

Reflexology

Reflexology is a popular alternative therapy that promotes relaxation, improves circulation, reduces pain and encourages overall healing.

History

The art of reflexology is believed to have its roots in the ancient civilizations of Egypt, China, Africa and the native Indian tribes of America. Not far from the Pyramid of King Teti at Saqqara lies the tomb of Ankhmahor – also known as the Physician's Tomb – which dates back to the 6th dynasty, around 2330BC. In the doorway to the pillared hall inside the tomb are several wall paintings of medical scenes including surgical operations and one (shown below) which suggests that a form of reflexology may have been practiced in Ancient Egypt.



In our western culture one of the earliest books to be written on reflexology was published in 1582 by two eminent European physicians, Dr Adamum and Dr A'tatis. However, it wasn't until the early 1900s that an American doctor, **Dr William Fitzgerald**, noting that pressure on specific parts of the body could have an anaesthetizing effect on a related

area, established a concept called 'zone therapy'. The name was later changed to reflexology because physiotherapists objected to the use of the word 'therapy'.

Eunice Ingham, a physiotherapist who worked with Dr Fitzgerald, shaped the practice into a clinical therapy by formally identifying the parts of the feet and hands that correspond to different organs of the body and developing the pressure massage moves used to stimulate reflexes. Most teachers of foot reflexology have acquired their basic knowledge directly or indirectly from Eunice Ingham's teaching and it was one of her students, Doreen Bayly, who introduced reflexology to the UK in the 1960s. It is now used in pain clinics, cancer centers and during pregnancy and childbirth, and is one of the few complementary therapies sometimes available on the NHS.

The Therapy

Reflexology today is a precisely defined form of treatment based on the principle

that the anatomy of the body is reflected in miniature on reflex zones on the feet (and also on the hands, though a little less defined).

Sometimes the body is in a state of 'imbalance' following illness or injury, disease or stress, and energy pathways are blocked preventing the body from functioning effectively. These 'imbalances' manifest themselves through crystals at the affected reflex point. These reflex points are minute (over 7,000 in a human foot) but sensitive, trained hands can detect subtle changes and, by working on these

points, applying firm pressure with the thumb or fingers, can release blockages and encourage the flow of energy to the corresponding organ or system of the body.

With ever increasing levels of stress, it is important for us to take more responsibility for our own health care needs. By helping to restore and maintain the body's natural equilibrium, reflexology encourages healing and helps us to cope on a physical, mental and emotional level.



What to expect during the treatment

The first visit will include a consultation to determine your present and past health and lifestyle. It is important that you are frank and open with the therapist who will treat all information with the utmost confidentiality.

The reflexologist will assess the feet and stimulate various points to identify areas of tenderness or tension. She will then go over all areas of the feet but will tend to

focus on those zones linked to troubled areas. The application and effect of the therapy is unique to each person.

The first appointment can last more than an hour. A course of treatments can vary depending on individual needs and will be discussed with the therapist.

Who can benefit from the treatment?

Reflexology treats the whole person, not just the symptoms of a particular problem. Most people can benefit from the therapy and there is no minimum or maximum age limit.

Sufferers from many diverse conditions have reported benefits and reflexology has been shown to be effective for:

Back pain

Sports injuries

Arthritis

Migraine and tension headaches

Sleep disorders

Infertility
Stress related problems
Hormonal imbalance
Digestive disorders

An increasing number of people are using this safe, natural therapy as a way of relaxing, balancing and harmonising the body.

How will I feel after the treatment?

After one or two treatments your body may respond in a very definite way. Most people feel calm and relaxed.

However, everyone's body is different. Occasionally some people feel lethargic, nauseous or tearful but this is only temporary and is usually a reflection that the treatment is working and your body is responding in a positive way. It is also vital information to feed back to the therapist so that the treatment plan can be tailored specifically to your needs.

Precautions

Reflexology is recommended as a complementary therapy and should not replace medical treatment.

Be sure to give the reflexologist a complete and accurate health history.

If you are pregnant, or if you have foot ulcers, injury or blood vessel disease, you should consult your GP before having reflexology.

Treatments:

Ruth Dixon and Julia Massey are
both highly qualified, experienced
professionals

Ruth Dixon

Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Sun £30

Julia Elizabeth Massey

Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri, Sun £30