

## Incorporating Reflexology into Your Life

### Footprints for Health

You walk on them all day, but did you know your feet do more than carry you from one place to the next? They also have a unique connection to balanced health and well-being. In a form of bodywork known as reflexology, the feet are said to contain reflex areas that mirror and connect to all parts of the body--and pressure on these points can actually influence your state of health.

### What is Reflexology

The roots of reflexology draw, in part, from the ancient healing art of foot massage, practiced the world over, from Asian and Egyptian civilizations to tribal communities of the Americas. Early archaeological digs have revealed statues

relaxation technique. Using the thumb, finger, and hand, gentle pressure is applied to reflex areas of the feet in order to decrease stress and bring the body into equilibrium. While some reflexologists also apply treatment to the hands and ears, the foot--with its greater quantity of sensitive nerve endings--is considered the most amenable to this approach.

Although simplistic in application, the effects of the treatment can be profound. Through activation of nerve receptors in the hands and feet, new messages flood into the body system, changing its tempo and tone. In essence, the foot or hand becomes a conduit for sharing information throughout the



The foot has a greater quantity of sensitive nerve endings than other body parts.

of Buddha in China and Japan, and Vishnu (a Hindu god) in India, depicting markings of specific areas on the feet. But it has only been within the last century that this work has established a foothold, so to speak, in Western practice.

As we know it today, reflexology is viewed primarily as a stress reduction or

body. Function in the connecting area is improved and, at the same time, the body experiences overall relaxation and benefits to the circulation and elimination systems. When the body's systems are at optimal functioning, self-healing is enhanced.

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*Our bodies  
communicate  
to us clearly  
and  
specifically, if  
we are willing  
to listen.*

-Shakti Gawain

#### Office Hours and Contact

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**Monday & Thursday 9am to 5pm**

**Tuesday and Friday 9am to 3pm**

**Saturday 9am to 12pm**

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In this sense, reflexology is not a medical treatment for specific symptoms or diseases, but rather a way to facilitate the body's inherent healing power. Therefore, it stands to reason that paying attention to your feet can also be a great preventive measure and one easily incorporated into a daily routine.

How and why reflexology works the way it does is still up for debate. Some say it involves communication through the nervous system; other theories point to opening blockages of chi, or vital energy, in the body. Regardless, scientific studies have documented its benefit for a variety of ailments, ranging from acute disorders to chronic diseases. The majority of reflexology research has come from China where the technique is commonly used in hospitals and homes for both health maintenance, and as adjunct to medical care. Some of the positive findings include reduction of pain, improvement in circulation, release of tension, and improved effectiveness of medication, as well as benefits for diabetes and headaches.

## Fancy Footwork

Kevin Kunz, author of several reflexology books and codirector of the Reflexology Research Project, emphasizes the importance of making reflexology a part of your life. Consistency is key if you expect results, and foot homework is a low-cost, efficient way to extend the benefits of weekly sessions with your reflexologist. The techniques can be practiced even while you're busy doing something else. You can purchase devices such as foot rollers for use under the desk, but even inexpensive homemade devices will do, Kunz says. "You can put a golf ball in a sock, tie it up, and you have a roller. Anything to cause stimulation has a beneficial effect."

Reflexology is also a safe and effective technique for infants and children, soothing their emotions and promoting sleep. Naturally available and noninvasive, this approach can enhance communication between parent and child and aid in developing the child's physical awareness.

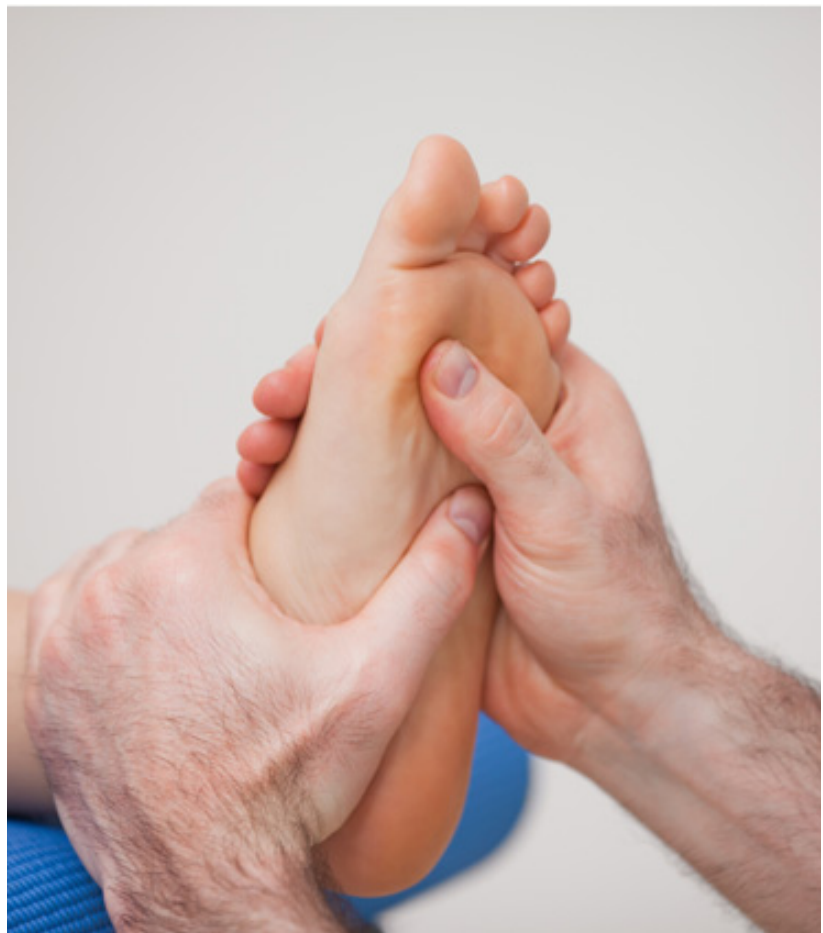
## Feedback and Stimulation

According to Kunz, lack of stimulation for the feet is a major problem in our society. We box our feet in shoes and forbid them to traipse the natural environment. Some American feet never even see sunlight, much less travel naked on a forest floor. "The feet carry the body, in more ways than one," Kunz says. "Constant feedback from the feet is needed in order for the body to make the proper responses." There is no challenge for the foot in walking on flat surfaces. Feet crave stimulation, and they were built for a variety of surfaces.

The Japanese, as well as Europeans, have addressed this basic need by creating health pathways to stimulate every part of the foot. "This comes from taki fumi," Kunz says, "to step upon bamboo. Here we call them stroll pathways. The idea is that you stroll along, and as you do, you are strengthening the system. It's great exercise and gives you more endurance."

In Asia, pathways frequently feature cobblestones for stimulation, but a sandy beach or rocky hiking trail can provide variation underfoot.

Whatever path you choose, get off the pavement, free your feet, and let them do their thing. "Over thousands of years," Kunz says, "every culture has discovered it in some shape or form. The foot is it."



Scientific studies have documented the benefits of reflexology for a variety of ailments.

# Prevent the Afternoon Slump

## Some Tips for P.M. Energy

*Jerry V. Teplitz*

If you're like most people, you've experienced the afternoon slump. You know the feeling -- it's only 2 p.m., yet you feel drained. Fortunately, you can employ methods to reduce the slump's frequency and shorten its duration.

### DRINK WATER.

Your body uses water even if you're not exercising. If you wait until you feel thirsty, you're already dehydrated. Keep a water bottle handy all day.

### AVOID SUGAR AND SIMPLE CARBOHYDRATES.

While a mid-afternoon candy bar may give you a quick rush, it actually worsens the slump. Instead, choose protein-rich foods and complex carbs.

### EAT SMALL MEALS.

Have six small meals over the course of the day instead of three large ones. Big meals cause the digestive process to divert blood from your brain to use in the digestive track.

### EVALUATE YOUR LIGHTING.

Most offices are lit with cool, white fluorescent tubes, which have a terrible effect on how people feel and function at work. A better option is full-spectrum, fluorescent tubes.

### TAKE TIME FOR WALKS.

Walking gets your blood circulating, helps you breathe better, and stimulates your brain due to the increased blood flow. Take a 5- or 10-minute walk during the day.

### MEDITATE.

Meditation is great for rejuvenating your body. By meditating for 15 to 20 minutes twice a day, you're keeping your body continually energized and rested.

### TAKE TIME TO BREATHE AND STRETCH.

Deep breathing exercises give you an energy boost. Also, stand up and stretch to increase blood flow and stimulate the lymphatic system.

### HANDLE NEGATIVITY.

Negative people and images can have a

draining effect on your energy. Make a conscious effort to stay positive.



**Avoid the drain office settings can bring on.**

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# The Power of Tea Tree Oil

Is your medicine cabinet full of ointments, oils, and creams that each treats one specific ailment? Maybe you can cut down on some of the clutter by adding nature's own wonder drug, tea tree oil, instead.

## What is Tea Tree Oil

Produced in Australia from the tree *M. alternifolia*, tea tree oil acts as an antiseptic, fungicide, insect deterrent, and more. It has been used in Australia by aborigines for generations and, since the country's colonization, has spread to the rest of the world.

Tea tree oil, which can be found as an essential oil as well as in creams, ointments, shampoo, and even toothpaste, can be used to treat a staggering variety of conditions, including: acne, arthritis, athlete's foot,

burns, cuts, dandruff, eczema, gingivitis, infection, insect bites and stings, lice, muscle sprains, psoriasis, and rashes. And that's just a partial list!

## Potential Benefits

The exact cause of tea tree oil's effectiveness is difficult to ascertain, and researchers are still looking into just how much the natural remedy can do for us. Newer studies have looked at its ability to stop the spread of sometimes-deadly methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus in hospitals.

## Use Safely

While there are plenty of benefits to using tea tree oil, its strength can also be problematic, even dangerous. The Mayo Clinic advises that it's not safe to ingest or take tea tree oil internally, and it is considered particularly harmful if

ingested by pets.

Also, like most natural remedies, the US Food and Drug Administration does not regulate tea tree oil as it does other medicines, leaving no standard quality of tea tree oil products. And, while many people enthusiastically support tea tree oil, it is no substitute for professional medical care.

Yet, many people agree that, if nothing else, tea tree oil should be a part of your first aid kit in case of bites, burns, or scrapes. But who knows? You might find yourself using it for much more than that.

*If you're feeling  
out of kilter,  
don't know why  
or what about,  
let your feet  
reveal the  
answer, find the  
sore spot, work  
it out.*

-Eunice Ingham

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World Reflexology Week: 23 to 29 September 2019

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- Chinese Reflexology
- Thai Foot Massage

Investing in massage and reflexology is an investment in your health.

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