

At Your Fingertips

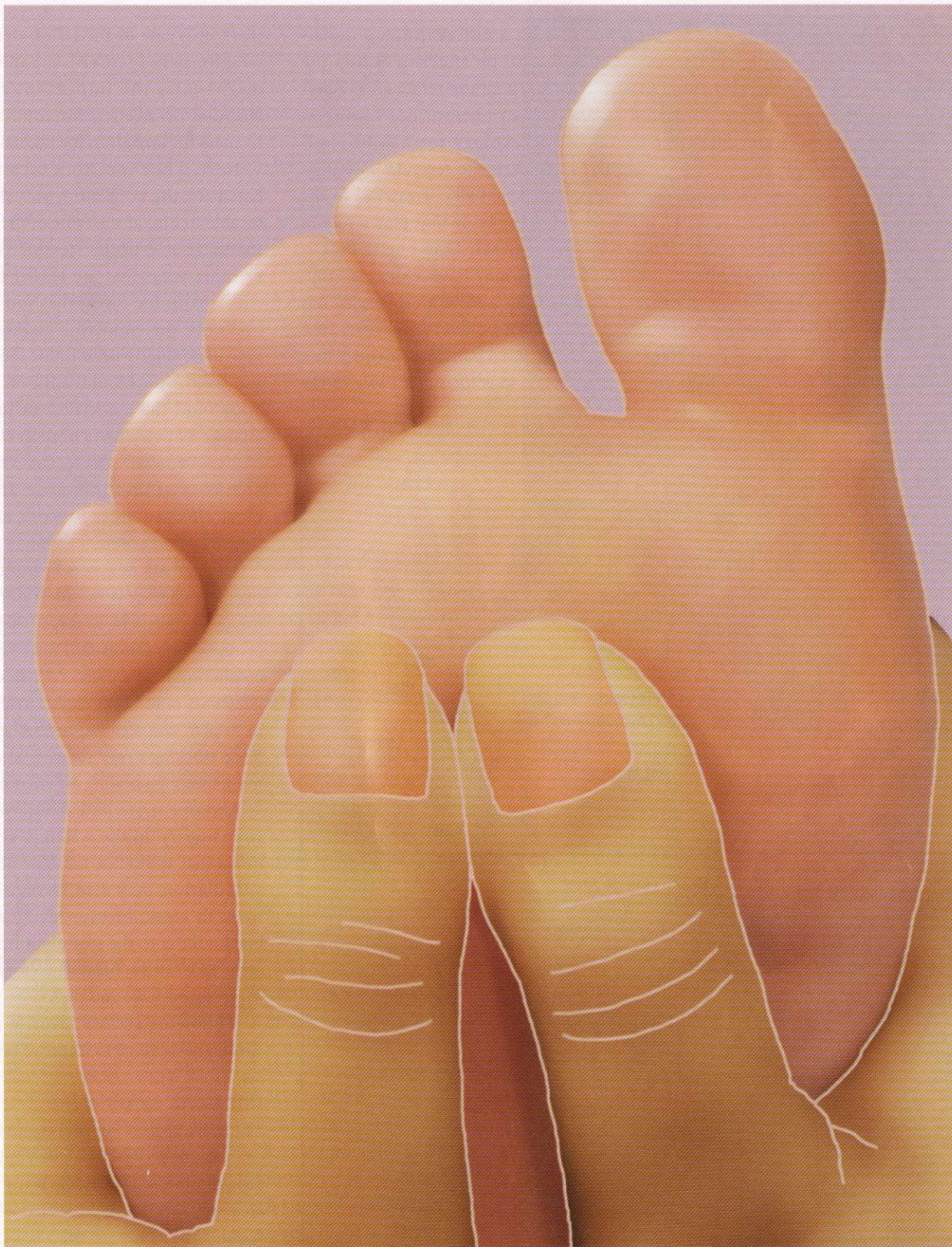
reflexology techniques for skin, health and beauty

by Frankie Avalon Wolfe

The art and practice of reflexology is one of the fastest growing, natural modalities in the world and is becoming a permanent offering at spas, health clubs and holistic health centers everywhere. As a safe, natural and effective practice that can be used exclusively alone or integrated to enhance other practices, reflexology can add value to just about any spa experience. It is straightforward enough that everyone can quickly learn at least a few moves and reflex areas on the feet, hands or ears that can enhance health, well-being and even beauty.

Most people know that reflexology is based on the theory that there is an invisible map on the feet, hands and even the ears that corresponds to the rest of the organs and parts of the body. By manipulating specific points with reflexology techniques, the corresponding body part(s) that is in need of healing, stimulation or rebalancing, responds via biochemical, magnetic and energetic changes that can positively affect the related organ.

Knowing even a little about reflexology helps one understand how the body is interconnected and how it works as a whole to keep homeostasis—the balanced state in which the body functions best. Since signs of unrest inside, such as autointoxication (a back up of toxins) and hormonal imbalance, eventually show up on the outside in the form of pimples, bloating, puffy eyes, etc., it is obvious that promoting internal balance can enhance outward beauty. ➤



Healing at your fingertips

In lieu of working both feet and hands in their entirety as in most typical reflexology sessions, here are two methods to enhance a beauty treatment with reflexology:

- 1. Work all the reflexes associated with the condition.
- 2. Find the deposits or tender areas and give them extra attention/work.

The reason working all the reflexes associated with the condition is so important is that each person may have the root of their problem stem-

ming from a different organ imbalance. So, to be effective across the board, work all the reflex areas related to the condition. For example, under reflexology for weight management, there are several reflex areas mentioned that all correspond to the organs in the body that play a role in weight control. One client that is overweight may have a sluggish thyroid causing a slow metabolism, but another can be overweight because he or she has a pancreas disorder that causes cravings for sugary snacks. To

work only one of the reflex areas for weight management means you might miss the important reflex stimulation needed for total effectiveness for any given individual.

Next, when you work each reflex listed for the condition, you should be able to find at least one of the areas that have a “crunchy” texture or one or more areas that are tender to the client. With the caveat that you never overwork the endocrine glands on a very ill or elderly person, for the average client, you should work on those areas until the tenderness or texture change is evident. These areas are indications of where the energy blocks exist and therefore are the most effective areas to work at that time on that particular client.

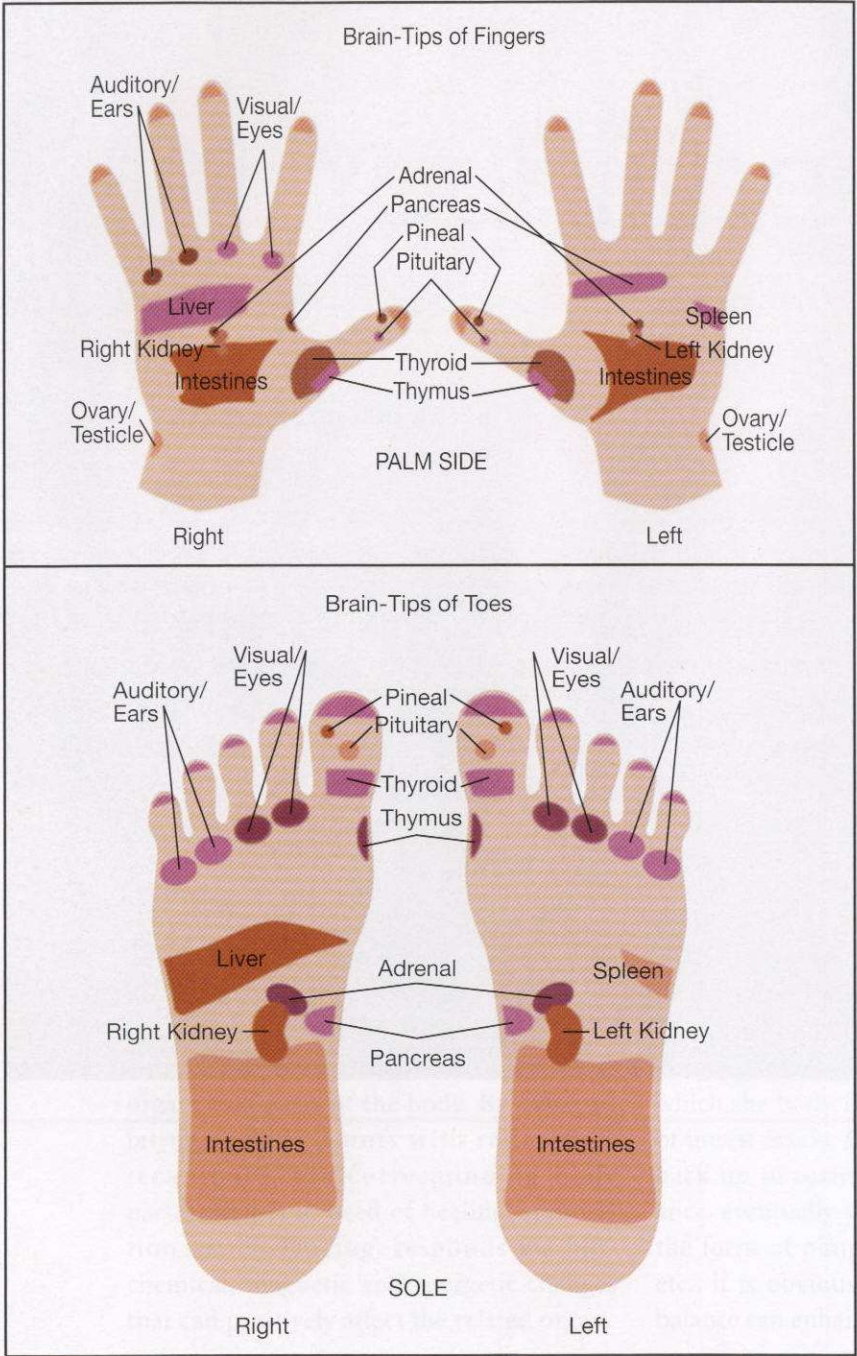
Though you may benefit from these tips, a disclaimer is in order: Although the guidelines aim to target the most common imbalances causing the related condition, these are general reflexology guidelines only. Other factors may come in to play, and so a full reflexology session, working every reflex is always a more thorough healing experience.

And one more note before you let your fingers do the walking, keep in mind that the reflex areas in need of stimulation may also change from week to week, or even daily, as the body adjusts to the stimulation and is affected by other lifestyle factors such as stress, exercise and diet.

Following are my favorite reflex stimulation points to improve beauty.

For acne or pimples

There are several internal reasons skin can look dull, dry or be interrupted by acne or pimples. Following is my list of areas to work to help balance internal factors that may be the root of the problem. Pimples can be the result of hormonal imbalance (on either sex), such as estrogen dominance, and many times show up on a woman’s chin a few days prior to menstruation. But post-menopausal women can also have hormonally induced skin eruptions. And, since skin is our largest elimination



organ—when we have an overload of toxins built up in the system because of a sluggish elimination system, the skin can throw off extra toxins through the pores. Here's how to stimulate detoxing in the body and promote hormonal balance.

Work the following reflexes:

- Pituitary/hypothalamus (master controller for all glands/hormones)
- Ovaries/testes
- Liver (filters out excess estrogen)
- Spleen
- All the channels of elimination such as the large intestine (work all the way up, across and down the ascending, transverse and descending colon reflex areas), kidneys and lungs
- If time permits, work all the endocrine glands: pineal, thymus, thyroid, pancreas, adrenals and parathyroids

Ear, hand and foot work can greatly enhance the facial experience. Work these areas to balance body processes while a congealing facial mask is doing the work on the outside.

For unexplained skin rashes

Besides a host of nutritional needs for the skin that can lead to mysterious skin conditions, reflexology may help ease emotions immediately, thus improving the skin condition and alleviating the emotion that is tied to who- or whatever is getting under your client's skin. Or you may be able to stimulate a healing response or curb itching, for example, with the aid of reflexology.

Work the following reflexes:

- Adrenals (produce cortisone when needed in the body)
- Solar plexus (the de-stressor button, can help quash emotional causes of a rash)
- Kidneys
- Working the toes and fingers can relieve stress and anxiety held in the face

See Photo 1.

Reflexology for puffy eyes

Puffy eyelids and puffy bags under the eyes detract from even the most striking set of eyes. Most puffy eyes are temporary and are the result of a few underlying causes.

Puffy eyes can be caused by allergies or stressed kidneys. A lack of sleep, too many glasses of wine the night before or a bad diet can stress the kidneys, leading to puffiness. The kidneys are the filters of the blood and also play a huge role in keeping minerals in balance. When we hold too much sodium, for instance, we can hold excess water, causing a puffy condition in the fat around the eyes. In addition, puffy eyes can also be related to external allergens. When using reflexology to combat puffy eyes, work the following reflexes:

- Kidneys
- Adrenals (aid for allergies and asthma)
- Eyes
- Ears
- Sinuses

See photo 2.

continues



PHOTO 1—Press up and into the solar plexus reflex while instructing client to exhale



PHOTO 2—Rotating on a point technique on the eye reflex



PHOTO 3—The hook and back up technique is used to stimulate the pituitary reflex found at the center of Big toe's 'bull's-eye' print.

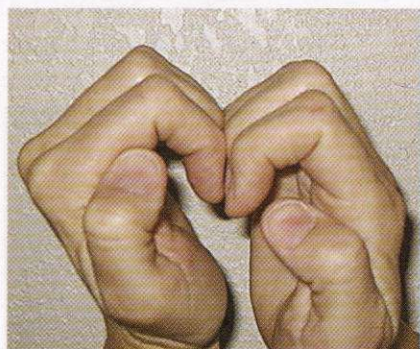


PHOTO 4—Briskly running fingertips or the flat surfaces of the fingernails together in a back and forth motion stimulates reflexes connected to the scalp.

Reflexology for weight management

A healthy weight can not only make clients appear more beautiful by boosting their confidence, but for those who tend to hold weight in the face and chin areas, weight loss can reveal good looks dramatically! For those who are a bit under weight, a little more fullness in the face can bring out a glowing beauty.

So many factors are involved in weight management, it would be misleading to tell you there exists some magic reflex point to push to control weight! But, since hormones fundamentally control fat, muscle formation and metabolism, the best way to balance weight is to attend to several endocrine gland reflexes.

Work the following reflexes:

- Pituitary/hypothalamus (master controller to keep all glands functioning properly, helps prevent excessive accumulation of fat)
- Thyroid (keeps metabolism healthy)
- Liver (aids digestion and digestion of fats)
- Pancreas (helps keep blood sugar in balance, therefore appetite)
- Large intestines (elimination channel, keeps from back up of toxins, and an active bowel relieves bloating and constipation)
- Adrenals (aid in blood sugar balance and stress)

See Photo 3.

Reflexology for beautiful hair

Some of us are lucky and are born with a beautiful head of hair. Others had beautiful hair that is now thinning. Some of us have just had a bad hair day as long as we can remember! But to all, healthy, beautiful, shiny hair is fantastically attractive. To aid hair growth and health, a variety of reflexology techniques can be employed.

Minerals nourish hair follicles primarily, therefore, addressing the reflexes that correspond to the organs that maintain mineral balance is essential. In addition, wildly fluctuating hormones can cause hair to fall out in mass quantity, so keeping the hormones balanced is another important part of having healthy hair. Blood supply circulating to the scalp carries nutrients to help nourish hair follicles. And a clean lymphatic system will help keep wastes from backing up into the bloodstream, helping to keep circulation unobstructed.

See Photo 4.

Work the following reflexes:

- Top of head—the tops of toes and fingertips correspond to the head/brain/scalp
- Kidneys (for mineral balance)
- Thyroid (for mineral and hormonal balance)
- Ovaries/testes
- Adrenals (especially if high blood pressure is involved)
- Solar plexus (especially if under emotional stress)
- Lymphatics

Reflexology sends healing energy along the body's energy pathways and can have immediate effects. Reflexes for specific effects can also be self-administered. This can give the client an empowering tool they can take home with them and is a reminder of their spa experience. Though not a cure-all, reflexology has a solid place in natural health and beauty care, and can be part of every spa experience. ■

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