

## Where can I learn more about reflexology?

Arizona Reflexology Association (AZRA)

<http://www.reflexology-az.com/>

American Reflexology Certification Board (ARCB)

<http://arcb.net/cms/>

University of Minnesota Center for Healing and Spirituality

<http://takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/explore-healing-practices/reflexology>

**Please consult with your healthcare provider before starting any complementary therapy.**

# Reflexology

## An Overview



Prepared by



COMMUNITY  
CANCER  
CONNECTIONS

1305 N. Martin Ave.

Tucson, AZ 85721

(520) 626-6151



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
College of Nursing

## What is reflexology?

**Reflexology is touch therapy based on the belief that specific areas on the foot, hand and ear are reflex points that correspond with organs and body systems.** When these points, primarily on the soles and sides of the feet, the palms of the hands and the inside/outside of the ear, are stimulated by applying pressure with specific thumb, finger and hand techniques, tension and dysfunction in the specific organs or bodily systems are relieved. **Reflexology is used in conjunction with other treatments to improve the symptoms associated with kidney function, asthma, and gastrointestinal disorders and to reduce pain and anxiety.**

**Guided by maps of the feet, hands and ears, reflexologists work with reflexes within the body to promote health and wellbeing by applying alternating controlled pressure with their fingers. Each side of the body (right and left) is reflected on the foot or hand on the same side. Therefore, reflexologists will work bilaterally to balance the body systems and organs.**

Reflexology is particularly popular in Europe where it has been incorporated into mainstream health care systems. Archeological findings indicate that forms of reflexology were practiced in ancient Egypt (2330 BC), China (2704 BC) and Japan (690 BC).

## Why should I use reflexology?

**There are increasing numbers of studies that examine the effectiveness of reflexology to treat a variety of clinical problems.** Over 500 studies have been conducted to test the effect of reflexology on a variety of conditions and symptoms. The quality of studies continues to improve, with the latest systematic reviews including 44 articles found to meet quality evidence standards.

**Results indicate that reflexology can be used to:**

- relieve fatigue
- reduce pain
- improve sleep quality
- decrease anxiety
- decrease nausea and vomiting
- improve quality of life
- improve mood
- improve function and mobility

Cancer survivors also report that reflexology may be helpful to manage symptoms associated with surgical procedures, chemotherapies and long-term effects of treatment. In particular, the literature suggests that **reflexology can be used to address gastrointestinal issues, bladder and kidney dysfunction (including bladder spasms and urinary retention), neuropathies, chronic headaches and chronic stress responses.**

## Is reflexology right for me?

**Reflexology sessions last approximately 30 minutes to an hour.** You will be asked to lie down on a table or in a chair that reclines so that your feet can be conveniently reached for the treatment. The reflexologist will use pressure, stretch and movement to work with your feet. No lotion or oil will be needed and you will only have to remove your socks. **Sessions rate costs are usually \$60-\$75, depending on whether the session lasts 30 minutes or an hour. Although the number of sessions varies, typically you will be required to come once a week for 3 to 6 weeks.**

**At the end of the session, you should feel relaxed but will be able to drive home without difficulty. Reflexology treatments are safe and have few complications.** However, if you have diabetes, a history of neuropathy or numbness of your feet or lymphedema (swelling in your feet), please consult with your health care provider before seeking reflexology treatments.

## How do I choose a reflexology instructor/class?

Licensure requirements vary from state to state. However, reflexology businesses are required to have appropriate business licenses. In addition, **reflexologists can be nationally certified through the American Reflexology Certification Board (ARCB). ARCB certification assures that your therapist has specific education, knowledge and skills and practices using the most current standards and guidelines.**