

Joe Linn Massage Newsletter

May 2015

Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

Incorporating Reflexology into Your Life

Footprints for Health

You walk on them all day, but did you know your feet do more than carry you from one place to the next? They also have a unique connection to balanced health and well-being. In a form of bodywork known as reflexology, the feet are said to contain reflex areas that mirror and connect to all parts of the body--and pressure on these points can actually influence your state of health.

What is Reflexology

The roots of reflexology draw, in part, from the ancient healing art of foot massage, practiced the world over, from Asian and Egyptian civilizations to tribal communities of the Americas. Early archaeological digs have revealed statues

relaxation technique. Using the thumb, finger, and hand, gentle pressure is applied to reflex areas of the feet in order to decrease stress and bring the body into equilibrium. While some reflexologists also apply treatment to the hands and ears, the foot--with its greater quantity of sensitive nerve endings--is considered the most amenable to this approach.

Although simplistic in application, the effects of the treatment can be profound. Through activation of nerve receptors in the hands and feet, new messages flood into the body system, changing its tempo and tone. In essence, the foot or hand becomes a conduit for sharing information throughout the



The foot has a greater quantity of sensitive nerve endings than other body parts.

of Buddha in China and Japan, and Vishnu (a Hindu god) in India, depicting markings of specific areas on the feet. But it has only been within the last century that this work has established a foothold, so to speak, in Western practice.

As we know it today, reflexology is viewed primarily as a stress reduction or

body. Function in the connecting area is improved and, at the same time, the body experiences overall relaxation and benefits to the circulation and elimination systems. When the body's systems are at optimal functioning, self-healing is enhanced.

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*Hey! It's
summer! Be
free and happy
and danceful
and
uninhibited...*

-Robert Montgomery

Office Hours and Contact

Joe Linn Massage

Joe Linn

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By appointment only

Hours available Monday - Saturday

Call today to schedule your massage.

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In this sense, reflexology is not a medical treatment for specific symptoms or diseases, but rather a way to facilitate the body's inherent healing power. Therefore, it stands to reason that paying attention to your feet can also be a great preventive measure and one easily incorporated into a daily routine.

How and why reflexology works the way it does is still up for debate. Some say it involves communication through the nervous system; other theories point to opening blockages of chi, or vital energy, in the body. Regardless, scientific studies have documented its benefit for a variety of ailments, ranging from acute disorders to chronic diseases. The majority of reflexology research has come from China where the technique is commonly used in hospitals and homes for both health maintenance, and as adjunct to medical care. Some of the positive findings include reduction of pain, improvement in circulation, release of tension, and improved effectiveness of medication, as well as benefits for diabetes and headaches.

Fancy Footwork

Kevin Kunz, author of several reflexology books and codirector of the Reflexology Research Project, emphasizes the importance of making reflexology a part of your life. Consistency is key if you expect results, and foot homework is a low-cost, efficient way to extend the benefits of weekly sessions with your reflexologist. The techniques can be practiced even while you're busy doing something else. You can purchase devices such as foot rollers for use under the desk, but even inexpensive homemade devices will do, Kunz says. "You can put a golf ball in a sock, tie it up, and you have a roller. Anything to cause stimulation has a beneficial effect."

Reflexology is also a safe and effective technique for infants and children, soothing their emotions and promoting sleep. Naturally available and noninvasive, this approach can enhance communication between parent and child and aid in developing the child's physical awareness.

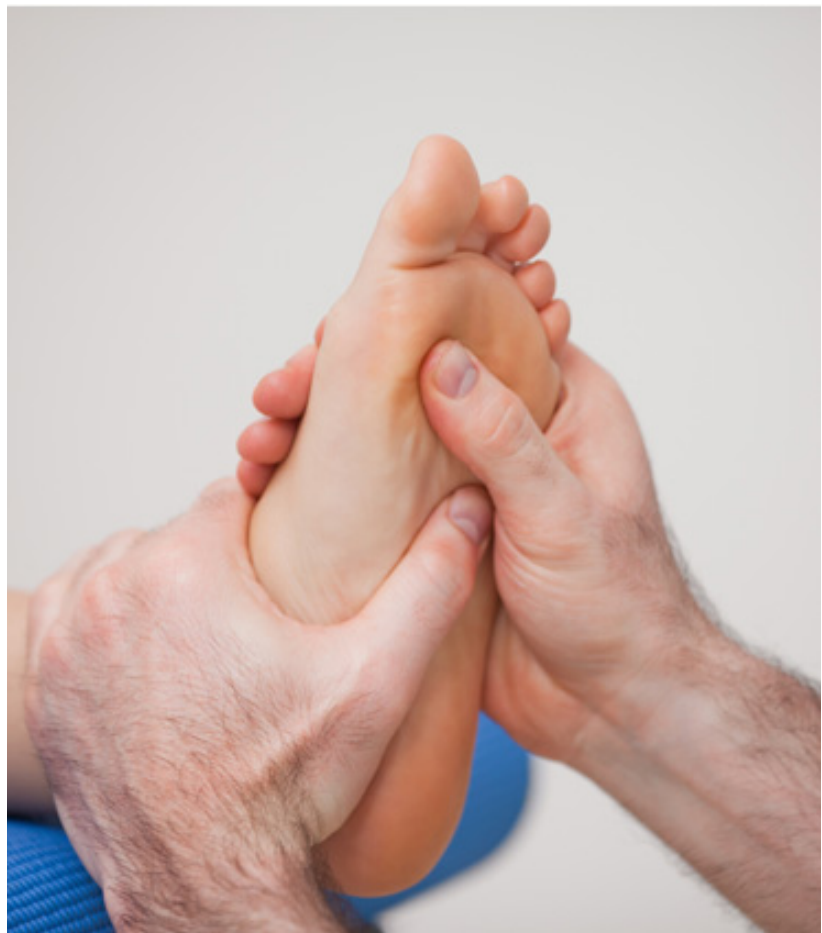
Feedback and Stimulation

According to Kunz, lack of stimulation for the feet is a major problem in our society. We box our feet in shoes and forbid them to traipse the natural environment. Some American feet never even see sunlight, much less travel naked on a forest floor. "The feet carry the body, in more ways than one," Kunz says. "Constant feedback from the feet is needed in order for the body to make the proper responses." There is no challenge for the foot in walking on flat surfaces. Feet crave stimulation, and they were built for a variety of surfaces.

The Japanese, as well as Europeans, have addressed this basic need by creating health pathways to stimulate every part of the foot. "This comes from taki fumi," Kunz says, "to step upon bamboo. Here we call them stroll pathways. The idea is that you stroll along, and as you do, you are strengthening the system. It's great exercise and gives you more endurance."

In Asia, pathways frequently feature cobblestones for stimulation, but a sandy beach or rocky hiking trail can provide variation underfoot.

Whatever path you choose, get off the pavement, free your feet, and let them do their thing. "Over thousands of years," Kunz says, "every culture has discovered it in some shape or form. The foot is it."



Scientific studies have documented the benefits of reflexology for a variety of ailments.

Pre-Session Yoga Moves for Calm

Mary Beth Braun

It's one of those mornings. Your alarm didn't go off and you have an appointment in an hour. How can you quickly collect and calm yourself enough to be fully present for the day ahead? Breath and yoga.

BREATH

Take this time to center and calm yourself. Start by channeling your yoga instructor or massage therapist and begin with breath (pranayama): inhaling to the count of three and exhaling to the count of six. Do this three times and move on to do a few yoga poses (asanas).

YOGA

You remember a few basic yoga poses from class, right? Try these two: simple seated twist and standing half moon.

SIMPLE SEATED TWIST

Continuing to use your breath, sit on the floor in an easy, cross-legged pose and begin simple seated twist. Raise the crown of your head to the ceiling, elongating your neck and spine. Inhale

and exhale, then twist to the left. Exhaling, move through center, and repeat on the right, continuing to inhale and exhale.

STANDING HALF MOON, BIKRAM STYLE

From there, step your right foot forward, followed by your left foot, and slowly roll up one vertebrae at a time until you are standing upright with your feet firmly grounded into the earth.

Feeling your feet firmly grounded, raise your hands overhead, taking the wrinkles out of your neck and elongating your spine. Inhale, exhale, and side bend to the right. Once there, exhale and feel your side body open up as you press your foot into the earth to enhance the stretch. Inhaling through center, exhale and bend to the left. Return to your center and take one more deep breath in and out.

You feel better, right? Now, let go of that harried morning and begin your day fully present and centered.

Mary Beth Braun is a certified massage therapist based in Indianapolis, Indiana.



Channel your inner yoga instructor.

Healthy Grilling Tips

Summertime and grills go together like a hot dog and mustard. But could that hot dog actually be doing you harm? Alice Bender, registered dietician at the American Institute for Cancer, says that diets high in beef, pork, and lamb, as well as processed meats like hot dogs, are linked to an increased risk of colon cancer. She suggests that sticking with chicken and fish can "make this summer's backyard grilling both healthier and more flavorful." Use herbs and spices to amp up flavor, and try marinating for 30 minutes before you grill, which can reduce the amount of heterocyclic amines--the potentially cancer-causing compounds formed when grilling.

Here are some other tips to help reduce health risks associated with the grill:

TRIM THE FAT

Fat can increase smoke, which may contain carcinogens, so choose leaner meats and trim excess fat.

DON'T BURN IT

Charred, well-done meat can increase your risk of pancreatic cancer, according to a study from the University of Minnesota.

BUT COOK IT THROUGH

Make sure that you hit the USDA recommendations for internal temperature, which can be found at www.foodsafety.gov.

MORE VEGGIES!

Grilling vegetables does not create the same heterocyclic amines as grilling meats. Plus, veggies have less fat and cholesterol in general.

KEEP IT CLEAN

Don't let a charred mess build up on your grill, because it will eventually find its way onto your food.

*The summer
night is like a
perfection of
thought.*

-Wallace Stevens

Celebrate June!

June can be such a busy time of year; Father's day, graduations, weddings and the kids getting out of school for summer vacation. Make sure to take some time for yourself!

In this month's newsletter we get to look at "What is Reflexology?" The article will give you a deeper understanding of this ancient treatment. Reflexology is not just a foot rub.

"Pre-Session Yoga Moves for Calm" offers a few quick tips for getting or keeping your day calm and centered. I like to use yoga to stay loose and grounded throughout my day.

Barbecuing is one of my favorite summer activities. "Healthy Grilling Tips" offers some great advice and remember to grill those veggies.

Congratulations to all the Graduates, Happy Father's day to all the Dads. Have a great start to your summer and I look forward to seeing you soon!

Be Well,
Joe

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