

## Reflexology

With my first formal introduction to reflexology I didn't really know what to expect. What I experienced was a gradual warming and unwinding of my whole body and an attention of profound curiosity and wonder that developed immediately on what was going on with my feet. How could pressure applied to my feet be influencing the rest of my body? I came out of that first session with that feeling commonly referred to as grounded; I was alert, relaxed and I sensed a calmness all around me.

At the time, I was pursuing studies in kinesiology and psychology that addressed my interest in athletics and my desire to better understand the body and mind. Throughout university, post-graduate travels, and well into my first job at a physiotherapy clinic, I found myself preoccupied with the reflexology I had experienced and gradually recognized that that session was now changing my life direction. I began to entertain the idea of becoming a reflexologist to deepen my knowledge and understanding of the changes that were taking place in my body as a result of regular treatments. And that, as they say, is history.

Now it is not only my experience that commits my interest and enthusiasm for reflexology, but the experiences of my clients and the changes it makes in their lives and health. It's still all part of the great mystery of healing, a mystery that deepens with the positive and concrete outcomes of my clients.

What exactly is reflexology? Well, reflexology is a natural, non-invasive therapy based on the principle that there are zones and reflexes in the feet, hands, and ears that correspond to every organ, gland, part, and system of the body. Therefore, by applying pressure to the nerve endings of the feet, hands, and ears, reflexology creates channels for healing energy to circulate to all parts of the body. People have been practicing reflexology for thousands of years to treat the individual as a whole, in order to restore balance and harmony in body, mind and spirit. Some researchers believe that reflexology is actually more than 5500 years old. Exactly where it originated is not clear, but the oldest documentation depicting reflexology treatment was found in Egypt.

Although no one actually knows who invented it, we can recognize and celebrate the benefits of reflexology. A typical session will take sixty to

seventy-five minutes and can help promote deep relaxation, reduce stress and anxiety, relax tense muscles, restore libido and reproductive health, improve lymphatic and cardiovascular circulation, drainage and elimination, revitalize energy, improve digestive and respiratory health, release emotional blockages, ease pain, and promote the natural functions of the body.

Reflexology has literally changed my life. I no longer suffer from various nagging health issues that I was told I had to live with. And whenever new health concerns surface in my life, I always use reflexology to help my body heal itself; naturally, holistically and without adverse side effects.

Though many people have heard of reflexology, it is often thought of as a relaxation therapy. And though its benefits in that direction are, as I have said, profound, reflexology is much more than that. Reflexology helps detect health problems early to prevent serious symptoms from developing. Practitioners use this therapy to get to the root cause of ill-health and treat this-rather than just treating the symptoms at the surface.

Imbalances in the body are reflected in the feet and are palpable to the reflexologist. Regular sessions address these areas of weakness and congestion, with changes evidencing themselves both in the client's experience of their own health and in the reflex zones of the feet that the practitioner works with and feels. It's a great feedback system, and a great program for increasing health and vitality. Conditions from localized musculo-skeletal pain to weaknesses in the organ system are all addressed with the stimulation of reflex points.

Reflexology's recent adoption into the spa industry brings mixed blessings. As a result of this event more people have had an introduction to reflexology, but unfortunately the skill level of the practitioner is often secondary to selling a service. Reflexology, practiced as it should be, as a deep-reaching healing modality, can, and does, positively change one's health. Because this healing power lies within, I encourage all of you to

put your "soles" in the hands of a dedicated reflexologist and begin your journey with reflexology.