

What is Reflexology?

Reflexology is a scientific art based on the premise that there are zones and reflex areas (think reflection of the body in a mirror) in the feet and hands and ears, which correspond to all body parts. The physical act of applying specific pressures using thumb, finger and hand techniques results in stress reduction, which causes a physiological change in the body.

How Does Reflexology Work?

Reflexology involves the use of applied precise alternating pressure techniques, also called "thumb and finger walking", on the corresponding area of the body located on the hands and feet.

- In reflexology the body is mapped on the hands, feet and ears. The body is divided into 10 longitudinal (vertical) zones, which run the length of the body from head to toe. There are 10 zones, each finger and each toe represents the 10 zones that are used by the reflexologist to locate specific areas of the body.
- There are about 7200 nerve endings in each foot; 2500 in each hand and 435 in each ear that corresponds to every part of the body. It is the nerve endings in the hands, feet and ears that send the message to the brain about stress or pain found in the body during a reflexology session. The brain then responds by producing endorphins, the body's natural pain reliever.

What can Reflexology do for you?

The Anatomy & Physiology mechanisms by which Reflexology works includes, but is not limited to:

The nervous system

Circulatory system

Lymphatic system

Sensory stimulation

Biomechanics

Relaxation response

Reflexologists are not physicians and do not diagnose or prescribe.

Reflexology improves circulation of the entire body, reduces stress, induces relaxation and helps to normalize the body naturally.

Is Reflexology Safe?

No drugs or needles are used, and tools are not used by methods that correspond to guidelines of the American Reflexology Certification Board (ARCB). The recipient removes only their shoes and socks and perhaps jewelry.

Is Reflexology a Medical Treatment?

Reflexology is not recognized as a medical treatment. The AMA says that 85% of all illness is due to stress. Reflexology today is practiced as a form of stress management and wellness maintenance. Release the stress and the body will respond. In order for the body to begin the healing process, it must be in a state of rest and relaxation. Reflexology releases tension, improves circulation and normalizes the body function, a compliment to conventional and traditional healthcare.

The following Medical Centers statements are their own findings and opinions:

Memorial Sloan-Kettering's Cancer center states: A reflexology session is deeply relaxing and helps to reduce stress, relieve pain, increase circulation, and enhance well-being.

Maryland Center for Integrative Medicine states:

The benefits (of reflexology) include reduction in tension and stress, increased vascular, neural and lymphatic circulation and the releasing of toxins. Research has shown that blood pressure can actually decrease during a session! Clients use reflexology to alleviate or manage asthma, sinus problems, digestive disorders, inflammations, menstrual irregularities, pain, fatigue, inflammatory skin conditions and other imbalances. It is especially beneficial for circulatory problems.

The Heart Center at Rita's Medical Center states:

Reflexology helps speed recovery and reduces discomfort. Reflexology therapy strengthens and supports the body's own healing process. St. Rita's conducted a three-month pilot study on open-heart surgery patients who received reflexology, and the study confirmed a patient's level of pain and anxiety decreased significantly. It also helped patients increase the distance they were able to walk, decreased the number of days they were hospitalized and the amount of medication administered during the recovery process.

Research Studies

The American Academy of Reflexology conducted the first reflexology research study to ever be published in scientific medical literature, when the study appeared in the prestigious journal, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Vol. 82, #6, December 1993. This ground-breaking study was reported around the world, including in Journal Watch, which is published by the same people who publish the New England Journal of Medicine. Publishing of the study, and the wide spread reporting that followed in magazines, newspapers, numerous professional journals, as well as on radio, television, for the first time, gave Reflexologists around the world the ability to say, "Yes" when asked if there was any published scientific Reflexology Research validating that Reflexology works. Since the study was published, many other Reflexology Research Studies have been reported around the world. For any number of reasons, the PMS Reflexology Research Study has helped open doors for others around the world to conduct their studies. (From www.reflexologyresearch.net) The results were so astounding it is impossible to ignore. To say that reflexology has no basis in science is to purposefully ignore that study and the subsequent studies that followed. Dr. Shewta Choudhary, India, Reflexology and Post Operative Pain [3] Dr. Shewta Choudhary, India, Reflexology and Post Operative Nausea [4] Reflexology Research Study By M. Piquemal, M.D., E.E. [5]