



Reflexology

Most people know by now that Reflex Zone Therapy or Reflexology as it is commonly known is a special type of massage of the feet that comes under the heading of "Natural Healing". Some still have reservations; I hope I can help to dispel these.

WHY THE FEET?

In the early part of the 20th Century a Dr William Fitzgerald undertook research into African and Red Indian natural healing techniques using massage of the feet. He developed a way of using the pressure of the ends of the thumbs to pinpoint various parts of the body through what he called the lines of reflex. These run from the tips of the toes down the soles and over the tops of the feet in parallel lines. The feet are particularly sensitive to touch.

WHICH THERAPIST SHOULD I CHOOSE?

Personal recommendation is the best way to find a good therapist. Your own doctor may recommend someone, many nurses have discovered the benefits of Reflexology and are attached to medical centres and also the local Natural Healing Centre is a good source of information. Do be careful when you make your choice, harm can be done by those who are inexperienced. Always check that the therapist is fully insured. A good therapist will treat people holistically, which means not only will the symptoms you are experiencing be addressed, but also the underlying causes. A list of registered therapists can be obtained from the Association of Reflexologists on 09906 73320.

WHAT HAPPENS?

After asking questions to ascertain your general state of health and that there are no contra-indications, the therapist will very gently massage your feet briefly to get the "feel" of your skin and to help relax you. She/he will then press with the tip of her/his thumb many times, moving slowly along the lines of reflex. Your therapist will have explained to you what she/he will be doing and ask you to respond. The whole treatment including preparation should take about an hour.



DOES IT WORK?

Reflexology does work, but not immediately and unfortunately not for every person, which can also be said of orthodox medicine. It will not affect a cure for bone-related ailments but it can often relieve some of the pain. The main aim is to bring balance to the body, encouraging all the organs to work in harmony. It is particularly good for people with stress-related conditions and/or hormonal problems.

Sometimes there is an unrelated reason for a complaint. I had a patient complaining of cystitis whom I could not help. Still puzzled, I asked her to explain to her doctor who then sent her for an X-ray. It was found that a stitch left behind after an appendix operation 17 years previously had gathered tissue around it and was pressing on part of her urinary system. Once the offending stitch was removed her cystitis went too!

HOW DOES IT HELP?

No guarantees of cure should be given to you but you can be sure that you will feel better after treatment. Think about it. For the most part of an hour you are encouraged to relax with your feet up. The precise nature of the massage stimulates your circulation and the flow of lymph around your body. This helps move toxins on their way and gives the whole body a better balance. Stress is a factor in most ailments and that should most certainly have been relieved.

For further information I recommend the book *Reflex Zone Therapy of the Feet* by Hanne Marquardt. You can also get more information from the Central London School of Reflexology Tel No 0207 2401438.

Pam Fewings
Qualified Reflexology Practitioner