

What is Reflexology?



Reflexology is a protocol of manual techniques, such as thumb and finger-walking, hook and backup and rotating-on-a-point; applied to specific reflex areas predominantly on the feet and hands.



These techniques stimulate the complex neural pathways linking body systems, supporting the body's efforts to function optimally.



The effectiveness of reflexology is recognized worldwide by various national health institutions and the public at large as a distinct complementary practice within the holistic health field.

Reflexology



NATURAL PATHWAYS

Auburn, MA

History of Reflexology

Overview

Reflexology was developed in the early part of the 20th century by American medical professionals, Dr. William Fitzgerald MD, Dr. Shelby Riley MD, and physiotherapist Eunice Ingham.

While there is evidence of therapeutic foot and hand work over a multitude of cultures and time periods, Reflexology as developed, named and practiced is of American medical origin *and is not an Asian Bodywork Therapy*.

Reflexology has its own history, theory, vocabulary and technique.

In countries across the globe, Reflexology is considered an allied health discipline and is often recommended by medical doctors in support of conventional medical treatment.

Nationally Recognized

Reflexology has state, national and international organizations, recognized professional educational standards, code of ethics, standards of practice, established scope of practice, recognized educational institutions and independent educators and three national certifying boards. Members of these associations meet the highest educational standards in the industry and exceed the standards set forth by the three national certifying bodies.

Reflexology is recognized as a legitimate, stand alone, non-invasive complementary health modality by

- National Cancer Institute
- National Center of Complementary and Integrative Health-NIH

And Defined by resolution by National Federation of Women Legislators



Reflexology Everywhere

Reflexology professionals practice in a variety of settings



Integrative and functional medicine practices

Workplaces

Wellness centers

Spas

Fitness centers and gyms

Hospitals

Rehabilitation facilities



Chiropractic and acupuncture practices

Retirement communities

Hospice

Private studio practices

Technique for Solar Plexus

How Does Reflexology Work

Currently, there is not a definitive explanation of the mechanism of action for Reflexology; however, one theory is Autonomic-Somatic Integration Theory.

Autonomic-Somatic Integration Theory

Under the *Autonomic-Somatic Integration Theory*, the application of alternating pressure to the feet, hands and ears causes predictable reflexive actions within the nervous system.

This type of alternating touch engages the parasympathetic nervous system which slows breathing and heart rate, inducing a deep state of relaxation.

“Therapeutic touch stimulates the sensory and proprioceptive nerve fibers of the skin and underlying tissues, and these messages pass along the afferent fibers to the spinal chord. From there it is conceivable that these stimuli may disperse through the central and autonomic nervous systems – producing various effects in any zones supplied from the same segment of the spinal chord. ... Such reactions are called reflex effects”

Dr. Frances Tappan, 1998,
leading researcher and author on the effects of touch therapies

Reflexology vs. Massage

Reflexology

A professionally trained Reflexologist has 200 or more hours of reflexology-only education.

Massage

Massage therapists may have a basic knowledge of reflexology with 8- 30 hours of training.

A foot or hand massage that uses some reflexology techniques is a significantly different experience than a reflexology session from a professionally trained Reflexologist.

Reflexology

Reflexology utilizes very light to moderate touch on the skin's surface to induce relaxation using unique-to- reflexology thumb and finger technique.

Massage

The massage therapist using moderate to deep pressure will utilize a variety of techniques involving fingers, hands, forearms and elbows.

Though many of the benefits are the same, massage is based on the therapeutic manipulation of the soft tissues (fascia, muscles, tendons, and ligaments), superficial and deep, over the entire the body.

Reflexology vs. Massage

Reflexology

The reflexology client removes only shoes and socks to experience a reflexology session.

Massage

The massage client is usually unclothed, but draped, during the massage.

Reflexology is primarily a stress - reduction technique.

Many of our health issues can be directly linked to stress. The long-term activation of the stress-response system — and the subsequent overexposure to cortisol and other stress hormones — can disrupt your body's processes.



The Reflexology Session

What can one expect

Usually, a session begins with a client health intake and interview. You may be asked to sign a consent form. Your reflexologist will explain what to expect in the session and answer any questions you may have. S/he will also inform you that reflexology does not treat specific illnesses and is not a substitute for medical treatment.

The session takes place with the client fully clothed, except for socks and shoes, while reclining in a chair or lying on a therapeutic table. The practitioner will begin by cleaning and assessing your feet for open wounds, rashes, sores, plantar warts or bunions and will ask you about any foot or leg pain. Once complete, the session will begin.

The application of Reflexology should not be painful or leave bruising or discomfort after a session. Reflexology is generally applied using light to moderate touch with the fingers and thumbs, not tools. The practitioner should make every effort to utilize the appropriate pressure for each individual. Since we generally don't spend time having our feet/hands/ears touched, during a session one may notice unexpected sensitivity, which may be due to footwear, usage or clothing; or the sensitivity may be an indication of where the body is holding tension.

A reflexology session can range in time from 30 mins. to 90 mins. Depending on the training and experience of the practitioner, expect to pay between \$60-\$150+ for an hour session.

Be an Informed Consumer

Research Your Reflexologist

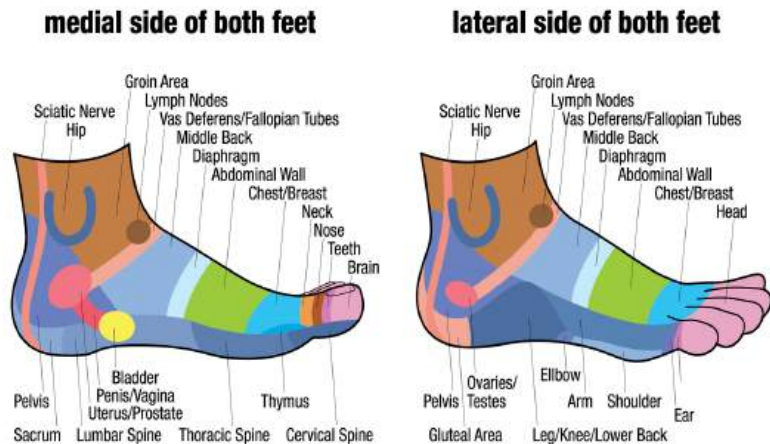
Currently in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts there is no state law governing the practice of Reflexology, though many towns and cities have their own regulations that vary in requirements.

There are some businesses that say they offer "reflexology" and "bodywork" but are actually fronts for human trafficking. Their staff does not have formal training in reflexology, anatomy, physiology, pathology or universal precautions. This practice not only misrepresents the services they claim to provide; but also puts the health and well being of the public at risk.

When selecting a reflexologist, look for the following key elements:

- Practitioner has a certificate of completion or diploma from an accredited school or recognized educator.
- S/he is a member of state and/or national reflexology associations such as the Massachusetts Association of Reflexology or the Reflexology Association of America.
- Practitioners will have credentials and professional affiliations in plain view or easily accessible for review.
- Sessions are generally available by appointment only.
- Prior to the session, the client will be asked about their lifestyle and complete a confidential health history including a list of medications. Client may also be asked to sign an Informed Consent.
- The client remains fully clothed except for the removal of socks and shoes.

Foot Reflexology Chart



Who We Are

Natural Pathways is a family business owned and operated by Kathy Knight and Dawn Skoglund. They received certification from the American Reflexology Certification Board in 2004.

Contact Us

Natural Pathways is available by appointment only. For more information or questions, please contact us by phone or email.

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Natural Pathways

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