



Not the Doctor

Wilhemeena Monroe, director of Soul Centre, asks reflexologist **KERRY LE-GALLOUDEC** how we can use reflexology at home to help us cope better with stress

It has been said that about 75 percent of illnesses in modern life are stress-related. Don't we know it – it takes a great deal of effort to balance work and family life. Wouldn't it be great if we could find a simple and natural way to care for ourselves that helps us deal with and manage stress well? The good news is we can, using reflexology.

For those unfamiliar with the term, reflexology is a form of treatment based on the principle that the whole body is reflected in miniature on reflex zones on the feet, hands and ears. Applying specific pressure on a reflex triggers a response in the corresponding area of the body which is believed to help create a healthy, harmonious state and encourages the body's natural powers of self healing. The theory is that reflexology interrupts the pattern of stress, and helps us create clear and calm states of being in our bodies and minds.

To get the best out of reflexology, book an appointment with a

professional reflexologist. You can lie back, enjoy the experience and let your body instinctively start the self-healing process that your practitioner is putting in motion for you.

For the days when you can't see a professional, you can give yourself a treatment on your hands and feet. Here are a few suggestions for helping your body deal with stress. Some of these movements are so instinctive you probably already do some of them. Put your mind and intention into it and you will enjoy so much more benefit.

Creative boost

If you need to come up with some good ideas and get your brain whirring in a good way, tap the ends of the fingers and thumbs together (we already do this when we're thinking, right?). This stimulates the reflexes for the brain.

Upper back love

When we are feeling stressed or

uncertain, we often wring our hands. That motion of stroking one thumb up the side of the other one is rubbing the thoracic and cervical spine reflexes; this soothes the upper back and neck and calms the spinal nerves. You can work the whole of the spine by doing a caterpillar crawl with your thumb from that bony nodule on the outside edge of the palm of your hand, just where it meets the wrist, along the base of the hand and all the way up the outside edge of the thumb. Do this on both hands. You can also try squeezing and pulling along the sides of all the fingers and thumbs to ease a stiff neck.

Breathe easy

For general relaxation and to aid deeper breathing we can work on the diaphragm and solar plexus reflexes. Wrap your fingers around the thumb of the opposite hand. Leaving your thumb resting on the palm of the hand, open your fingers out. You should find that your thumb is positioned on the

Reality is the leading
cause of stress
amongst those who
are in touch with it


JANE WAGNER



diaphragm line. You can either do the caterpillar crawl along the diaphragm or open and close your fingers around the thumb, but move the thumb to a slightly different position on that line each time you close the fingers, so that you are moving the point of pressure and therefore working the whole of the reflex. Repeat on both hands.

Deep sleep

If you are having trouble sleeping, the pituitary press is the move for you.

The pituitary gland controls the release of hormones throughout your body. One of the hormones that effects your ability to sleep is adrenaline, the fight or flight hormone. Working the pituitary reflex helps to balance the whole of the endocrine system, including the adrenal glands and thus promote a good night's sleep. The reflex can be found in the centre of the thumb pad. Use the tip of the opposite thumb to press in and then do a few little circles. Repeat on the other thumb. 



For more about reflexology or to find a professional practitioner near you, go to the Reflexology New Zealand website, www.reflexology.org.nz



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