feet in the form of reflex points. By following a certain pattern for massage and using the right techniques, one can easily achieve a reduction in symptoms. Moreover, since reflexology is a form of massage, it is highly relaxing and exactly what a woman is looking for during those uncomfortable days. Your client may also simply come for a massage to reduce pain and increase relaxation during her cycle days without an underlying condition.

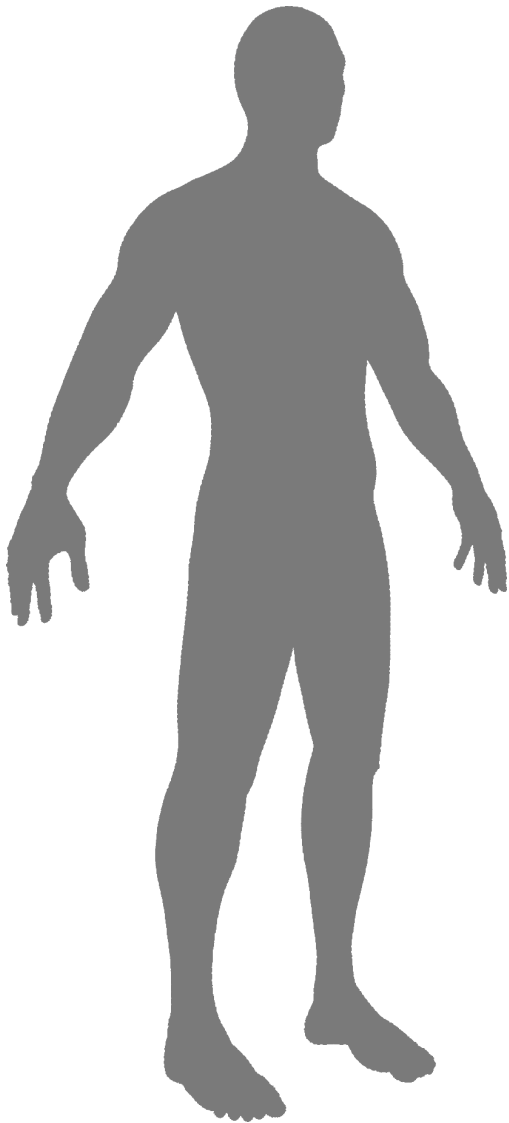
Reflexology is also known for connecting two seemingly unrelated conditions, candida and tinnitus. Candida is a common term used for describing a genus of yeast. Generally, it is present within our bodies in the ears, vagina and other areas.

Tinnitus, as mentioned before, is a condition that causes ringing in the ear, as well as other symptoms. If your client is diagnosed with Candidiasis, it is likely that he or she will also experience tinnitus, along with ear pain and fluid present in the ear. The chances of infections and other complications are increased as well.

Reflexology has shown great benefits in addressing some of the symptoms associated with tinnitus caused by Candidiasis. This is not the direct treatment, but is recognized as a complementary form of treatment. When pressure is applied on the identified reflexes, this can help instantly by releasing the anxiety and stress that may occur with tinnitus. Following specific massage techniques – including the amount of pressure applied along with the right-hand movements and pattern for massage – helps to relieve the pressure in muscles by stimulating the nervous system. A reflex map can be followed for giving this massage successfully.

All of the above-mentioned female-related problems can be addressed using reflexology treatment. It is important, however, to make sure a proper diagnosis is carried out before you start your massage treatment.

### **For Men: Enlarged Prostate, Impotence, Infertility in Men, Male Menopause, Libido**



Just like women, certain health issues and diseases are particular to men. Men might face certain health problems that can be addressed and resolved following the right reflexology techniques. This section will cover most of these diseases and symptoms and will explain how reflexology is beneficial for men and their specific problems.

Foot reflexology can be used to treat an enlarged prostate. More than 50 percent of men who have hit their 50s and more than 90 percent of men in their 80s are diagnosed with Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy (BPH).<sup>42</sup> In addition, some men also experience symptoms of different prostate diseases, such as a constant urge to urinate, the frustration that comes with an inability to empty the bladder fully and dribble their urine.

Reflex points are present on the feet representing the prostate where healing energy can be sent using reflexology. This helps in restoration and clearing out congestion to bring

the prostate back to health.

It is best to learn about these methods from a professional to practice them on men who come to you for help.



Impotency is another common and unfortunate condition experienced by men. Rather than trying to discover the core reason behind their impotency, typically when men face difficulty with erectile dysfunction the first thing the majority of them do is head to the store to get the medicine. However, there are natural cures available for the condition that can rekindle their drive without relying on any sex-enhancing drugs.



Drug manufacturing companies are making quite a haul by selling "sex-enhancing" erectile dysfunction drugs. According to research, it is clear how the number of people seeking such medicines have increased exponentially.

Another surprising factor highlighted from research is the increase in the number of younger men wanting these medicines compared to the traditional association of older men with these drugs. Interestingly, obesity is one of the major reasons why young men may also experience impotence.

This is where reflexology comes in to assist with the reflexes that help the reproductive areas. Using the specific reflexology technique for applying pressure and following the right pattern to massage the area can stimulate sex organs, including the penis.

Men are turning to this natural remedy to address issues like erectile dysfunction and impotency. It is also believed that reflexology gives amazing results in this matter since stress is also controlled using this therapy.

Smoking and alcohol consumption are also directly associated with erectile dysfunction and eventually, impotency. It is important that you encourage your clients to give up unhealthy habits altogether, along with offering them professional reflexology services to boost natural healing. Helping your clients give up bad health habits combined with reflexology will help you successfully cure impotence.

Reflexology is just as effective for male menopause as it is for female menopause. The symptoms of menopause and the changes it causes to the

body are overwhelming for women and men. At such an age, it is difficult for both genders to deal with such physical and hormonal changes. Not to mention that the side effects and other health issues associated with menopause can be far worse, too.

Again, the process requires identification of the male sex organs and their reflex points on the feet of the client. Certain points are used and pressure is applied for stimulation of those organs. The stimulation helps in bringing the organs back to their optimal functionality, and the unwanted symptoms of male menopause are reduced and controlled to a great extent.

Reflexology can also be used to boost sex drive. If your client is looking for natural ways to increase libido, the answer lies in reflexology. Who does not like more libido for a better and more satisfying sex life? Everyone does!

While lifestyle habits and diet play an important role here, reflexology can also provide benefits by playing its part. In addition to guiding your client about making certain lifestyle and nutrition changes to naturally boost libido, you can also provide reflexology to achieve that same purpose.

Again, pressure is applied to the reflexes that represent the male sex organs. It is often the ankle area and the big toe where the reflexes represent the sex organs, however, proper study will help you locate them just right. When sex organs are stimulated following a reflexology massage, it is only natural for the hormones and glands to work in accordance with the organ. Reflexology is known to step up the libido, not only in men but women too, by eliminating their state of anxiety and stress, while inducing deep relaxation at the same time.

In addition, because reflexology boosts the circulation of blood throughout the body, including the sex organs, this treatment will definitely improve the libido, helping to achieve your client's goal.

Reflexology is also beneficial in restoring emotional, physical and hormonal balance. So, helping your clients get rid of toxins is nothing less than facilitating the smooth flow of oxygen and sexual energy throughout their bodies.

The best thing about reflexology is that it focuses on overall well-being, even when it is aimed to achieve a certain goal. Instead of being symptomatic or localized, relief is provided to the whole body. The aim of reflexology is to clear up any energy blockages in the body, along with eliminating negative emotions, to promote natural healing and health.

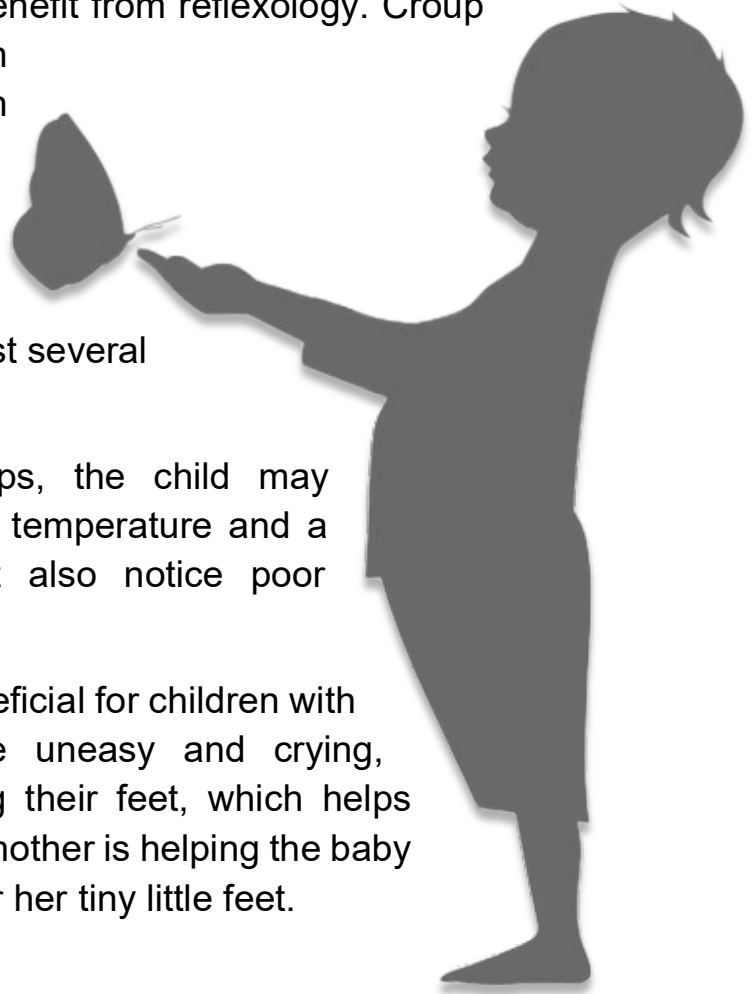
### Young Children: Croup, Hyperactivity

Reflexology offers great benefits for young children too. This could be a surprise for your clients if you tell them they can bring their kids for natural healing and improved well-being too.

Croup is one condition that can benefit from reflexology. Croup is an illness in young children (usually younger than age 3) which causes narrowing of the upper airways. The best way is to get a diagnosis done but features of croup include noisy breathing and a barking cough, which can last several days.

Even before the cough develops, the child may experience sore throat, red eyes, temperature and a runny nose. The parents might also notice poor appetite.

Reflexology can be extremely beneficial for children with croup. When young babies are uneasy and crying, mothers often end up massaging their feet, which helps them calm down. Unknowingly, a mother is helping the baby release stress by massaging his or her tiny little feet.



Proper reflexology treatments that follow the correct pattern of massage and pressure can heal the baby naturally. Follow the professional guidelines to offer these services to babies and follow instructions safely and carefully.

For young children to recover quickly, multiple sessions of reflexology can be offered for acute conditions to help babies heal, not only from the regular croup but asthma attacks too. Your approach should be extremely gentle, and you should use simple and easy relaxation techniques.

As a reflexologist, you will be targeting the solar plexus point represented by the reflexes on the feet. Other regions that can be addressed to heal the condition include the lungs, the entire chest region, diaphragm, bronchial area, thymus, lymph chest/drainage, pituitary, adrenals, spleen and groin among others.

Is your child or your client's child hyperactive? Is he/she diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)? Reflexology can be very helpful!

According to statistics, more than 10 percent of our children are under the influence of ADHD. Reflexology, in this case, will not only help to relax the



hyperactivity but also relieve pain from a number of sources, and reduce symptoms like an aching tummy, nervous tension and headaches.<sup>43</sup>

ADHD is categorized as a genetic disorder and, unfortunately, the reasons why our children may experience this condition are still unknown. However, it is important to keep a behavioral check on our children to identify if they are being influenced by this disorder. Parents should keep a keen eye on their children to identify the symptoms. Some of the most common ones include excessive talking, waking up from sleep (and crying) and being unable to go back to sleep, a fear of sleep, fidgeting, impulsive actions, tendency toward daydreaming, inability to follow directions, poor eye and hand coordination and short attention spans.

There are different kinds of treatments available for ADHD. Reflexology can work wonders in such cases as it is both science and an art. As a reflexologist, you will be working on the specific reflex points on the hands and feet to treat the symptoms and improve the entire condition.

Using application of pressure following a specific pattern with fingers and thumb, a reflexologist can apply techniques to connect the body with the peripheral nervous system and bring it back to optimal functionality. Reflexology is extremely beneficial in these cases because children are more attuned to nature than adults. They have more active, natural instincts that persuade them to carry out various activities for finding natural healing for ailments they encounter.

### **Seniors: Alzheimer's disease, Arthritis**

As mentioned earlier, reflexology can play a very active role in treating Alzheimer's disease as well as arthritis. It is not only true for young people but also for the older generation.

While the response to the treatment could vary from person to person – depending on age, gender, progression of the illness, and other factors – reflexology is surely going to help seniors heal more naturally and help control their symptoms without further adding to their stress.



Just like the techniques used for younger people, a reflexologist will identify the right reflexes and apply pressure following the right patterns. However, for seniors, you may have to take a different, much gentler approach. Don't forget, the main reason your clients come to you is because they want to relax and feel relief from the symptoms of the diseases or ailments they're fighting. If your techniques or therapy cause more pain to your client, they may doubt your competency. Therefore, taking the right approach is very important.

Offer reflexology in your practice and help people identify the general and more specific benefits it has for them. This non-invasive, simple therapy can be used to boost overall healing and/or complement traditional medicine to help treat diseases, so make sure you introduce your clients to reflexology. Educating them about this effective alternate therapy could change their lives and to take your business to the next level.

## Chapter 7: Contraindications

Learning about the benefits of reflexology, it is very easy to believe that reflexology is one technique that can be used in all situations, right? Wrong! This should not be the approach.

As a professional reflexologist, you will be expected to identify the problem, understand the core reason behind each problem, then make a decision that's best for your client based on his/her individual health needs.

You cannot start with the treatment just because the name of the condition or the type of treatment sounds familiar and you *think* you can use the reflexology techniques to help your clients. Regardless of how pure your intentions are to help and serve your clients, the whole thing could go wrong if you ignore the important details.

In some cases, reflexology should not be implemented at all. This chapter covers the contraindications--situations in which a procedure should not be carried out due to high risk or because it may be harmful for the person under treatment. Here you will learn about some situations where reflexology may not be appropriate.

So, keep reading and keep learning!

### Wounds, Infections, Tumors

While reflexology is an extremely safe and natural healing therapy, it is important to recognize the situations and circumstances where reflexology will not be suitable. Some of the contraindications on that list would include wounds, infections and tumors on the feet or calves.

Reflexology techniques are discouraged on the feet of clients with unhealed wounds, foot fractures (broken bones) and/or active gout or tumors in their calves or feet. Clients with osteoarthritis who have problems with their ankles or feet should also be steered clear from this natural healing therapy.



However, people who have a fracture, cuts, wounds, gout or infection on the feet or near the feet can still benefit from reflexology. In these cases, it is acceptable to offer such clients the benefits of reflexology instead on the hands and ears.

### **Blood Clots & Vascular Disease**

Reflexology should never be used if blood clots are a known problem. This could be fatal. If a client has any history of thrombosis or is taking blood thinners, you should communicate with their doctor before offering Reflexology.

Also, clients with vascular disease involving the arteries, veins, and vessels of the feet or legs should give you an "all-clear" letter from their primary medical service provider before any reflexology treatments begin with their feet.

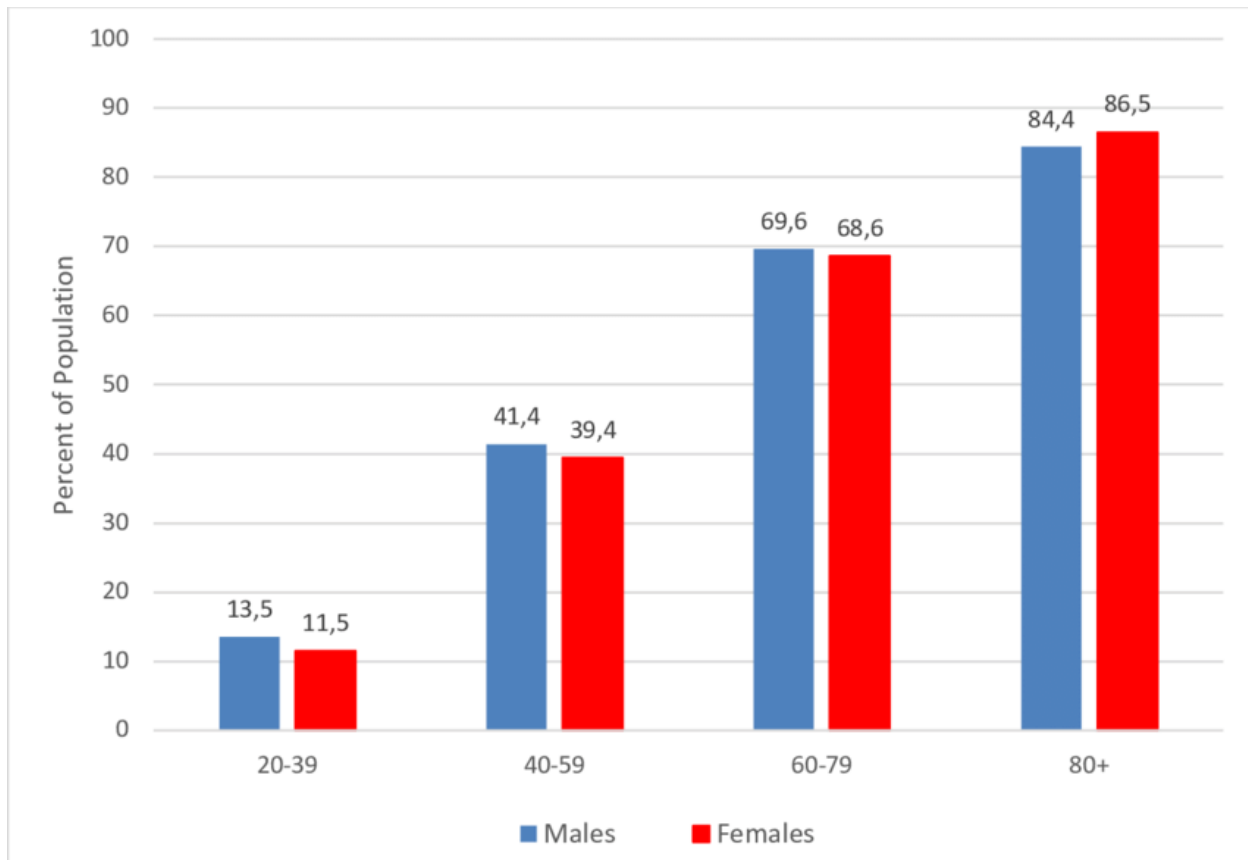
### **Heart Condition**

Clients who have a history of any heart disease or heart condition should provide their reflexologist with consent from a general practitioner. This is important before appointments are scheduled for reflexology treatments.

If your clients have had a heart attack, or any other cardiology treatment, if you fail to get a general practitioner's consent, they will be eligible to take you to court if their health is disturbed after having reflexology treatment.



## Cardiovascular Disease in Adults



*Prevalence of cardiovascular disease in adults <sup>3</sup> 20 years of age Data including coronary heart disease, heart failure, stroke, hypertension. Presented data were collected for the NAHNES (National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey) between 2011 and 2014.<sup>44</sup>*

## Fever & Systemic Infection

It is never a wise choice to use reflexology healing methods to treat clients in the throes of a fever. Giving massage to these clients could cause their temperature to rise even more and make them feel more ill. Thus, reflexology and other similar alternative treatment therapies should always be avoided when clients are fighting fevers and systemic infections.

## High-Risk Pregnancies

We covered pregnancy a bit earlier, however, certain pregnant conditions must be on the list of contraindications. It is important to remember not to

treat women who have had a history of miscarriage. This also pertains to high-risk pregnancies, or where the mother-to-be is not sure about her condition. To be on the safe side, it is not appropriate to administer any reflexology treatments on pregnant women until their 16<sup>th</sup> week (after their first trimester). As a professional, it is oftentimes your responsibility to decline services for reflexology for your client's own safety.

Also, avoid targeting the pituitary gland for expectant mothers until their due date is near. The reproductive reflexes on the feet should be massaged with extreme care throughout pregnancy. Most importantly, if your personal experience does not make you feel comfortable providing reflexology to an expectant mother, tell her you will not be moving forward with the treatment and explain your reasons to help her understand your decision.

### **Severe Depression & Mental Illness**

Without consent from their general practitioner, it is not considered appropriate to treat a client with reflexology who is going through severe depression or any mental illness. Since a reflexologist is not directly involved with the primary medical treatment, proper diagnosis and understanding of the situation could be difficult. Therefore, it is important in such cases to first check with their doctor and receive prior permission before any reflexology treatments begin.

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

Clients who are addicts and tend to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol should not be treated with reflexology. Although these treatments can turn out to be effective in some cases, in others it can make the alcoholic or addict feel more irrational and react badly in other ways. Generally, these people can be way too unpredictable, and therapy can eventually cause them to become sicker. Since reflexology and similar holistic therapies are known for removing toxins from the body, such sudden changes for addicts can be too overwhelming for their bodies to accept.

## Severe Burns

Clients with severe burn wounds should not be provided reflexology until they are fully recovered. Even after the recovery is complete, it is important that you ask for consent from the primary care physician before the treatment is started. This is essential to prevent future problems.

## Diabetes

Yes, diabetes. While we have mentioned diabetes as one of the diseases that can benefit from reflexology, it is important to mention that not all diabetic clients can be treated using this alternative healing technique.



Proactive clients who keep a close check on their condition by taking medication and keeping a strict eye on their diet can still experience reflexology treatments, but with caution. It is important that blood sugar levels are continuously and carefully monitored before and after each reflexology treatment.

Also, it is important for clients to monitor the condition of their feet to check for any changes or abnormalities that could raise concern as well as changes in how they feel after the therapy.

## Shingles

Shingles is a viral disease and can be infectious. Therefore, it is not advisable for reflexologists to treat such clients, especially when the sores are still visible. The infection can be very difficult for the client as the symptoms are extremely painful. Because shingles affects nerve endings throughout the body, it is very common for such clients to look for therapies like reflexology for relief.

Once the sores have healed completely, reflexology treatments can begin, however, may want to get a confirmation from their doctor before starting any treatments. Applying reflexology after the sores have healed helps in treating any leftover pain.

## Medications

It is highly advisable for clients to warn you about any medications they are taking prior to reflexology therapy. Whatever medicines consumed are processed in the liver. The liver is also where toxins are filtered out of the bloodstream. Since reflexology helps in removing toxins from the body, this could be problematic for clients taking medications. For instance, if the client has taken painkillers, the side effect could entail numbing the reflex sites that are being directed during the therapy.

## Cancer

Reflexology can offer a little relief for clients fighting cancer, as the treatment helps in lowering their stress and depression. However, it's best to talk to the client's doctors about any current treatments before massage therapy can begin. Often, massage is out of the question for some cancer clients since the disease could travel to other organs and body parts. If their doctor gives a green light to give reflexology treatment, however, it can help patients better handle the emotions and stress of dealing with cancer along with some of the side effects, too.

## Malignant Melanoma

As mentioned earlier, reflexology treatments should not be offered unless prior consent is received from a health professional for patients fighting any form of cancer. Skin cancers are becoming more common, mainly because of sun tanning and covering the body with the wrong creams. Unfortunately, if not diagnosed and treated in time, skin cancer can be fatal. Reflexologists must consult with their clients to learn about any rough irregular areas and dark spots present on their skin as well as proactively looking for them while

carrying out their treatments to avoid any risks for their clients. In fact, it's advisable to turn down clients with malignant melanoma who are seeking reflexology treatments.

### **Common Foot Ailments Worth Noticing**

For reflexologists, it is important that they pay serious attention to these common foot ailments and decide whether or not reflexology treatments are appropriate for such clients.

#### **Dry Skin**

Weather and the wrong footwear can cause dry skin, as can hormones, eczema, and autoimmune diseases. In some cases, reflexology may make the dryness painful or even worsen small tears in the skin. If you determine the condition is still viable for providing reflexology treatment, you should advise your clients to keep their feet nicely moisturized.

#### **Nail Concerns**

If you notice extremely curved nails, ingrown nails, or any other condition of the nails that are causing problems for your clients, feel free to recommend them to a chiropodist or podiatrist.

#### **Allergies**

Allergies can be caused when the skin comes in contact with irritating elements, like synthetic fibers, washing detergents and some chemicals. If you observe or are made aware of any hives, rashes, redness, or swelling, you may need to hold off on reflexology until the symptoms are gone. People should also be advised to change their footwear in case allergies are caused by a rash given to them by their footwear.

## Various Heloma/Corns

This is overgrowth of horny skin on the joints and toes. This situation is quite painful for the client and is often caused by wearing the wrong or ill-fitting footwear. When bad footwear repeatedly rubs against the skin, it can cause extremely painful symptoms.

There are different types of skin corns. Some are more serious and painful than others. A chiropodist is the right person to treat them. However, reflexology can also be used to help ease the pain experienced by your clients once their corns are treated.

## Bursitis

Bursitis is caused by a small sac filled with fluid which may become inflamed near the joints. This condition is easily identified because it forms a ring of red skin surrounding the affected area. The bursitis sac is usually present on an enlarged joint or bunion and can be tender and sore. Before you provide reflexology therapy to your clients with this problem, your client must see a chiropodist.

## Athlete's Foot

One of the most common issues, Athlete's foot, is a fungal infection easily recognized by scaly, oozing and inflamed skin between the toes. Since this condition is highly infectious, it is very important to be extremely cautious with such clients. For treatment purposes, a chiropodist should be recommended.

Reflexology can only begin once the treatment for this condition is completed successfully.



## Contraindications for Reflexology to Remember

Contraindications to reflexology indicate that certain conditions or clients diagnosed with certain health problems should not be treated until permissions have been given by a medical professional.

If your client—or a potential client—is under the care of medical professionals for any condition and/or is taking medication, it is important to gain information about the contraindications before an appointment is booked. Otherwise, you may be forced to cancel an appointment and disappoint a client.

In addition to the conditions we've already covered, here's a quick table of contraindications for reflexology for you to remember. When talking to a client, you can always refer to the following table keeping in mind that the majority of the cases are based on the judgment of reflexologists. Not all cases are severe and should be turned down.

| <b>Contraindications</b><br><b>May Require Permission from a Medical Professional Before Treatment Can be Provided</b>   |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any severe medical condition that has been left untreated</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any contagious skin disease such as Athlete's foot, scabies, impetigo, mumps, chicken pox, shingles, etc.</li> </ul>                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any form of infection, fever or disease (can worsen the conditions of the client and spread infections to the therapist)</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skin damage, grazes, cuts, rashes, open skin, fractures, burns, bruises, bites</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Localized swelling, inflammation, acute pain</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recent operations or fractures (minimum three months)</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clients under influence of recreational drugs or alcohol</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any person displaying strange/inappropriate behavior or mental health issues</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cancer (within five years of surgery)</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heart condition, hypotension, hypertension</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spastic conditions, psychotic/nervous conditions</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blood clots, phlebitis, vascular disease</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pinched/trapped nerve (sciatica)</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diabetes</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Osteoporosis (can speed up decalcification)</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External or Internal bleeding</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tumors, hematoma</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Severe varicose veins, thrombosis,</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scar tissue (two years for a major surgery and six months for a small scar)</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Severe eczema or psoriasis on the foot (the foot is often too sore to be worked on)</li> </ul>                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scar tissue (two years for a major surgery and six months for a small scar)</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Epilepsy</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Athlete's foot or verrucae (plantar warts)</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corns, heloma, nail issues</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acute rheumatism, arthritis</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sunburn, Malignant Melanoma</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hormonal implants</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medication for a serious disease or condition (reflexology may alter the impact of the medication in the body)</li> </ul>           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pregnancy (should not be treated in the first three months or if high-risk)</li> </ul>  |

## Chapter 8: Preparation for Clients

### Offering the Best Reflexology Services to Clients

The professionalism of a reflexologist is not only based on how well he or she is able to perform the therapy, or the good decisions made on behalf of his or her clients, it's how those reflexology services are delivered too! This requires keeping in mind the individual requirements of different clients, having a routine, and providing the best space to carry out the therapy.

Once you've learned the skills to practice reflexology and have chosen to add it to your provided services, it is important to set up the right space to provide the best experience for your clients. Each massage therapy practice is unique, just like the practitioner who operates it.

Because your clients might come with serious and painful illnesses and conditions, it is essential that you offer them the most comfortable place where they can relax and enjoy the entire therapy session.

Moreover, while it is important that you cater to the needs of your individual clients who come for your services, it isn't easy to set up one room that works for everyone. But if you pay attention to the important details, you can create an optimal space that gives all of your clients the perfect place to relax and enjoy the relaxing alternative treatments you provide.

This chapter covers the best practices and important guidelines that will help you set up a successful and comfortable reflexology massage therapy treatment room. Here you will find helpful tips, tricks and ideas for making a space where you love to work, and your clients will enjoy visiting again and again.

### Tools and Supplies

As mentioned earlier, the only tools you need for reflexology are your skilled hands! Since reflexology relies more on pressure and techniques, oils and lotions aren't even necessary. In fact, in using reflexology for treatment of illness, using oils, lotions, or lubricants can make the surface too slippery to do the techniques correctly.

There are, however, some reflexology tools to help aid in specific techniques. Eunice Ingham taught reflexology with a basic pencil, using the eraser as a probe<sup>45</sup> Wooden tools with blunt, nubby ends can sometimes help with directing pressure and for doing some of the finer techniques, however, your competent hands can “listen” to the body best. So, keeping the focus on your clients’ well-being will help you determine if just your hands are sufficient to help get your clients in balance.

### Where to Treat

The room that you are setting up for reflexology treatment should be first on your priority list. Before offering your reflexology services, it is important that the room you use to work with clients is set up properly.

Comfort is the first thing you should consider. Your clients are seeking maximum comfort based on the therapy you provide. Thus, the space should be as comfortable as possible with a very relaxing ambience. Before you jump to setting the right ambience in the room, however, think about the furniture.

If you are already working as a massage therapist (and we suspect you are if you’re taking this class to renew your license!), you may only need to make minor changes to adjust your workspace for reflexology. First, ask yourself, are the massage rooms you already have for services enough or would you like a space to be more specific to reflexology? Would accommodations need to be made if you did reflexology on an expectant mother? A child? Or the elderly?

## Chair

Some reflexologists have chairs that make foot reflexology easier. When choosing such a chair, it can be anything that allows you access to your clients' feet and hands that also gives comfort to your clients (remembering some will have painful health issues). The chair would also have to accommodate your space allowance, budget, and esthetic style.

In general, being able to recline and have head support is important for your clients' comfort. Some reflexologists use ergonomically designed zero-gravity versions while others might prefer overstuffed recliners or chairs with a movable ottoman. With a minimal amount of research, finding the right chair to carry out reflexology treatments will not be difficult.

## Table

If you are considering adding reflexology as an add-on to your massages, you may want to consider buying a reflexology table, which is nothing like a dining table but should resemble more of a comfortable bed for clients. Reflexology tables generally can be adjusted to an incline for sitting with removable pillows or cushions for the head, arms, and knees.

Most of you will prefer using your regular massage rooms for reflexology. You can add a chair or table for reflexology or simply place some comfortable padding over your massage table before you start the reflexology treatment. The massage table must be comfortable, aesthetically pleasing, and in sync with the rest of the furniture used in the room.

It is ideal to choose a table that is easily adjustable to the varying size, weight and height of your clients. Most practitioners prefer to use tables with a rectangular shape and a slightly larger width. Be sure it has good, comfortable padding because therapy sessions can go on longer than an hour. Give your client whole body support (neck and under legs) so that they are able to relax during the therapy.

## Setting Up a Narrow Room

The size of your room will also help you decide the type and size of table you want for your reflexology therapy room. If you have a narrow room, setting it up the right way to make it appear comfortable and cozy is very important.

First and foremost, make sure the room is free of clutter so that it looks as spacious as possible. Keep only the necessary things within the space, getting rid of all unnecessary items. Here are some simple tricks that will help you maximize your workspace in no time.

- ❖ Use vertical corners and spaces.
- ❖ Choose a table/chair size that is comfortable for the client and allows you to walk around the room easily. Maintain plenty of space near the table and your own chair.
- ❖ Pay attention to the décor of the room. Use mirrors, wall décor and a light color palette to enhance the overall look as well as to make it look spacious.
- ❖ For storage purposes, hang baskets on the wall instead of placing things on the table (that could occupy a lot of space). Check out Google and Pinterest to learn some new ideas.
- ❖ Pay attention to the style and design of the furniture you are getting. Do not mix and match. Remember, the appearance of your room should be extremely professional. Modern furniture in classic colors will work wonders to make your workspace look bigger.

The placement of the table and your own chair or stool should be aligned. Choose a corner to set it up to make it more comfortable for you and your client. Also, if you choose a comfortable sofa for yourself instead of a chair or stool, it may help you sit easily for longer periods of time.

## Provide a Spot for the Client's Belongings

A major appeal for reflexology is that the palms and soles are very accessible—without the need for removing more than socks and shoes. As a massage therapist, you should already have a private place for the client

to change clothes, but it is also important to provide a space where your clients' clothes, coats, shoes and other items can be stored safely.

Also, it's nice to have an end table, chair and organizer in this area where clients can place personal items like a purse, glasses, keys and jewelry. You can also place a pitcher of water and a glass along with the right amount of lighting for this area. Last but not least, don't forget to add a nice mirror so that your clients can check their makeup, clothes and hair after the massage and/or reflexology.

### **Setting the Right Ambience for an Ideal Reflexology Therapy Session**

Choosing the space and furniture is the first step of setting up an ideal room for a reflexology massage session. Setting the right ambience is the next step.

Regardless of the type of massage you are providing—including reflexology—comfort and relaxation are the two most important features your clients will look for. If you play loud music, keep sharp lights on or have windows open to a busy road, it is definitely not going to be the ideal ambience for relaxation.

To make the session go as smoothly as possible, follow the tips in this chapter and see how you can change the ambience to fit your clients' expectations.

### **Choosing the Right Music**

In addition to addressing the different ailments and diseases your clients bring with them, reflexology is a wonderful opportunity to help your clients leave behind the worries of life.

You may prefer keeping a quiet, no-music environment, but music can play a major role in helping your client stay calm and relaxed throughout a



reflexology session. A playlist with different kinds of relaxing, soft music is ideal for reflexology massage. Look for music that does not follow any obvious pattern or tune. Such style of music can be more conducive for a relaxing environment. In short, it keeps their mind engaged during the therapy.

In some cases (especially for the sensitive ones), it is best if you discuss the musical preferences with your clients. Older and more particular individuals might find every type of sound annoying and may prefer a music-less environment. Thus, having a discussion about this is important and shouldn't be avoided. You can always change the music if a client asks.



## Scent

Just like music, scent is extremely important to provide the perfect ambience for a relaxing therapy. The use of candles, fresh flowers, or relaxing essential oils will definitely enhance your treatment room. Avoid strong scents and verify the scent is agreeable to your client before treatment. You will be surprised how the simple element of scent can make your therapy a memorable experience for clients. Don't forget to add these extras!

## Lighting

To give your therapy room an amazing feel and unique look, pay attention to the lighting.

Here are some guidelines that will help you create the perfect lighting for a massage room before you offer reflexology treatments.

1. Try to arrange a window-less room for reflexology massage therapy. This is the best way to control the amount and type of light within the space.
2. In case the room has a window, use blackout curtains or shutters to eliminate or minimize the impact of outside light as much as possible.
3. Use a dimmer switch or soft incandescent bulbs to control the amount of light in the room.
4. It is important to keep the lights low enough to make it totally comfortable for clients. Don't forget that they are coming to relax. Harsh lights right on top of their face can be very disturbing. Lights should only be bright enough for you to see what you are doing. That's very important for reflexology, since you have to work on the exact reflex points for it to be effective.
5. You can use candles instead of lights. In fact, candles with complementary scents can provide a two-in-one feature for your therapy room. As far as their placement, put candles in areas where they do not interrupt you during sessions and where they are safely away from your place of work.

Gentle lighting and the right color of lights can enhance the overall experience for your clients.

## Water: Reflexology Will Make Your Clients Thirsty



It is important to provide water to your clients inside the therapy room. Clean, cool water should be within your client's reach in the therapy room, and it is critical that your clients understand the importance of being hydrated during reflexology sessions. Why?

Reflexology and water work together to achieve the purpose of healing and promoting balance in the body.

In fact, it's just as important for clients to be hydrated before their treatment starts as it is after the treatment.

The moment the treatment starts, the body starts working twice as hard to heal itself naturally by getting rid of waste and toxins from organs, cells, blood and every other part of the human body.

Water is essential because it is used as a medium for waste and toxins to exit the body. Without sufficient H<sub>2</sub>O in the body, waste will continue to build up since there's no other way it can leave the body. That could eventually result in your clients feeling worse.

When a client receives reflexology, the circulation of his/her blood vessels experiences a major boost, and the collection of waste and toxins speeds up for the 24 hours following the therapy.

Here's an analogy to help you understand this concept.

Imagine your blood vessels are a group of laborers digging a mine in a long tunnel, then collecting the rocks and dirt and putting them in a cart so that they can be hauled away.

To speed up the process, extra laborers are sent down to the mines to collect the rocks and dirt faster. This also requires extra carts, otherwise all the waste that the extra laborers dig out will keep piling up and eventually create a blockage in the tunnel.

In this



scenario, the tunnel represents your blood system whereas the laborers are

your blood vessels. The extra laborers you provided your body represents reflexology therapy and the extra carts symbolize water.

As mentioned earlier, when there are extra laborers to speed up the collection of dirt, it is essential to provide enough carts to avoid blockages in the tunnel. This is exactly what happens when you don't provide enough water to your system during a reflexology therapy.

Without water, your body will not be able to get rid of extra waste and toxins. It is the only liquid that will help your clients achieve these results efficiently. It is also important to note here that there are no substitutes for water. So, make sure you provide your clients with water and remind them to drink it during therapy.

### **How Much Water is Required?**

You will follow the general rule here to calculate the requirement of water by your body. The simple rule is to take your weight in pounds and divide it by two. This will be the number of ounces of water you should drink in a normal day.

For instance, if your client weighs 150 lbs., he/she should be drinking 75 ounces of water daily. For reflexology purposes, the client may prefer drinking a little more than that.

Share these rules with your clients to help them improve their reflexology experience. Providing them water within their reach is a efficient way to prevent the disruption of the therapy.

Believe it or not, keeping the water requirements of your clients fulfilled is one of the secrets to reflexology working perfectly.

Also, don't forget to warn clients that they may experience symptoms like flu, tiredness and headaches for up to 24 hours if they don't stay hydrated, and then remind them again to drink plenty of water.

### **Preparing Yourself as the Professional**

Reflexology is a treatment therapy that offers a world of fulfillment and satisfaction to any candidate with the right credentials, the right personality and, of course, the right timing.



It is important that you adopt certain emotional and social qualities in order to establish a personal, comfortable environment for your clients, together with maintaining professionalism.

Before you become a skilled reflexology professional, it's important to be aware of the personal traits your clients expect from you, especially those that maintain your professional image.

Not only are these traits important for a reflexologist, but also for a massage therapist in general. Check out the following list of personality traits that will help you succeed and see where you think you need to improve. After all, it's a matter of your own image and career.



## Hygiene Requirements: How to Pay Special Attention to Your Hands



Good personal hygiene is the first and most important factor that you should never ignore. When practicing reflexology, it is important that you pay attention to personal hygiene and provide a clean environment for your clients to carry out the treatment therapy.

Since a reflexology treatment requires an intimate environment, hygiene should be a high priority. Since you will only be using your hands to provide the right therapy, it's essential that you pay special attention to the cleanliness of your hands. In fact, this will probably be the first thing your clients see when they come to you for a treatment.

Be very conscious about your personal appearance. Looking clean and hygienic counts as professionalism. How much care you take for your personal hygiene, as well as the massage setting, will make a significant impression on your clients.

## Strong Systemizing Skills

Establishing organizational skills is the best and most effective way to keep your business operational and independently organized.

If you already have a number of permanent clients, it is normal to expect an influx of new clients once you offer services as a professional reflexologist. This extra volume of people could double your record-keeping work. Therefore, you must take a proactive approach to avoid future confusion among clients.



As a professional reflexologist, you must know how to manage direct accounts, market your prices, maintain records of your clients, order supplies and equipment (if you need any), market your business as a professional reflexologist and schedule appointments.

You can hire someone to do this job for you as long as you are willing to pay him or her. However, if you choose to do this on your own, it will require you to be on top of the administrative side of your business too.

Upping your game in the administrative section of your business requires conscientiousness, dedication and solid time management skills. These are some important personal qualities that could help you deal with the financial and personal frustrations related to your business.



### **Empathy – Clearing Your Energy and Its Impact**

Just like any treatment, reflexology massage also requires that the reflexologist show genuine empathy for others. This requires clearing your own energy and its impact so that it does not affect the person who receives the treatments you provide.

Reflexologists who show compassion, consider the vulnerabilities associated with individual clients and depend on their intuitive awareness are more likely to establish the trust required for developing long-term relationships with their clients.

### **Setting a Limit for Ideal Reflexology Treatment**

This refers to the working hours and conditions that you will be offering your clients as a professional reflexologist. It is important to set a limit to the number of clients you treat in a day in order to maintain the quality of your sessions. Your working hours will depend on the number of clients you are willing to see in a day, particularly if you are self-employed. If you do not have your own space and need to create a good reputation before you do that, there are many other settings where you can offer your services and

win clients. These settings may include hospices, holistic or complementary medicine clinics and client residences.

Setting limits is important so that you give appropriate and equal time to all of your clients and yourself.

### Set Your Intention

As a reflexologist, you will be working to help clients achieve their particular health goal. Mostly, this involves treating clients with stress, sleeping disorders, chronic back pain and sports injuries.

It is imperative to sync your intentions and objectives with those of your clients to achieve these mutual goals successfully. To stay on the right track, you need to put in some work. This involves:

- Explaining the treatment (reflexology) to the client in detail and answering any questions he/she may have about what reflexology actually offers them.
- Scheduling a session so that you can discuss and record details about the client's medical history, diet, health and lifestyle.
- Examining the hands and feet of the client before actually starting the therapy. This helps the reflexologist identify possible problem areas and blockages in the hands and feet.
- Using both fingers and thumbs and the right massage pattern to provide the ideal massage to help clients achieve their health goals.
- Maintaining treatment goals and fulfilling administrative duties to be more efficient in your work.
- Referring clients to their general practitioner or having a discussion with their medical professional if the case requires.

Having all of these details in hand and the right mindset, you will be good to proceed with the treatment with the right intention.

## Focus on Your Task

A professional reflexologist has extensive knowledge of the right techniques to use for achieving individual goals of clients.

This approach is especially important for reflexology since it is different from the regular massage therapies. Here, you are focusing on one or two goals set by your clients. Thus, following the right therapy is the only thing that will help you here. Use the knowledge and skills we offer you here and make sure you pass them on to your clients as well as use them during the treatment therapy.

## Excellent Interpersonal and Communication Skills

A successful and professional reflexologist must have excellent interpersonal and communication skills, which are required to help him/her create good rapport and a comfortable, friendly environment for clients. This capable, skilled professional is not only good at communicating important details with clients, he/she is able and ready to answer any questions and explain why a certain step is carried out during the treatment.

Satisfying the client is very important, especially when it comes to alternative treatment therapies. As a professional, be ready to answer some tough questions. Pass on the knowledge you have and make sure your clients are totally satisfied with the therapy.

Excellent communication skills are a critical trait for gaining loyal clients and building trust with the new ones. The reflexologist or a massage therapist must listen to their clients attentively. It is important to understand what the client is looking for, then respond to them accordingly. Your clients should feel 100 percent satisfied and comfortable with your treatment. Inclinations towards chattiness are not considered very desirable in this occupation.

## The Right Level of Physical Stamina

Physical stamina can play a major role in the reflexology (or massage) profession. Sometimes, you may be required to stand for hours, so physical endurance becomes a necessary trait for a professional, competent reflexologist.

A great reflexologist is expected to have excellent manual dexterity. You must be able to perform the technical maneuvers required by the treatment therapy.

It is important that you learn how to offer treatments using the strength of your upper body, not only the hands and wrists. This will reduce the pressure on your hands and will make you feel less tired after each session.

And, don't forget to take breaks, too. Your hands need rest!

### **Warm Hands – How to Do That Before You Begin the Therapy**

It is important that you warm your hands every time before beginning reflexology therapy. Not only is it great for your own hands, but your clients will really appreciate it if you prepare your hands and make them a little warm before starting the massage. No one likes cold hands touching their feet, especially during the winter.

Picture this scenario: A client visits you to receive a nice, relaxing massage. They enter a cozy environment, sit on a warm bed and expect to relax. He or she takes a deep breath and waits for a warm touch to begin the massage. Suddenly, the skin of the client comes in contact with the ice-cold hands of the reflexologist.

The environment that you have worked so very hard to create for the comfort of your client suddenly hits a "cold" stop. Just imagine how your client feels. How would you feel if you were the client? On a more serious note, delivering a massage with cold hands works against all desirable outcomes, so it's a big no-no!

Here are some good tips you should consider to warm up your hands before starting a reflexology treatment:



1. One of the simplest methods is to put your hands under hot running water for a few minutes. For this to work perfectly, however, it is important that the overall temperature in the room is also warm so that your hands do not become cold instantly after you dry them.
2. Another way is called hydrotherapy. In this method, you fill two basins with water – one with cold water and the other with hot water. The temperature of both basins should not be extreme. Put your hands in the hot basin for 30 seconds and then immediately put them in the cold water for 10 seconds. Repeat this at least three times in the same way. The alternating temperature creates a pumping action, which increases circulation.
3. Hot stone is another way you can warm up your hands. Just hold a hot or warm stone in your hand for a few minutes until the heat is transmitted to your hands.
4. Heat packs are a quick and effective way to immediately warm up your hands. You can purchase these inexpensive packs at most sports shops. Upon activation, they can remain hot for a few hours, so you can use them to warm up your hands during the therapy as well.
5. If your hands are not too cold, you can simply rub your hands together to and fro until they become warm.

Acknowledging and understanding your personality traits can make a significant difference in the direction your career will take and the fulfillment you will get from it. If you already handle people well, you may want to work

on the other skills that revolve around the administrative side of your business or vice versa.

If all of the characteristics we've described above are a perfect fit based on your personality, you have definitely chosen the perfect career!

Working as a reflexologist is a job full of self-satisfaction and fulfillment. If you enjoy a life filled with empathy for others, this job will do wonders for your personality and personal life!

## Final Word

People have always looked for alternative treatment methods to improve their health, reduce their intake of prescription medicine and avoid surgical or medical procedures as much as possible. For most, reflexology is an answer to their problems.

There's no question reflexology is easy to understand and simple to practice and benefits nearly everyone, regardless of age or gender. Adding reflexology as a part of your alternative treatment therapies will enhance your scope as a massage therapist. Without a doubt, the ability lies in your fingertips and has always been there.

Reflexology empowers you as a professional to address the challenges and health problems your clients face at different stages of their lives.

This continuing education class can be used for information and reference to the concepts of reflexology, whereas a hands-on class will detail the techniques and how they relate to the reflexology maps. The subject of reflexology is vast and a lot more detailed than you may think! Moreover, when it comes to massage, no education is complete without practical experience. This is especially true with reflexology where you have to work with reflexes and how they represent different parts of the body.

Thus, in order to make your sessions with clients successful, roll up your sleeves and think about your career options.

We hope you've enjoyed learning about reflexology!

To proceed to your certificate, complete the Multiple-Choice Question Quiz.

Good luck!



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