



discovering reflexology

Our bodies are indeed, a wondrous miracle. The fascinating way we function, the power of self-healing, and the mind-body connection have been a focus of both traditional and alternative medicine for centuries.

One method of healing, reflexology, has been practiced for thousands of years. Historically practiced by early Indian, Chinese and Egyptian cultures, reflexology was introduced to the West in the early 1900s by Dr. William Fitzgerald, an American ear, nose and throat specialist. Fitzgerald noticed that pressure on specific parts of the body could have an anaesthetizing effect on a related area. By studying and developing this theory, the doctor determined that specific zones of systems and organs of the body were, in turn, linked to reflex points on the feet and hands.

As early 20th century medicine grew, practitioners further developed this zone therapy into modern reflexology for the foot. Practical application taught that congestion or tension in any part of the foot mirrors congestion or tension in a corresponding part of the body. Thus, when you massage the heel, there is

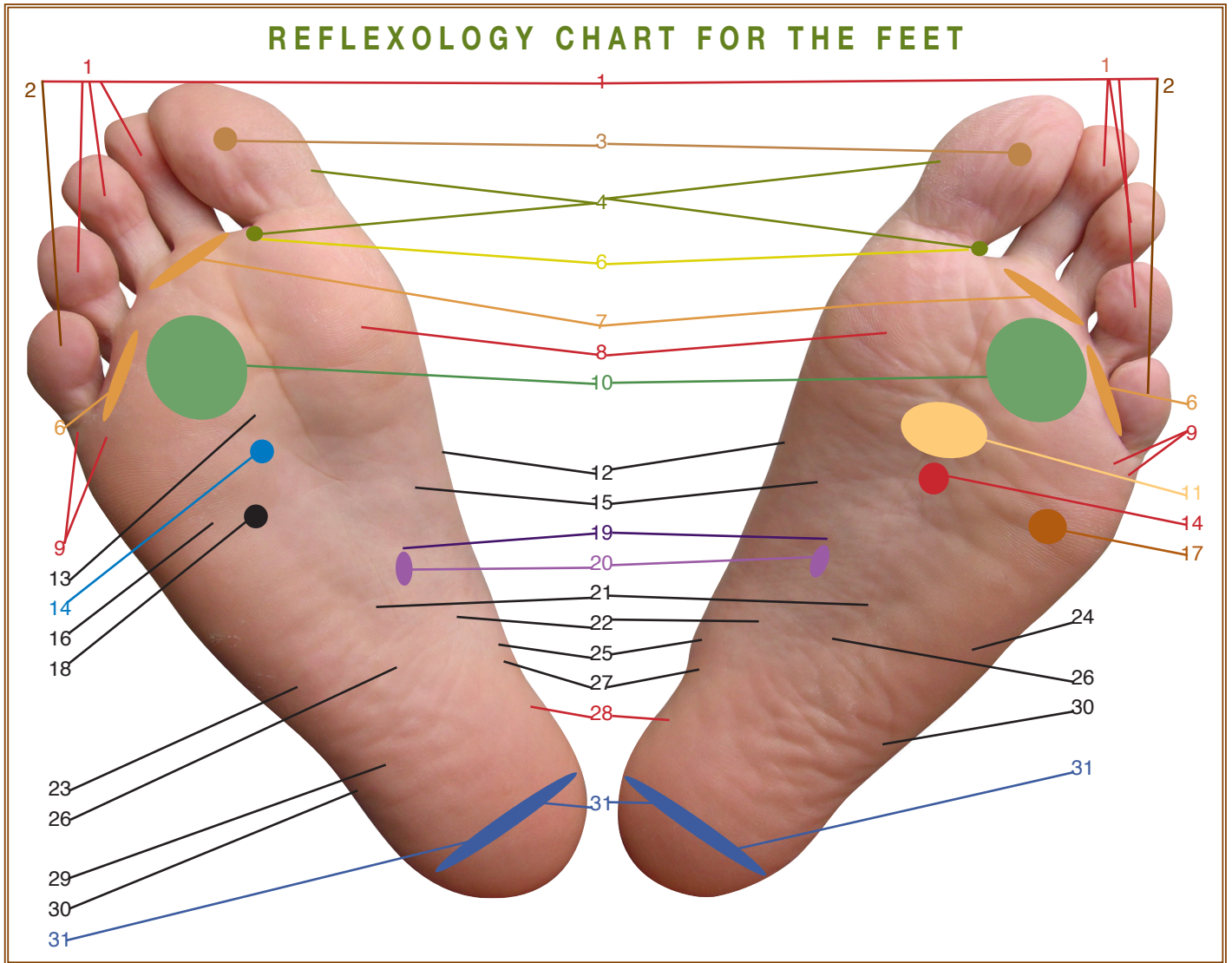
a related treatment of the sciatic nerves; when the whole foot is massaged, the entire body is affected.

A WELLNESS TOOL

A reflexology practitioner can provide a complete description of the dozens of reflex areas that correspond to various organs, muscles, and zones of the body — we've noted some basic corresponding areas (right). For example, the side and base of the big toe links to the neck area. Massaging these pressure points often helps release neck tension.

Therapists work with patients to combat fatigue, illness, or imbalance by gently massaging appropriate areas of the feet (and for some, the hands and its corresponding reflex points) — all in an effort to encourage healing, relieve stress, or boost energy. Trained (and many, certified) in this study area, reflexologists will often detect tiny deposits that with pressure point massage, will release corresponding tension or congestion. Circulation is improved and often, patients feel both relaxed and energized after a

REFLEXOLOGY CHART FOR THE FEET



session, which lasts from 30 to 60 minutes.

Reflexology is just another tool in our arsenal of wellness options. Most spas offer reflexology — a wonderful adjunct to massage (even pedicures!) that provides a whole-body treatment.

A MAP OF YOUR BODY

Reflexology is sometimes referred to as a “map” of your body. From the tips of your toes to the edge of your ankles, the surfaces of your feet maps to a specific organ, muscle, or system of your body. During a reflexology session, your practitioner will use fingers and thumbs to massage each area to ensure complete therapy occurs. Be sure to respond to her pressure, which will help her determine any problem areas.

Some basic treatment reflexes include the following:

For puffiness and water retention, massage the corresponding points for the ureters (22), bladder (28), and kidneys (20).

To stimulate a slow metabolism and promote wellness in food digestion, massage reflex areas for the thyroid

1	Top of Head	17	Spleen
2	Sinuses	18	Gall Bladder
3	Pituitary Gland	19	Adrenal Glands
4	Neck, Cervical	20	Kidneys
5	Upper Lymph Area	21	Waist
6	Ears	22	Ureters
7	Eyes	23	Ascending Colon
8	Thyroid Glands	24	Descending Colon
9	Shoulder	25	Lumbar
10	Lungs, Bronchial	26	Small Intestines
11	Heart	27	Sacral
12	Spine, Vertebra	28	Bladder
13	Pancreas	29	Appendix
14	Solar Plexus	30	Hip, Lower Back
15	Stomach, Duodenum	31	Sciatic Nerves
16	Liver		

Source: OFESITE.com

We offer information on reflexology as a wellness modality option. Our information is not presented to teach medical practice or to replace your physician's knowledge and treatment.

glands (8), stomach (15), small intestines (26), and colon (23, 24).

Rubbing alongside the outer edges of the back of the ankle, for example, helps “massage” the Uterus, Fallopian Tubes, and Ovaries, which helps ease menstrual cramps, some women report.

TIPS FOR ENJOYING REFLEXOLOGY

Reflexology is a gentle massage that’s usually appropriate for all of us, but, as with all alternative treatments, check with your physician to ensure reflexology fits within your wellness requirements.

Not sure this is the massage for you? Then start out with a 10-minute session. Even such a short treatment can provide stress release and relaxation.

Your body will respond almost immediately — you may feel relaxed or energized, depending upon your treatment session.

The key is to enjoy the therapy: If you’re ticklish,

you may want to rethink reflexology and opt for more traditional full body massage.

Just as with any massage, after your reflexology session, drink plenty of water to help hydrate your system.

DIY REFLEXOLOGY

Can’t wait to make an appointment with your local spa? A simple foot massager (below) is a perfect purchase. After a long day, kick off your shoes and roll your foot massager vigorously for five minutes to stimulate circulation and promote overall wellness. Better yet, soak feet in warm water (a massaging foot tub or pedicure station boosts the effect), then use your foot massager.

Although a session with a trained reflexologist is preferable, you can perform light foot massage and point pressure on your own at home using a reflex chart. Invest in a basic reflexology book to help you further understand this fascinating treatment and to get you started on some fancy footwork!

Fresh Tip

For more information on reflexology, check out these websites:

reflexology.org/
reflexologyresearch.com/
reflexology-usa.net/
reflexology-usa.org/

For spas in your area that offer reflexology, visit spafinders.com and spaindex.com

