

# FOOT REFLEXOLOGY

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# FOOT REFLEXOLOGY

1. Define reflexology, theories behind how it works, and how the body is mapped on the feet.
2. Describe basic techniques used in foot reflexology and treatment guidelines.

# INTRODUCTION

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- ✘ *Reflexology* originated over 5000 years ago
- ✘ Roots can be traced to many countries, including:
  - + India
  - + Egypt
  - + China
  - + Japan



# EUNICE INGHAM

- ✘ Mother of reflexology
- ✘ Mapped locations of reflex points on feet
- ✘ Popularized reflexology in North America



Courtesy International Institute of Reflexology.

# INTRODUCTION

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- ✘ Disrobing is not necessary
- ✘ Lubricants are not needed
- ✘ Can be done practically anywhere

# THEORY OF REFLEXOLOGY

- ✘ *Reflexology*: Method of increasing life force through applied pressures on reflex points located on hands, ears, face, and feet
  - + Developed from zone therapy
- ✘ Energy travels through body through 10 zones
- ✘ Direct pressure directs life force through its respective zone



# THEORY OF REFLEXOLOGY

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- ✘ When the body is in a state of health, energy flows freely along the zones
- ✘ Do not confuse reflex points with reflex actions, which are involuntary responses to nerve stimuli
- ✘ Disease or pain impedes the flow of life force and represents an imbalance or obstruction in that flow
- ✘ Pressure typically is applied with fingers and thumbs along zones and reflex points

# MAP OF THE BODY: ZONES

## ✘ Zones

- + Paths through which energy or life force travels
- + 10 zones (5 per foot)
- + Zones run from each toe to the head
- + Stimulation of the life force in a zone on the foot affects the entire zone



# TEN ZONES

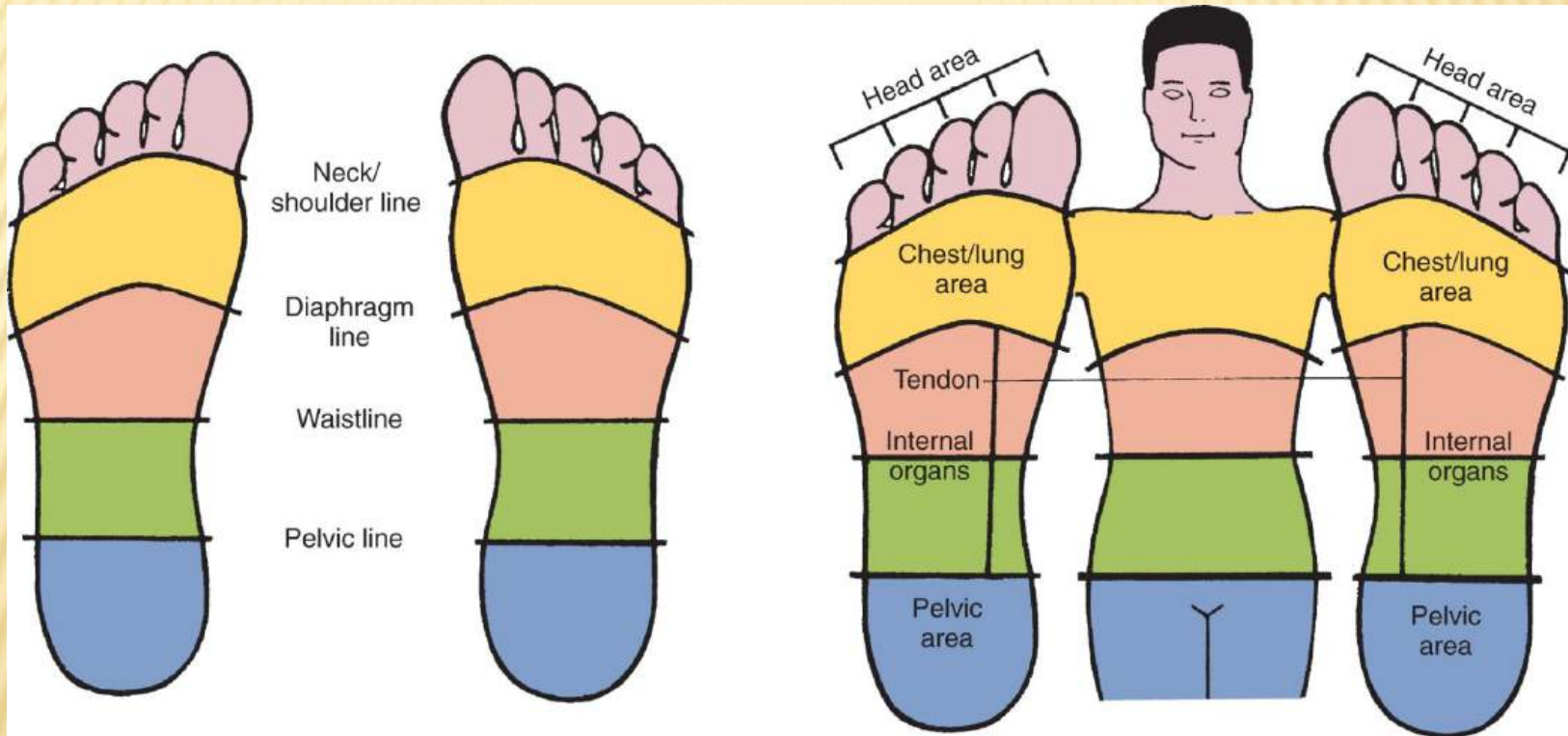


# LANDMARKS

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- ✘ The four horizontal lines that traverse the bottom surface of each foot
  - + Neck/shoulder line: Between toes and ball of foot
  - + Diaphragm line: Where ball of foot meets lateral arch
  - + Waistline: From base of fifth metatarsal to medial edge of foot
  - + Pelvic line: Front of heel

# HORIZONTAL LANDMARKS



Norman, L. *Feet first: a guide to foot reflexology*, New York, 1998, Simon & Schuster.

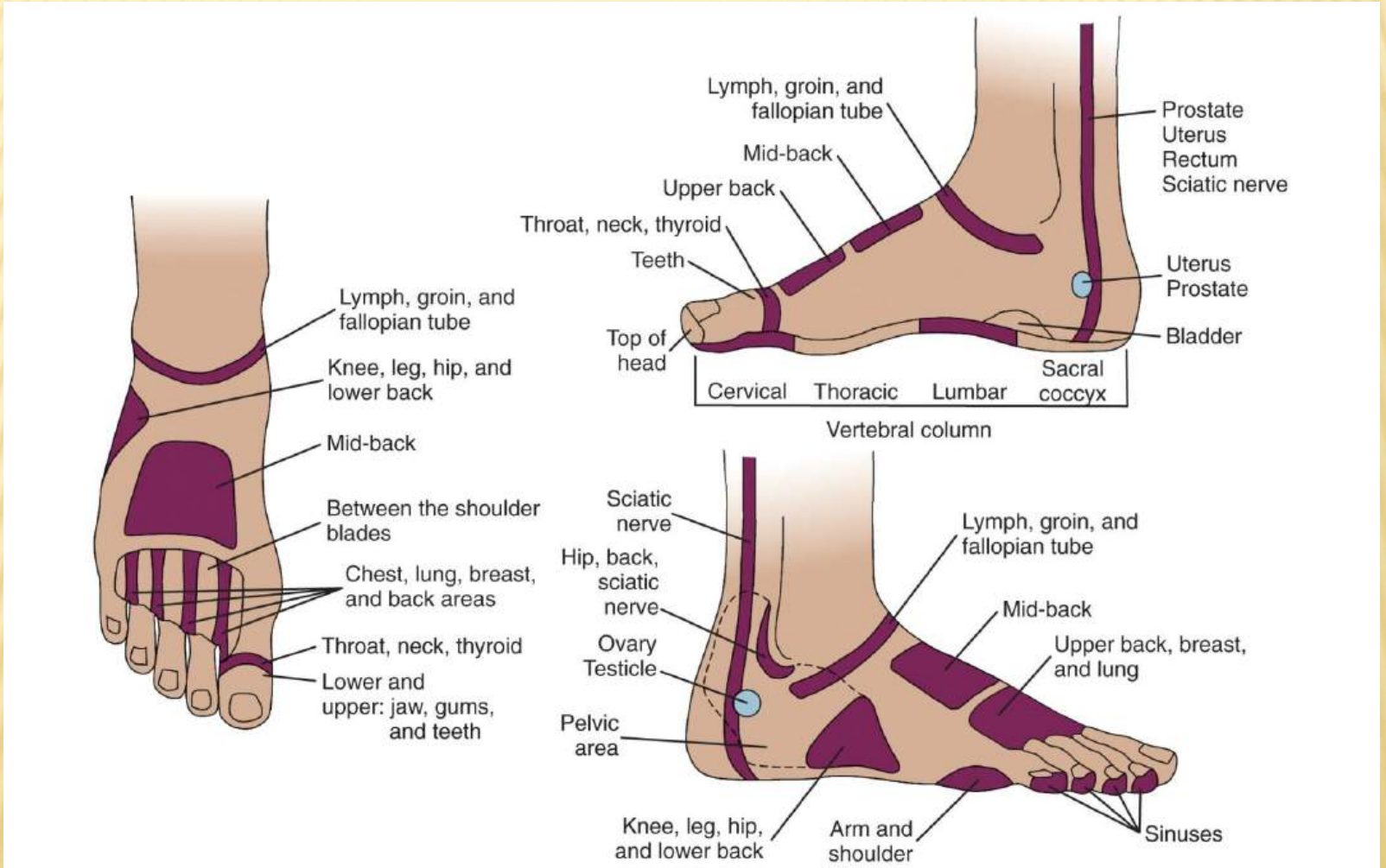


# REFLEX POINTS

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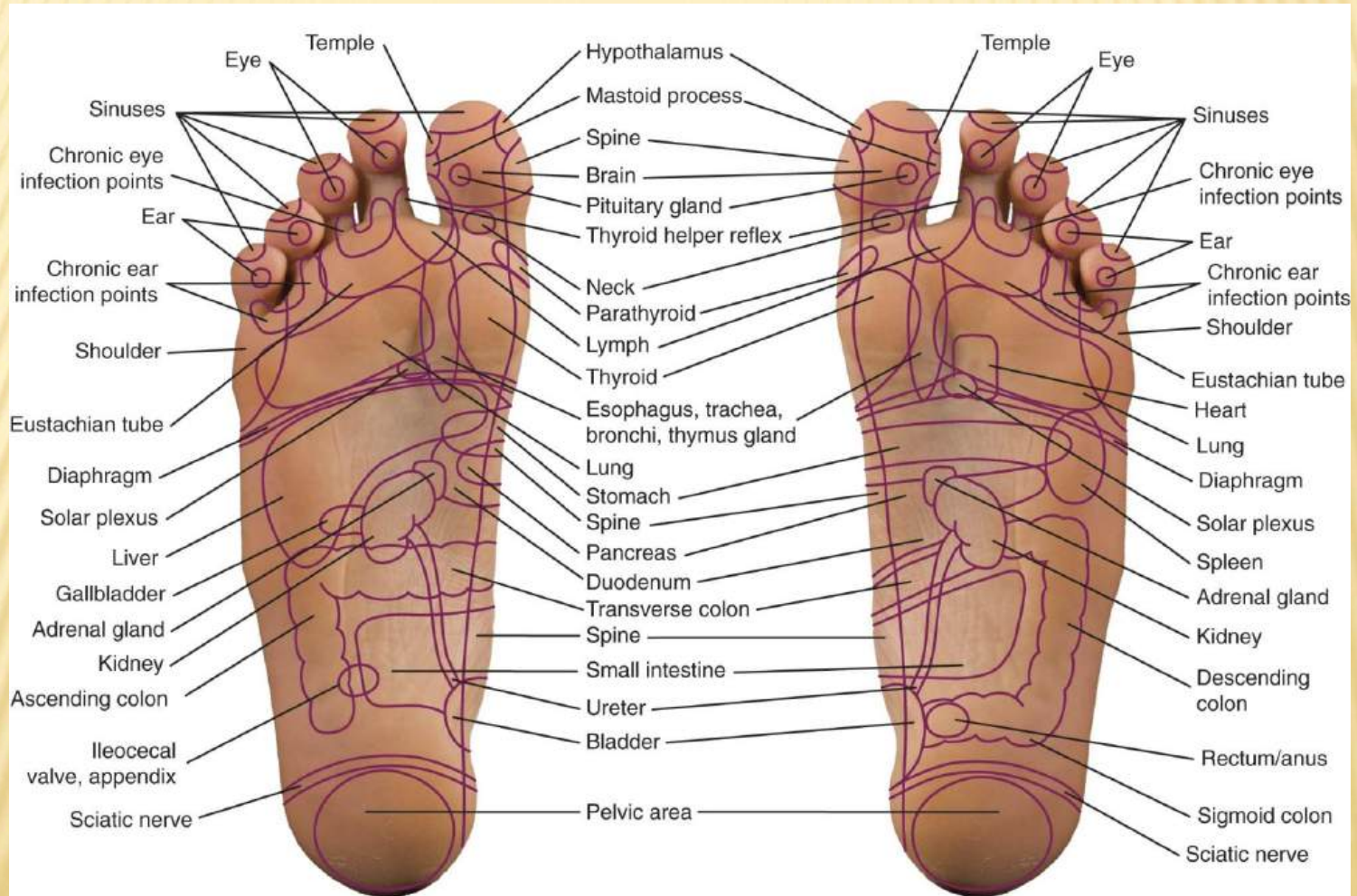
- ✘ Reflect the body's organs and structures
- ✘ Follow logical anatomic pattern closely resembling the body itself

# REFLEXOLOGY FOOT MAP





# REFLEXOLOGY FOOT MAP (CONT.)





# BASIC TECHNIQUES

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- ✘ Two basic techniques are:
  - + Finger and thumb walking
  - + Point work

# WALKING

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- ✘ Used to stimulate points in an entire zone
- ✘ Usually applied with:
  - + Thumb on bottom of foot
  - + Finger on top of foot
- ✘ Bend and straighten the thumb (or finger) at the distal interphalangeal (DIP) joint to create “walking” action
- ✘ Apply pressure in small increments along entire zone

# WALKING TECHNIQUE





# POINT WORK

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- ✘ Used to stimulate specific reflex points in a zone
- ✘ Two methods:
  - + Direct pressure
  - + Hook-in and backup

# POINT WORK

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- ✘ Direct pressure

- + Increase pressure by rotating, pivoting, or flexing foot onto thumb

- ✘ Hook-in and backup

- + Apply pressure, then flex and extend distal joint of thumb

- + Essentially “walking in place”

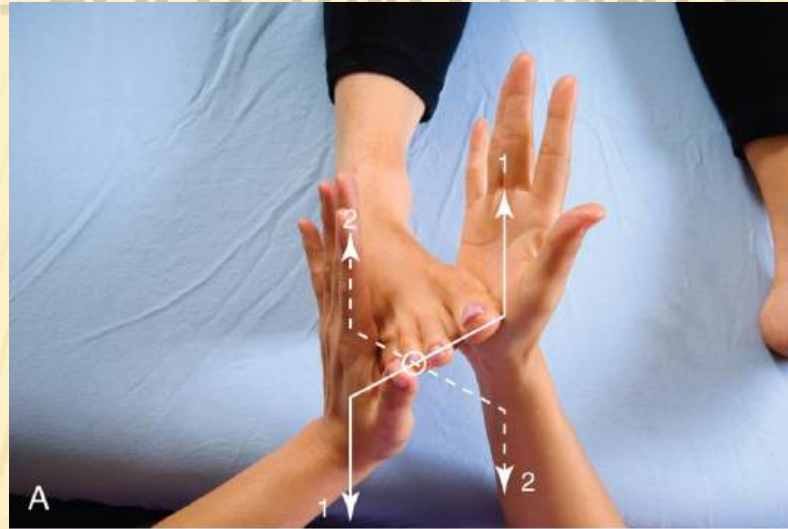
# RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

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- ✘ Also called *desserts*
- ✘ Techniques include:
  - + Moving foot side to side (foot and ankle flop)
  - + Joint movements (dorsiflexion, plantar flexion, inversion, eversion)



# DESSERTS: FOOT AND ANKLE FLOP



# DESSERTS: PLANTAR AND DORSIFLEXION





# DESSERTS: FOOT WRINGING





# TREATMENT GUIDELINES

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- ✘ Conduct intake to rule out contraindications and establish therapeutic goals
  - + Discuss procedure and answer questions
- ✘ Client is seated or lying down
- ✘ Remove socks and place feet on clean drape
- ✘ Sanitize your hands before and after session

# TREATMENT GUIDELINES

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- ✘ In general, do not use lubricants so that you do not slide off points
  - + If lubricant is used, check client for allergies
- ✘ Warm up area with relaxation techniques
  - + Use pressure within client's tolerance
- ✘ Avoid over treating
  - + Limit time spent on one area (for example, 10 to 15 seconds)
  - + You may revisit tender areas up to three times

# TREATMENT GUIDELINES

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- ✘ Use fingertips for pressure on top of foot
- ✘ Thumbs can be used on bottom of foot
- ✘ Knuckles can be used on thick skin of heel
  - + Or use handheld tool
- ✘ If your hands tire, interject relaxation techniques



# TREATMENT GUIDELINES

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- ✘ Wipe off excess lubricant (if used) after session
  - + Don't forget between toes
- ✘ May help client put on shoes and socks, if appropriate
- ✘ Suggest client drink plenty of fluids, namely pure water

# CONTRAINDICATIONS AND PRECAUTIONS

## ✘ General precautions

- + Neuropathy: Conditions include diabetes, sciatica, multiple sclerosis, and paralysis
  - ✘ Just apply gentle pressure with an open, flat hand
- + Frailty: Duration of technique should be shortened to 10 minutes per foot; treatment should involve lighter pressure and more frequent sessions

# CONTRAINDICATIONS AND PRECAUTIONS

- ✘ Local contraindications
  - + Localized cysts
  - + Warts, corns, calluses, and bunions
  - + Ulcerations, fissures, and other skin lesions
  - + Fungal infection and ingrown toenails
  - + Gout
  - + Recent injury of foot or ankle
  - + Pitting edema
  - + Recent surgery



# WHAT THE CLIENT MAY EXPERIENCE

- ✘ Deep relaxation during and after session
- ✘ Lightheadedness or dizziness when sitting or standing up (orthostatic hypotension)
  - + If this occurs, suggest client sit down, wait a moment, then try again more slowly; be ready to assist

# WHAT THE CLIENT MAY EXPERIENCE

- ✘ Flare-up of current or past illness
  - + Called *healing response* or *healing crisis*
  - + Symptoms often subside in a few days

# WHAT TENDERNESS MAY MEAN

- ✘ May indicate localized condition, such as a bunion or plantar wart
  - + If so, avoid area
- ✘ May indicate stress or client is unaccustomed to massage
  - + Tenderness often diminishes with subsequent sessions
- ✘ Do not imply that it indicates a health problem



# FOOT REFLEXOLOGY TREATMENT SESSION

- ✘ Establishing physical contact
- ✘ Locate solar plexus with thumbs
  - + Apply pressure during client inhalation and release during exhalation
  - + Repeat 3 to 6 times
- ✘ Locate diaphragm line
  - + Use walking technique over line to help client relax

# FOOT REFLEXOLOGY SESSION

- ✘ Foot can be divided into 6 treatment areas:
  - + Head
  - + Chest
  - + Abdomen
  - + Pelvic area
  - + Reproductive organs
  - + Spinal area

# HEAD AREA

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- ✘ Great toe is reflex area for head
- ✘ Locate pituitary in center of swirl on great toe
  - + Hook in with thumb
- ✘ Squeeze pads of each toe to stimulate sinus reflexes
- ✘ Use walking technique along bottom and sides of each toe, pressing from tip to base



# CHEST AREA

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- ✘ Ball of foot is reflex area for chest
  - + Heart reflex is located primarily on left foot, with small portion on right foot
- ✘ Use walking technique with thumbs to work area

# ABDOMINAL AREA

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- ✘ Contains abdominal reflexes
  - + Located between the diaphragm and pelvic lines
- ✘ Stimulate the pancreas reflex, located on the left foot just behind stomach reflex
- ✘ Avoid overworking during first few sessions
  - + Can leave client feeling overwhelmed and exhausted

# PELVIC AREA

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- ✘ Located behind the pelvic line landmark
- ✘ Contains reflexes for lower abdomen and pelvic organs



# REPRODUCTIVE AREA

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- ✘ Located on heels and ankles
  - + You can stimulate the uterus point during all pregnancy trimesters; no documented evidence indicates this would prompt labor
- ✘ Be sure to work sciatic nerve reflexes

# SPINAL AREA

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- ✘ Located along medial edge of feet
  - + Medial edge has four distinct curves, just as does the vertebral column
- ✘ Spinal area contains all the spinal reflexes, which are very important to overall health
- ✘ Walk your thumb along the spinal reflexes, pressing continuously from the base of the heel to the base of the nail of the great toe