

# The MASE Monthly Newsletter

## September 2015



### Winners of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

#### Heading into Autumn....



It hardly seems possible that we are heading into the Autumn months and our thoughts of the Summer are fading fast.

The leaves are beginning to turn yellow, red, and brown and fall gently to the ground. The weather turns a little colder, the days start to draw in, and people prepare themselves for the darker evenings, knowing that winter is just around the corner.

#### The Importance of Touch

This month our Newsletter concentrates on 'touch' and how important it is for people in all walks of life. But for the people who are unable to express what they feel, please remember that holding someone's hand, can give them so much pleasure. While the hand is a small area of the body, there are many reasons that make it a good choice for Carers to use in sharing their touch.

Most people feel comfortable touching someone's hand. The hand is easy to get to, no undressing is required, and you can apply many of the theories and techniques of massage therapy. Touching hands makes sense in reinforcing relationships, as hands are an important part of how we communicate. We wave hello, shake hands, and hug. When someone is ill, or aging, and the ability to speak, hear or understand words may decline, touch helps you establish a communication that is no longer verbal, but one that is felt.



**What we all know only too well is that in times of stress or unhappiness, there is nothing more comforting than a good old fashioned hug!**



#### INTERESTING FACTS ON TOUCH

- \* Touch is the first sense to develop in humans, and may be the last to fade.
- \* There are approximately 5 million touch receptors in our skin-- 3000 in a finger tip.
- \* A touch of any kind can reduce the heart rate and lower blood pressure.
- \* Touch stimulates the release of endorphins (the body's natural pain killers) which is why a mother's hug for a child's skinned knee can literally make it better.
- \* People with eating disorders who receive massage three time a day for ten day's, gain weight faster and get out of the hospital six days sooner than those who don't.
- \* Elderly people who massage surrogate grandchildren report higher-esteem and better moods.
- \* Massage before an athletic event, makes the athlete more flexible, enhanced speed and power, and less prone to injury.



#### Dates for your diaries

**Friday 16 October** - Lea Hall Social Club in Rugeley - **Paul Birch** will be hosting an evening of great entertainment to raise funds for the MASE. There will be 5 artists appearing and, as always, we can guarantee it will be a wonderful night. Tickets are £4.00 and available from Daphne or Elaine.

**Friday 4 December** - Our traditional Elvis night when **Mark Clay** will be singing for us at The Stafford Rangers Club to raise funds for the MASE. More details on this event will be given later in the year.



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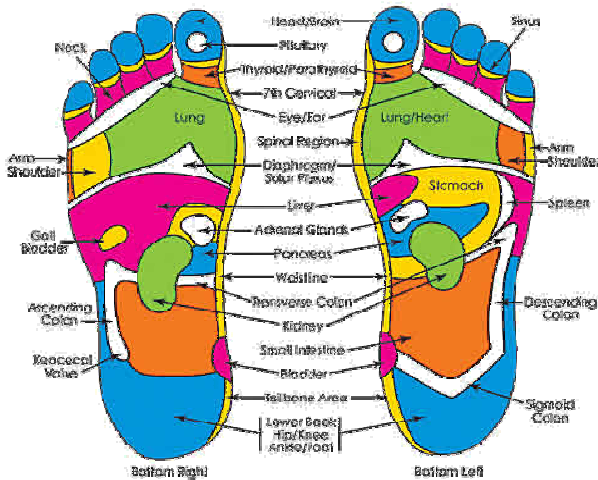
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# Guide to reflexology for older people

## What is reflexology?

Reflexology involves the manipulation of defined pressure points on the feet, hands, lower legs, face or ears. The theory is that these pressure points correspond to various areas of the body and that the application of pressure on these specific points can help to alleviate illness, encourage healing and release tension by working on lines of energy.



A growing awareness of complementary and alternative medicines and therapies (CAM) such as acupuncture, homeopathy, chiropractic, reiki, massage, and reflexology has led to increasing numbers of people in the UK seeking these types of treatments to promote their wellbeing.

Although supporting scientific evidence is sketchy, some of these therapies provide effective preventative healthcare. Reflexology is thought to be especially beneficial for older people dealing with complex and chronic conditions, such as pain, anxiety and depression.

## What to expect at a reflexology session

After taking note of the patient's medical history, lifestyle and general health, the reflexologist will use this information to choose the specific areas of the feet on which to work. Patients take off their shoes and socks and can recline in a chair or lie on a treatment table. First, the therapist will usually start by gently massaging the feet to promote relaxation. They may use lubricating oils. Then they will apply pressure to specific areas of the feet. It's normal for this pressure to feel sensitive or uncomfortable, but it should never be painful.

## Benefits of reflexology for older people

Reflexology cannot cure diseases, but can help to alleviate the symptoms of many health problems. As a gentle, non-invasive treatment, reflexology is thought to be very beneficial to promoting a better quality of life for many older people.

Reflexologists believe that gentle massage of specific points on the feet can complement mainstream medicine, particularly by inducing a state of deep relaxation, improving blood and lymphatic circulation and helping the body's own healing processes. Regular reflexology sessions can help older people cope with general aches and pains as well as alleviating symptoms associated with some chronic problems, including: Respiratory conditions, Anxiety and depression, Recovery from stroke, High blood pressure, Migraine and headaches.

Another important aspect of reflexology is the positive impact of having one-to-one time with the therapist, of being listened to and having respectful physical contact. This can be particularly beneficial for isolated or lonely older people, either living independently or in a care home.

## When reflexology shouldn't be tried

Reflexology for the feet is not advisable for people with: Foot fractures, Unhealed wounds on the feet, Active gout, Osteoarthritis of the foot or ankle, Vascular disease of the legs or feet, Thrombosis or embolism.

## Choosing a reflexologist

Although often used alongside mainstream treatments, complimentary therapies generally fall outside conventional medicine and healthcare and it is always advisable that anyone thinking about trying such treatment should always talk to their GP first.

## Things to consider

Finally, if you think reflexology might be helpful, remember that a professional reflexologist should always be aware of foot problems which commonly occur in older people, such as sensitive skin, fragile bones, problem toe nails, bunions, arthritis, reduced circulation, etc. In some cases, people can benefit from reflexology of the hands or ears instead.

If you have a computer please take a look at our website which covers all MASE activities: [www.themasegroup.com](http://www.themasegroup.com)

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