

FOOT REFLEXOLOGY

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

- ✘ *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

- ✘ 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

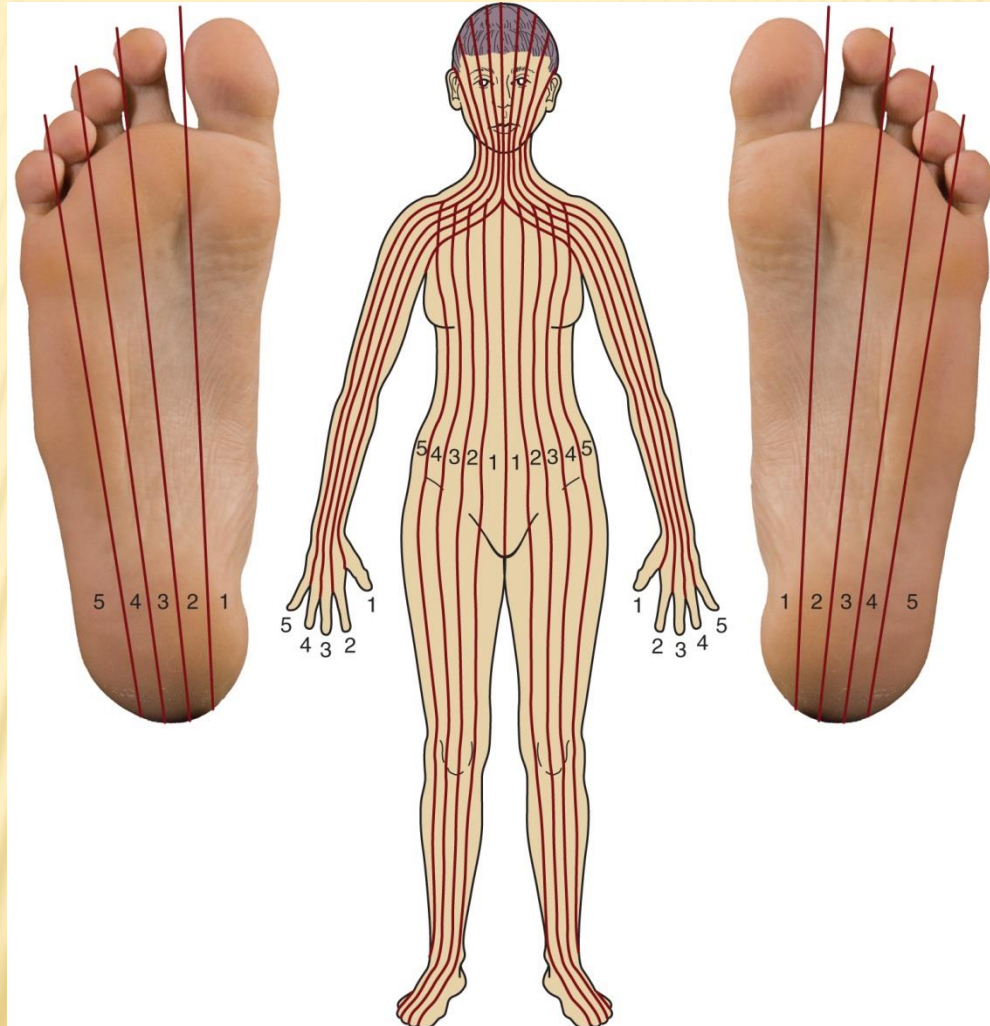
- ✘ When the body is in a state of health, energy flows freely along the zones
- ✘ Do not confuse reflex points with reflex actions, which are involuntary responses to nerve stimuli
- ✘ Disease or pain impedes the flow of life force and represents an imbalance or obstruction in that flow
- ✘ Pressure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

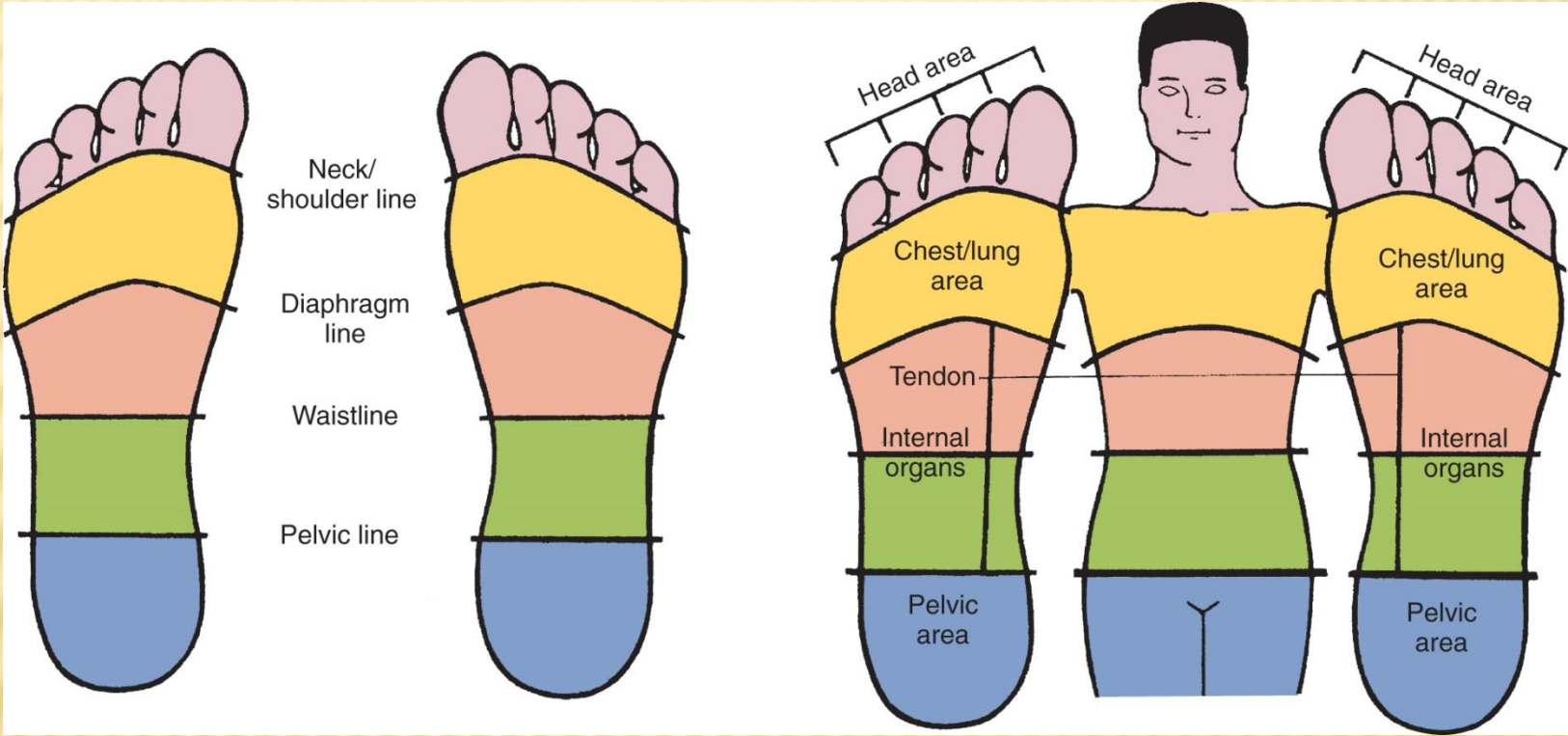
TEN ZONES



LANDMARKS

- ✘ 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

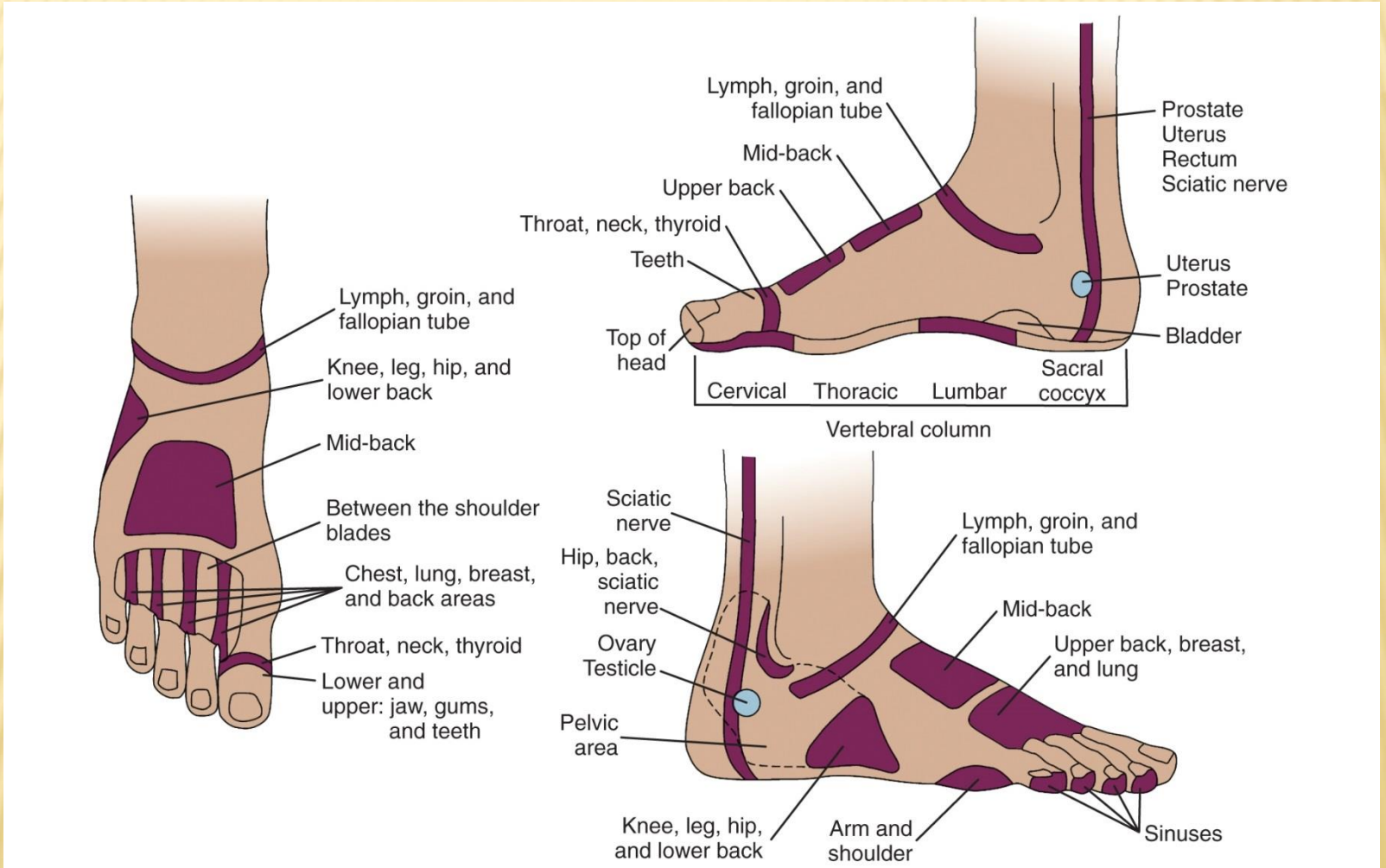


Norman L. *Feet first: a guide to foot reflexology*, New York, 1998, Simon & Schuster.

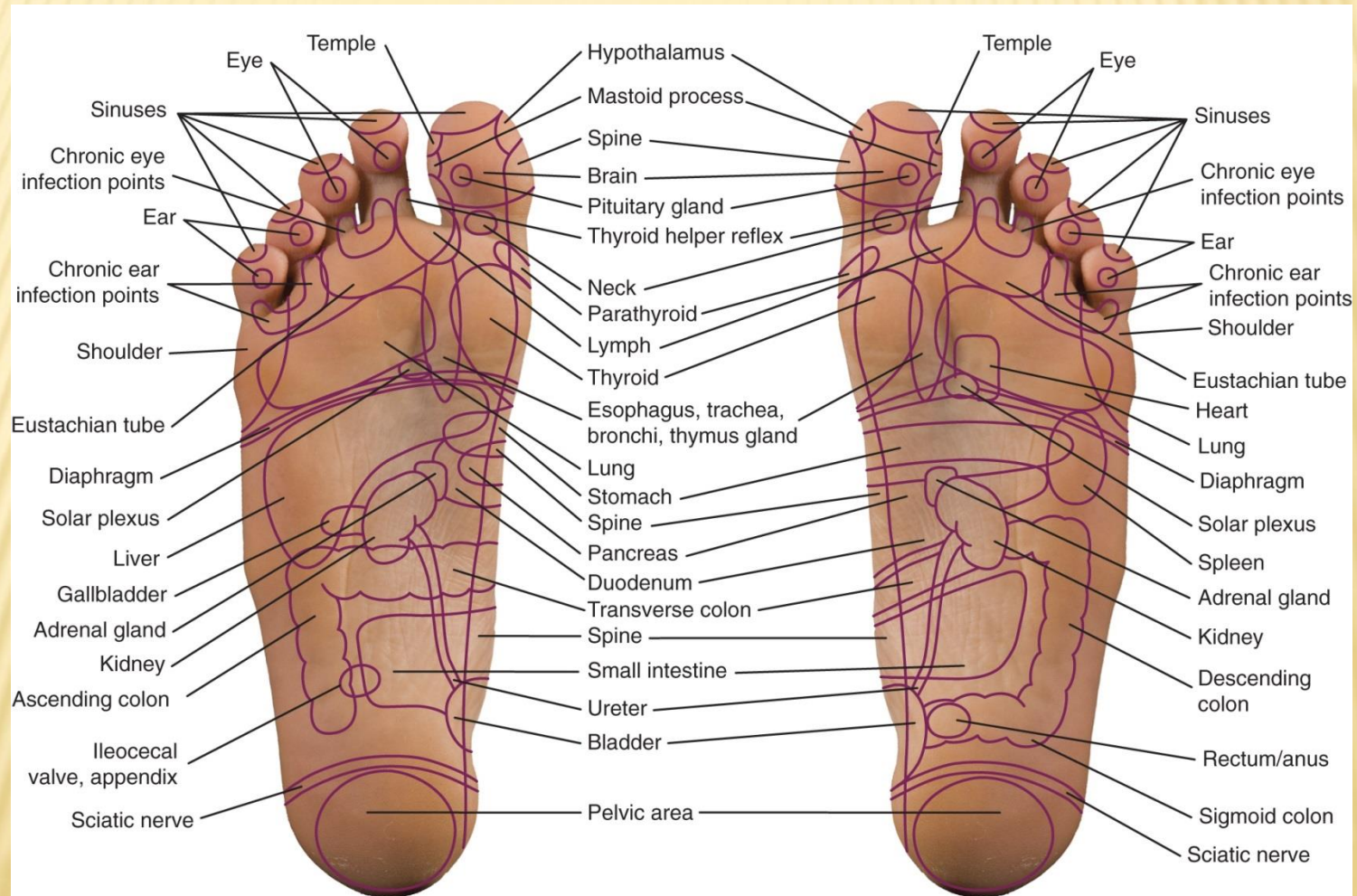
REFLEX POINTS

- ✘ 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

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

WALKING

- ✘ 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

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

POINT WORK

- ✘ Direct pressure

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

- ✘ Hook-in and backup

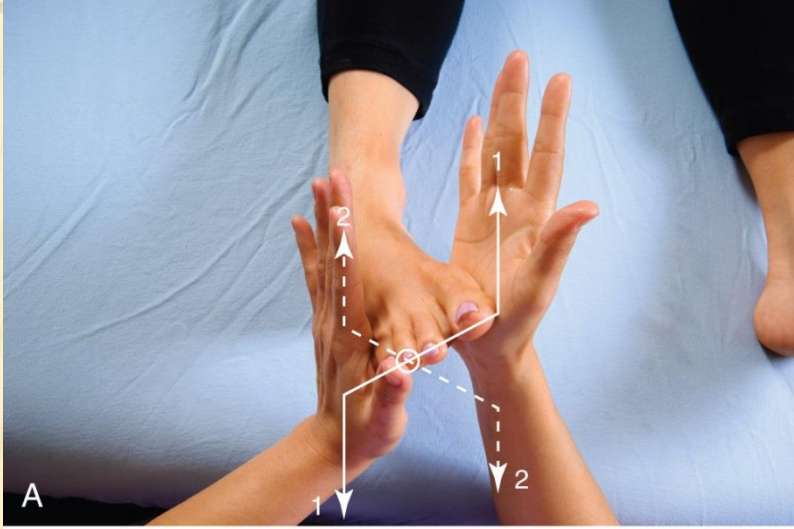
- + Apply pressure, then flex and extend distal joint of thumb

- + Essentially “walking in place”

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

- ✘ 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

- ✘ 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

- ✘ 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

- ✘ 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

- ✘ 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

- ✘ 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

- ✘ 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

- ✘ 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

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

REPRODUCTIVE AREA

- ✘ 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

- ✘ 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