

*A person's foot is half of
their adult size by the age
of one.*



REFLEXOLOGY

This chapter presents an introduction to reflexology, offers an understanding of what type of condition is helped by the treatment and summarises the benefits. It is not designed to equip you to practise as a reflexologist, but should go some way toward informing your thinking when working with clients.

What Exactly is Reflexology?

This is likely to be the most commonly asked question when you're advising a client to seek the professional help of a reflexologist.

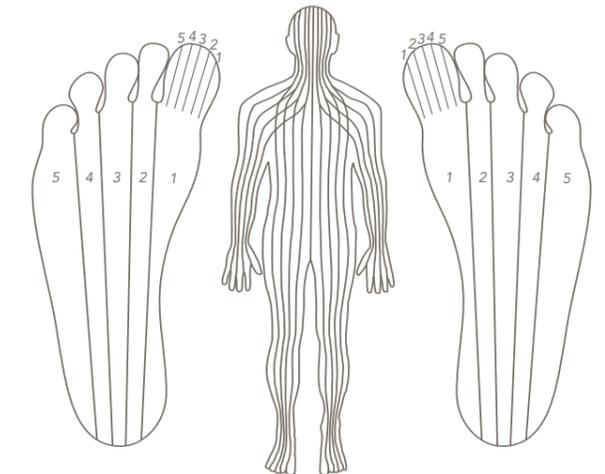
It is a form of natural, holistic therapy based on the discovery that certain points on the hands and feet correspond to systems, organs and structures in the entire body. It can be described as a specialised form of massage of the hands and feet, but most commonly the feet.

It is, however, far more than simply massage - special pressure techniques are used to detect and correct congestion or 'imbalances' in the body that may be causing ill-health. It is a highly relaxing yet deeply stimulating treatment using the principles of therapeutic human touch and interaction to work with the body's natural healing systems.

The Earliest Indication of Foot Therapy

There is evidence that reflexology has its roots in the practices of the healers of ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome and China. The oldest evidence documenting a treatment given to the feet is from an Egyptian papyrus from 2,300 BC, which shows physicians working on the feet and hands of two patients. There is also evidence to suggest

> The Ten Energy Zones of the Body



> In Dr Fitzgerald's theory, energy flows through ten vertical zones that run from the feet to the head, and also down each arm to the hands.

> Pressure on a reflex point in the appropriate zone area on the foot can treat organs, glands, bones and muscles within that zone.

reflexology was used for healing amongst the native peoples of both North and South America.

From Ayurvedic medicine, we know that a form of pressure technique on the feet is used as part of their system of 'Marma' points. Similarly, Chinese acupressure and acupuncture use many points located on the feet. The principle of all of these cultures was to take a comprehensive view of the person and their disease, rather than the traditional Western view of seeing them as totally separate.