

THEORIES

There are three major observable ways the body uses and adapts to stressors:

1. Foot stress - a level of tension held within the foot as pre-set instructions, so that each step is not a new step.
2. Reflex stress - tension held between body parts for highly organized tasks; pre-set instructions within the nervous system that make instant responses possible.
3. Body stress - overall state of equilibrium needed to maintain homeostasis; allows for integrated movement and behavior.

Reflexology is thought to affect the human being on three levels:

1. the physical
2. mental/emotional
3. bio-energetic/spiritual.

Although there are hundreds of studies showing that reflexology positively improves the life of people suffering with various health conditions, there are few that have been funded to explain "how" it works. There are numerous theories; likely all play a part.

Bio-energetic

1. Chi/Ki/Energy - is defined as the electromagnetic field of information within the body that is congruent with the energy running through the universe. When chi is blocked within part of any zone, the organs within that zone lack adequate energy, and are therefore unable to maintain homeostasis and/or function properly. Reflexology is thought to "break up or disturb" energy blockages and activate the healing force of the universe, returning the organism to balance.

Research indicates that electromagnetic energy within the body may be conducted through the vast network of connective tissue that radiates throughout the entire body. The connective tissue is now recognized as a fluid crystal structured matrix, a semiconductor that both absorbs and generates the same organic chi that is created by the Earth.

2. Constitutional. Reflexology deals with the entire person, not a specific part of the body. Rather than addressing an illness on a symptomatic level, reflexology affects the constitution of a person.

Mental/Emotional

1. TLC (Tender Loving Care). Healing occurs as a result of the exchange/hook-

up between practitioner and client. It is physical touch offered with care and concern that stimulates the body's response.

2. Rest and Awareness. For some individuals a reflexology session is the only "down-time" in an otherwise non-stop lifestyle. The rest, repair and awareness that occurs at this time are often the catalyst for change.

3. Psychological. The power of suggestion leads a person to choose to believe that reflexology will create positive results; the belief itself brings about the desired result. It is our attention to a possibility that manifests the results.

Physical

1. Circulation. Improved circulation of blood feeds more oxygen and other nutrients to the organs, which improves the health and functioning of the organs. Improved circulation also prevents stagnation of blood at the extremities and the subsequent pain that ensues; and removes waste materials from the cells that impede the proper functioning of the various body systems.

2. Reflexology blocks pain by encouraging the brain (primarily the pituitary gland) to produce endorphins, an analgesic five to ten times more powerful than morphine. With pain removed or reduced, the body is free to function as it is meant.

3. Reflex Action. Both one of the simplest and most complex forms of activity of the nervous system. Reflexes are specific and predictable, and do not require conscious thought in order to happen. For a reflex action to occur in the body, there must be:

- a) Reception of a stimulus by an exteroceptor (receptor sensitive to stimuli from the external environment - sight, sound, taste, smell, touch).
- b) Feedback: the conduction of the information to the central nervous system via a sensory (afferent) neuron.
- c) Feedforward: transmission of instruction to the motor nerves in a muscle or organ via a motor (efferent) neuron.
- d) Response.

In a Reflexology session, the therapist's touch provides the stimulus, information from which is fed to the brain, the brain forwards instruction to the organ associated with the reflex; the organ responds by returning to homeostasis.

It has been proven that:

- a. There is a connection between stimulation of the skin (whether it be by pressure, stroking, manipulation, massage, electrotherapy, heat or cold) and the

internal organs.

b. Pathological conditions of organs cause pathological symptoms in the skin, muscles, blood vessels and nerves.

c. Therapeutic agents applied to surface tissue will influence pathological conditions a great distance from the stimulus, providing the area stimulated and the affected organ share the same neurological root supply (dermatome).

4. Lymphatic. The lymphatic reservoirs are stimulated during reflexology, which encourages lymph drainage/elimination. Regular detoxification allows the body to function unimpeded.

5. Chemical. Every tissue and organ is controlled by a complex interaction of chemicals and hormones circulating within the body. This intricate balance of neurochemicals is controlled by the brain through the endocrine system. Reflexology is one of the few forms of bodywork that can directly influence the endocrine system.

Holographic

Holography is a relatively new way of perceiving the world we live in.

Holography uses a three-dimensional image to present an organizing pattern whereby the part reflects the whole. The holographic model is not built on ideas of mechanical and/or direct connections between part and whole.