



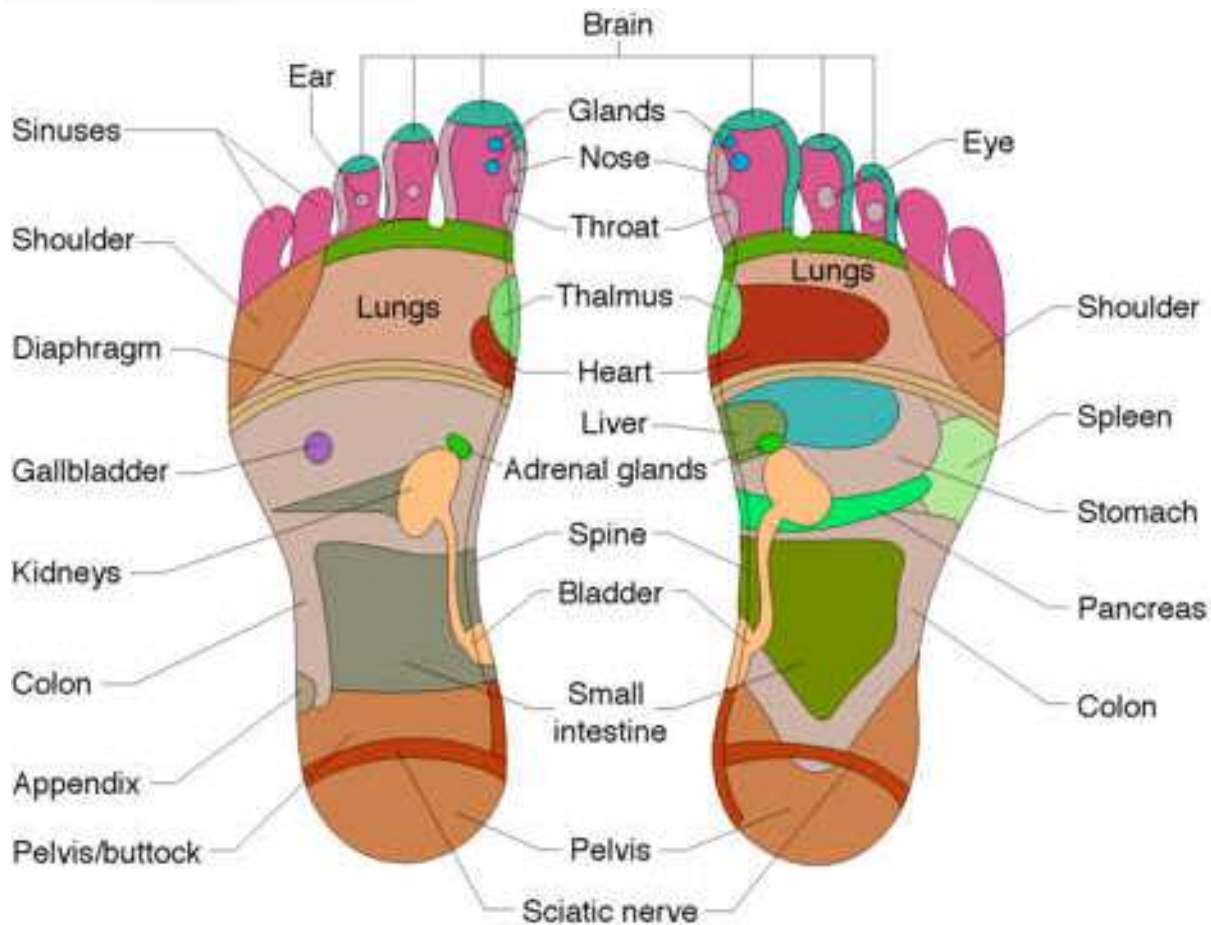
Reflexology Guide

What is Reflexology?

It is an ancient complementary therapy, which is based on the belief that various parts of the feet correspond to parts of the body. During a treatment, thumb and finger pressure points are applied to the soles of each foot. This then stimulates all the organs, glands and systems of the body via the nerve endings and meridians (energy channels which run up the whole body) present in the feet.



Reflexology is relaxing. When a person relaxes, the breathing and thinking slows, which helps to improve circulation, and allows the body to use more oxygen. If the body isn't relaxed, blood doesn't flow, organs are starved for oxygen, and endorphins (the body's painkillers) don't get where they're needed.



Mini Map of the Body

Reflexology can also be applied to the palms of the hands and the ears, but for the purpose of this guide, we will concentrate on foot reflexology.

Where did Reflexology originate?



The origins of reflexology go back to many diverse cultures. One theory is that reflexology originated in China about 5,000 years ago. It may have also been used in India, Egypt and Babylonia. The oldest evidence we have is a pictograph found on a tomb in Egypt dated around 2,330 BC

Feet Facts!

- There are over 7,000 nerve endings in the feet. These nerve endings have interconnections through the spinal cord and brain with all areas of the body.
- The feet are the furthest away from the heart, which is where circulation tends to stagnate. Receiving regular reflexology will improve circulation, encourage the release of accumulated toxins and will improve absorption of nutrients into the blood.
- Gravity pulls toxins downwards, which can be felt as calcium crystals in the soles of the feet



The benefits of Reflexology

- Reduces stress and calms the nervous system
- Improves circulation
- Cleanses the body of impurities and toxins
- Balances the whole system
- Revitalises natural energy levels
- Pain relief
- Stimulates natural healing mechanisms within the body

What conditions can reflexology help with?

- ME & Chronic Fatigue
- Infertility
- Stress and tension in the body, mind and emotions
- Hormone imbalances
- Headaches and Migraines
- Spine and musculoskeletal conditions such as Sciatica
- Toxic build up
- MS
- Disturbed sleep patterns and insomnia

- General tiredness and exhaustion

Reflexology and crystal deposits

Grainy crystal deposits can often be felt underneath the skin during a treatment. This is normally an indication that there is an imbalance in the corresponding area of the body and may cause slight discomfort when pressure is applied. These are believed to be calcium deposits which have settled beneath the skin surface at nerve endings. These deposits develop into acid crystals which can impede blood circulation. However, they can be broken down by reflexology and the residues are removed by the blood.

Health and Safety Essentials

In some cases, you will not be able to receive reflexology, this is called **TOTAL CONTRAINDICATION**.

In other cases, you will need GP permission first, this is called **MEDICAL CONTRAINDICATION**.

Finally, there is **LOCAL CONTRAINDICATION** – this means that the treatment may need to be modified e.g. if the receiver had athlete's foot or sunburn on their back, you would avoid that area completely. In the case of allergies, you would just need to use products which are suitable for your client. Here is a list of the conditions which are contraindicated:

Total Contraindications Do not carry out treatment	Medical Contraindications Obtain GP/Specialist's permission prior to treatment	Local Contraindications Avoid area during treatment
↓	↓	↓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contagious or infectious conditions • Skin diseases • Under the influence of recreational drugs or alcohol • Fever/temperature • Internal bleeding • Recent inoculation (wait 48 hrs) • Allergies to essential oils, base oils, talcum powder, creams/lotions used in therapy • Pregnancy (first 12 weeks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardio vascular conditions (Hypotension, Phlebitis, Hypertension, Hypotension, Thrombosis, Embolisms, Heart Conditions e.g. angina, pacemaker) • Diabetes if skin is very thin, easily bruised or loss of sensation in the feet • Gynaecological infections • Medical oedema (fluid retention) • Arthritis • Acute rheumatism • Osteoporosis • Asthma • Trapped, pinched, 	<p>APPLICABLE TO FEET & LEG AREAS only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scar tissue – 6 months for minor surgery & 2 yrs for major surgery • Sunburn • Cuts, bruises, boils, warts, open wounds, abrasions • Undiagnosed pain, lumps, bumps & swelling • Inflammation • Fractures/broken bones • Sprains

	inflamed nerves (neuritis) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High risk pregnancies • Nervous/psychotic conditions • Palliative care for the terminally ill • If client is on strong medication • If client is undergoing medical treatment • Bells Palsy • Peripheral neuropathy (loss of sensation in parts of the body) • Recent surgery/operations • Kidney infections 	
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Health and Safety: - for the person carrying out the treatment

- Wash and sanitise your hands – Superdrug and £ shops now sell the small gel sanitiser
- Tie long hair back
- Remove jewelry
- Use a clean towel
- Cover any small cuts with a plaster – for yourself or the person you are massaging
- Check that you do not have any contraindications for carrying out the massage

Equipment

- Towel
- Talc – reflexology is traditionally carried out with talc, if you allergic, use a small amount of lotion or carrier oil instead
- Foot wipes or bowl of warm water
- CD player and relaxation music

To begin with make sure the feet are clean and dry prior to starting the treatment. Either use a foot wipe or a nice relaxing foot soak.



If you are giving reflexology, ensure that the foot you are working on is placed at a height which is comfortable for your recipient, but enables you to keep an upright posture (avoid slouching). If you wish you can sit opposite your recipient and place their foot on your lap, on top of a towel.

Alternatively they may lie down e.g. on a sofa or bed and you sit at the opposite end, either with them or on a chair.



If you treating yourself to a foot massage than find a comfortable chair or sofa and put your foot on your lap.

Before you begin, ask the person to take 3 deep breaths and to imagine that they are in their most favourite place of relaxation, peace and safety – it could be home, on a beach etc etc

You should aim for the treatment to last between 30 minutes and 1 hour, divide the time equally between each foot.

Techniques

1. Warm up stroking



This technique stimulates the blood vessels and warms up the feet. **Hold one foot with one of your hands. With the other hand, use your thumbs in a slow, firm stroking motion, starting at the toes and moving up to the ankle.**

Once you have reached the ankle follow the same line back to the toes, applying lighter pressure on the way back down to the toes.

Repeat this 6 times and then perform the same technique to the sole of the foot.

2. Ankle rotation

Firstly, gently rock the ankle from side to side to loosen the joint.



Hold the heel of the foot with one hand (in a cupped position) and hold the top of the foot with the other hand.

Rotate the foot clockwise and anticlockwise 3 or 4 times to relax the foot from the ankle joint, reversing the directions will calm and de-stress your senses. Make sure you perform this technique gently.

3. Friction Circles

Cup the heel of the foot in one hand and use the other hand to massage the sole with your thumb or three middle fingers. Begin with the area directly below the large toe and slowly move across and down the sole of the foot.

4. Kneading

Using the knuckles, **gently** knead all over the sole of the foot, supporting the heel with your free hand.

5. Finger Walking



- This is a “caterpillar” type movement, using either your thumb or middle finger.
- Apply pressure points - **press down with the thumb/finger straight**
- Then, **keeping the pad of the thumb/finger pressed down**, bend the rest of the thumb/finger up into a triangle shape,
- **Release again so the finger/thumb is flat and slide to the next part of the foot.**

Work the whole foot, starting at the toes and working across and downwards. This is the main reflexology technique which stimulates and activates the meridian channels and ensures that you cover each organ and system of the body.

6. Sandwich Stroking



Gently stroke each foot from the ankle up to the tips of the toes

To End



Aftercare

Following a treatment it is normal to experience a detoxifying process, on both a physical and emotional level. Some of the symptoms may include: increased need to urinate, tiredness, nausea, headache, breakout of spots/pimples, crying, heightened emotional states etc. These reactions are all normal and healthy, a sign that your system is releasing built up physical toxins and emotional tensions.

In order to support you through this process, it is helpful to follow the after care advice for up to 48 hrs:

- Increase your water intake
- Eat light foods, preferably no meat

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- Eliminate alcohol, cigarettes and caffeine from your diet
- As much rest, sleep and relaxation as possible

If you have any prolonged symptoms, please contact your GP

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