Chapter 25

Foot Reflexology

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Introduction

• Reflexology originated over 5000 years ago and can be traced to many countries
• Modern reflexology developed out of zone therapy and the research of Dr. William Fitzgerald in the early 1900s
• Eunice Ingham popularized reflexology in North America and is known as the “mother of reflexology”

Theory of Reflexology

• Chi (Ki, Qi) is the life force
• 10 zones or energy pathways exist in the body and Chi travels through these zones
• Our body has reflex points located on the feet; energy blocks can be released by applied pressure to rebalance the body
• Toxins and impurities are released by increasing local circulation in the feet
• Reflexology acts to release and return venous and lymphatic wastes back into the circulation

• Avoid tumors, cysts, warts, varicosities, corns, or lesions
• Avoid areas of infection (athlete’s foot) or inflammation (gouty arthritis)
• Reduce treatment time if client is weakened by illness, age, or disability
• Lighten pressure for clients with neuropathy (diabetics and clients with MS)
Zones

• Zones are the mapping technique used in foot reflexology
• 10 zones exist in the body
• 5 zones begin on each foot; each toe begins a zone that travels up through the body
• Reflexology work done in a zone on the foot affects the entire zone

Landmarks

• Four horizontal landmarks:
  – Neck and shoulder line
  – Diaphragm line
  – Waist line
  – Pelvic line

Basic Techniques

• Two basic techniques
  – Walking: used for working the many reflexes along each zone
  – Pointwork: used when working specific reflex points; two methods
    • Direct pressure
    • Hook

Walking
Walking

Desserts

- Relaxation techniques
  - Shaking the feet and ankles from side to side
  - Taking the foot through its range of motion

- Foot flop and ankle flop

Desserts

- Dorsiflexion

Desserts

- Inversion and eversion

Treatment Guidelines

- Wash hands before and after each session
- Begin the session with essential oil in a footbath or a warm damp towel wrap
- Have client rest his feet on a clean towel
- Therapist assumes a comfortable position for therapy
- Do not use oils, gels, creams, or lotions
Treatment Guidelines

• Perform reflexology on bare feet
• Conduct an interview to rule out contraindication and establish client needs
• Discuss the procedure and answer client questions
• Avoid overtreating
• Warm up each area and adjust pressure as needed

Tenderness

• Tenderness, sensitivity, discomfort, or pain may mean the reflex or corresponding body area is under stress
• Lumpy or grainy deposits may be palpated
• Headache or increase in elimination through the skin, bowels, or urination may be experienced by client
• Client may experience flare-up of current or past illness, called a healing crisis

Solar Plexus Points

• Great toe is the head reflex with the brain and pituitary reflexes
• Hook into the pituitary reflex point
• Gently squeeze the pads of each toe to stimulate the sinus reflexes

Treatment Areas

• Use the fingertips on the dorsum of the foot
• Stimulate feet with a dry brush or towel and dust with foot powder
• Assist client with socks, stockings, and shoes, if appropriate
• Encourage client to drink plenty of fluid

Head Area

• Great toe is the head reflex with the brain and pituitary reflexes
• Hook into the pituitary reflex point
• Gently squeeze the pads of each toe to stimulate the sinus reflexes
Chest Area

• Ball of the foot is the reflex area for the heart and lungs
• Heart reflex is primarily on the left foot, with a small portion on the right
• Bronchial reflex is located between the first and second toe

Abdominal Area

• Located between the diaphragm and the pelvic line
• Spleen and stomach reflexes are on the left foot
• Liver and gallbladder reflexes are on the right foot
• Pancreas reflex is on the right foot just behind the stomach reflex

Pelvic Area

• Located between pelvic line and heel
• Ascending colon and part of transverse colon reflexes are on right foot
• Remaining transverse colon and descending colon reflexes are on left foot
• Urinary bladder reflex is where the pelvic line meets the arch of the foot
• Kidney reflexes are along waistline demarcation between 2nd and 3rd toes

Reproductive Area

• Located in heel
• Uterus or prostate reflex is in medial heel
• Ovaries or testes reflex is in lateral heel

Spinal Area

• Located along the medial aspect of foot
• Medial edge possesses four distinct curves, just as the vertebral column does
• Should be worked in every session

Summary

• Foot reflexology has been practiced for thousands of years
• Specific points are located on the feet where a reflex mechanism exists for each organ or area on the entire body
• The reflexologist assists the body to a state of health by using firm, but gentle, pressure