

## Therapeutic Reflexology Frequently Asked Questions



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#### How does reflexology work?

There are thousands of nerve endings in the feet that branch into the central nervous system. Reflexology is an holistic therapy that stimulates the body's own healing mechanism by means of tactile, deliberate and skilled '*hand and finger techniques*' applied to the feet, to promote a physiological response via the central nervous system, to influence whole body '*internal balance*' or homeostasis.

#### What are the principles that guide reflexology?

Reflexology is regarded as both a science and an art. It is a science because it is based on physiological and neurological study. It is an art because the success of the treatment depends on the manner in which the therapist applies their knowledge.

According to ancient theory, the structure of the feet is divided in relation to the body and is said to represent the entire body as a '*mirror-concept*'. (This means you can '*anatomically represent*' the correlation of the entire body organ system on the feet).

Reflexology considers the entire being in treatment, [a holistic approach] and encourages us to take responsibility for our own health in our life-style management: sleep routine, diet, exercise, in maintaining a positive attitude and, managing our emotions because '*physical imbalance's very seldom occur in isolation*'

#### Is the practice of reflexology regulated in South Africa?

Yes. Therapeutic reflexology is regulated by Allied Health Professions Counsel SA ([AHPCSA Regulations ACT 2001]. Reflexologists are required by law to register as practitioners and work in accordance with their scope of practice.

#### Will a reflexologist be able to diagnose, cure or heal a condition?

No. Reflexologist do not diagnose, prescribe medicine, nor may they claim to heal or cure a disease.

Reflexology promotes the body's natural healing system [homeostasis] to repair itself.

Reflexologists do not take on the responsibility for a patient's health and instead encourage patients to take a holistic approach to health. Reflexologists will refer a patient to a Medical Doctor where necessary.

#### How many treatments will I need?

The number of sessions will be determined for each individual case history, the severity of the condition (acute or chronic) and the length of time that the patient has presented with a particular condition. Other factors that may influence this decision is the medication taken by patient and, life-style habits/adjustments.

Most people notice a difference after 4-6 sessions and once the condition has been restored, a less-frequent routine of, a *maintenance reflexology programme* would be optimal, as part of a wellness-promotion regimen,

## What can I expect during a treatment?

A treatment will last from 30 minutes to one hour. During the first visit you will have a brief introductory discussion with the reflexologist.

You may ask as many questions as needed to assist you to make an informed decision on reflexology, and prior to giving your written consent to commence with the treatment.

## A treatment incorporates 3 phases

**Prior to the treatment:** You will be required to remove your shoes and socks. Your feet will be sterilised, and you will recline in a comfortable position on a reflexology bed.

**Phase 1:** The reflexologist commences the treatment with a series of tactile relaxing foot warm-up techniques, to loosen your ankles and increase blood flow.

**Phase 2:** Tactile therapeutic reflexology techniques follow to stimulate, soothe and relax all the reflexes corresponding to the entire body organ system. The treatment objective is to assist the main complaint/s whereby the areas of congestion or discomfort are given special attention and a complete body organ system reflex stimulation to induce a state of relaxation to promote homeostasis.

**Phase 3:** The treatment is rounded off with a series of relaxation techniques and, only at this final phase of the reflexology treatment, will a massage oil be applied to the feet, to assist the reflexologist to promote circulation and blood flow throughout the body and aid a deep state of relaxation.



## How should I prepare my feet for a reflexology treatment?

You need not pay any special attention to your feet, nor need you have a manicure, prior to visiting the reflexologist. The natural condition of your feet will provide the reflexologist with a wealth of information about the state of your health with clues to where possible imbalances are.

## Why do you need my personal information?

Record keeping are a regulation of AHPCSA. You are required to complete forms prior to commencement of your treatment: A consent form, a brief medical history, and provide indication of your most pressing health concerns.

The information gathered will assist the reflexologist to form a general picture of your health and life-style, or any possible ill-health conditions you may be presented with. The information also serves to provide a check-list for contra-indications and, a base-line for reference on the efficacy of treatment and recommendations.

## What are the benefits of reflexology?

The benefits of reflexology are derived as a result of stimulus [communication of electrical impulses] to activate chemical messengers to revitalise the body's internal balance or homeostasis.

Reflexology is an antidote to stress with the release of chemicals, open and clear neural pathways, release hormones to encourage hormonal balance or endorphins in pain management, breaks down crystal deposits and remove toxins, and may be beneficial in bringing comfort to persons with terminal illness.

## Why are some reflexes sensitive?

A sensitive reflex may indicate weakness, stress or a blockage in the related body organ [or body organ system], or it may be a crystal deposit on the nerve ending, a possible injury from the past, or an organ that is recovering.

The reflexologist will communicate with you throughout the treatment to gain feedback, in order to adjust the pressure according to your individual threshold. This is to ensure your comfort.

## Will I tolerate reflexology if my feet are sensitive?

Patients who experiences sensitivity 'a tickle reflex' to the touch of their feet are generally able to tolerate reflexology because a 'pressure technique' is used vs. massage. The therapist will adjust the pressure to ensure your comfort.

## What medical conditions are treated with caution in reflexology?

Your reflexologist will take care to discuss special conditions with you prior to the start of your first treatment.

The specific conditions [below] need to be noted on your patient consent form: If you are pregnant, have deep vein thrombosis, internal bleeding or blood clots, are an insulin dependent diabetic, have cancer, lymphatic cancer, leukaemia, osteoporosis (of the foot), If you suffer from epilepsy and If you have HIV/AIDS or an infectious disease the reflexologist needs to be informed.

Anyone can benefit from reflexology, nor need you be ill to benefit from reflexology, however caution need to be taken under certain conditions.

"By cleansing your body on a regular basis and eliminating as many toxins as possible from your environment, your body can begin to heal itself, prevent disease, and become stronger and more resilient than you ever dreamed possible!"

Dr Edward Group III