

THE BENEFITS OF REFLEXOLOGY

In the first of an occasional series, award-winning therapist Helen Mary Perkins highlights the benefits of complementary therapy

Complementary therapy, as the name suggests, can be used as a 'complement', or in addition to, more conventional medical treatment. Often based on centuries of traditional knowledge, therapies such as acupuncture and aromatherapy should not be confused with 'alternative' therapy which, some would argue, has negative connotations.

Of the many recognised and generally accepted forms of complementary therapy, one of the most popular is reflexology. Once known as press point or zone therapy, it works on the reflexes in the feet, hands, face or outer ear – sensitive parts of the body which are said to mirror various organs and areas of the anatomy.

Using fingers and thumbs to press on these tender or gritty spots alerts the reflexologist to your aching back or recurring headache. A highly experienced therapist can also use their intuition to identify problem areas.

In my own practice I offer a unique form of sound and intuition reflexology (Reflex Resonance Technique) which I developed in part after studying in Australia, where healing through sound is integral to the beliefs of the indigenous Aborigine people.

Reflexology has been shown to aid relaxation and relieve stress while also giving the feet some much needed TLC after being stuck in shoes that are too high or trainers that rarely get a proper airing. It

is not the same as a straightforward foot massage, although some massage-type movements may be incorporated. Regular sessions can improve mobility around a stiff toe joint, especially if bunions are a problem, while minor ailments such as sinusitis and indigestion can also benefit from this non-invasive approach. Aching neck and shoulders, from an intensive workout or too much time bent over a laptop, can also be helped.

As we put away socks and boots ready for the summer months and walks along the beach, the ancient art of reflexology, first practised by early Egyptians and later the Chinese, really comes into its own. If you are planning a pedicure to remove unsightly hard skin, take the opportunity to ask if your therapist can combine the treatment with reflexology to help relax you into holiday mood.

It has been well recorded that therapeutic touch of this kind can bring comfort and relief in many situations and even in the absence of any specific health problems a reflexology session with a qualified and experienced practitioner can leave you with a deep sense of wellbeing – almost as if you are walking on air!

To find out more, visit www.helenperkins.com or check out the Association of Reflexologists to find your nearest practitioner at www.aor.org.uk



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