

What is Reflexology?

Reflexology is a complementary therapy, that works on the feet, enabling the body to heal itself. Following illness, stress, injury or disease, the body is in a state of 'imbalance', and vital energy pathways are congested, preventing the body functioning effectively. Reflexology can be used to restore and maintain the body's natural equilibrium and encourage healing.

A reflexologist uses hands only, to apply pressure to the feet. For each person the application and effect of the therapy is unique. Sensitive trained hands can detect tiny deposits and imbalances, and by working on these points, the reflexologist can release congestion and restore free flow of energy to the whole body. Thousands of nerve endings on the feet are touched on, activating the neural pathways of the nervous system, thus allowing better communication between body and brain.

All body systems benefit. Tensions are eased, circulation and nerve supply improves, lymphatic function increases, and detoxification is greatly enhanced. Immunity, skin tone, and the ability to concentrate also improves.

Reflexology in health care

Scientific research studies conducted in the USA, Australia, Denmark, China, and elsewhere proving the effectiveness of Reflexology.

In the UK, Denmark, Finland and Australia, reflexology is part of the National Health Service. In China, the government considers reflexology as a means of preventing and curing disease. The Danish government funded research found many health benefits, including a gain of energy, improved mood and improved sleep.

What part can reflexology play within a Medical Practice?

Reflexology works in conjunction with conventional medicine. And acts as a compliment to all forms of standard medical treatment in a wide range of acute and chronic conditions.

Reflexology therapy is useful for

- long term chronic cases
- cases involving stress and tension
- patients 'who do not like taking pills'
- patients who need more support than can be given in within normal consultation times
- patients who produce symptoms and there appears to be no underlying pathology

Using reflexology to support and enhance treatment can free doctors to allocate their own time more effectively.

It also enables the practice to offer an extra service to patients. The fact that the therapy includes a 'feel good factor', can have a major effect on patients satisfaction and their appreciation of the level of care offered by the practice.

There is also some evidence to suggest that using complementary therapies within a medical practice can help reduce the drugs bill.

Wellness Programs in New Zealand

In NZ, reflexology is making a difference in the corporate world with organisations such as ANZ National, TelstraClear, Maori Television, Nestle, Trustpower and Tauranga City Council including reflexology in their Wellness Programs.

Many employers include weekly, fortnightly or monthly reflexology sessions as part of their health regime.

Which patients can benefit?

Experience has shown reflexology to be particularly helpful in the following areas.

- conditions involving poor cardiovascular or lymphatic circulation
- stress or trauma conditions
- muscular-skeletal pain (backache, stiff neck, frozen shoulder)
- hypertension / high blood pressure
- asthma and other respiratory conditions
- headaches and migraines / sinusitis
- bowel disorders / constipation / IBS
- menstrual irregularities / PMT / menopausal symptoms
- insomnia (disturbed sleeping problems)
- postoperative recovery
- care of the terminally ill

As the therapy is extremely gentle and safe, it can be used to treat all ages, from the very young, babies to those over 80's.

Reflexology is an exceptionally therapeutic way to relieve many acute and chronic conditions.

There are very few contraindications to reflexology. Certain conditions however do require special care and a close liaison with the medical practitioner.

Reflexology aims to

Along with other complementary therapies, Reflexology concentrates on relieving stress and anxiety by relaxing the mind and body.

For more information please visit the website of 'Association of Reflexology UK' www.aor.org.uk

Evidence to validate reflexology?

The following is some research reports:

1. A study in Denmark of 116 patients presenting with a range of 15 conditions resulted in 75% of those treated with reflexology reporting primary benefits and 63% reporting secondary benefits.
2. A large post office in Denmark which employed a full-time reflexologist since 1990, reports saving around NZ \$350,000 a year due to reduction in sickness, and absenteeism of 13.3%
3. A doctors study of 64 pregnant women within a GP's practice showed a range of positive effects, including significant reduced labour time.
4. A study of patients in the Trauma unit at the Price of Wales Orthopedic Hospital, Cardiff, showed that those who received reflexology went home on average 3-5 days earlier than others.
5. A study published in Obstetrics and Gynecology of women suffering from sever PMT, showed a significant reduction in symptoms amongst those treated with reflexology.
6. Research with MS and Parkinson's Disease
7. Research with Palliative Care

In Switzerland, nurses working with the terminally ill cancer patients routinely use reflexology to decrease pain, and make patients feel more comfortable.

Reflexology is supported by research which shows reflexology is one of the most popular modalities chosen by patients undergoing orthodox treatment for cancer.

Further indications of the effects produced by reflexology, include the following which although not subject to scientific protocols, have nevertheless been confirmed by medical tests or monitoring:

- normalizing blood pressure
- increase in white blood cell count
- increased in haemoglobin levels
- improvement in peak flow levels amongst asthmatics
- increased blood flow to the brain in a study of women with migraines
- improvement of blood sugar levels of diabetic patients
- anxiety & depression reduction amongst a group of patients in a geriatric unit
- balancing of hormones naturally (Foundation of Integrated Medicine Funding)
- work in Mexico, USA and South Africa with children suffering from mental retardation, cerebral palsy, autism and emotional issues showed improvement across a wide range of parameters. Including: hyperactivity, memory behavioral issues, concentration, socializing, digestion and eating habits.

If you have any queries contact local reflexologist

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Elisa has been in successful private practice for 14 years, and has worked alongside with both complementary and orthodox medical practitioners.

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Reflexology for Complementary Health Care



in a Medical Practice

Information Sheet

WellBeing on Bealey
Holistic Health Centre

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