PRINTABLE FOOT REFLEXOLOGY TIPS FROM ABMP

1A

1B

THE DIAPHRAGM ▲

Curl your hand. Notice how the hand is directed all toward one point. Now do this with your feet. This point, located below the third toe, is the main point of the diaphragm reflex (Image 1A). The diaphragm is the major breathing muscle. Just as the diaphragm stretches across the torso, the diaphragm reflex stretches across the foot.

Massage the diaphragm reflex with the thumbs using effleurage motions. As the client inhales, move the thumbs from the center point out to mimic the flattening motion of the diaphragm (Image 1B). As the client exhales, move thumbs to meet at the center point of the diaphragm reflex. Repeat three times.

The points of the feet are located similar to the way the organs and glands are located in the body. The diaphragm reflex separates the foot into two parts: superior and inferior to the diaphragm reflex. Even though it is not technically accurate, you could look at anatomical positions reflexively. In other words, distal reflexively would be superior and proximal would be inferior. Every organ in the body that is superior to the diaphragm is located distal or "superior" to the diaphragm reflex, and every organ in the body that is inferior to the diaphragm is located proximal or "inferior" to the diaphragm reflex. In addition, you can think of each toe as a zone that extends across the foot. Zone 1 is the big toe down to the heel, zone 2 is the second toe to the heel, and so on until the fifth zone, which is from the fifth toe to the heel.

2A

2B

SPINE ▲

The spinal reflexes are located along the inside arch of the foot. If you feel along the back of your neck and upper shoulders, the most noticeable bony protrusion is the spinous process of cervical vertebra 7 (C7).

The area that protrudes the most on the foot is the head of the first metatarsal. This is the reflex for C7. The spine has four natural curves: cervical, thoracic, lumbar, and sacral. The inside arch of the foot has four curves that relate reflexively to the spinal curves.

The sacral curve is located along the medial aspect of the calcaneus (Image 2A). The lumbar curve is located along the medial aspect of the first cuneiform to the navicular bone. The thoracic curve is located along the medial aspect of the first metatarsal to the first cuneiform. The cervical curve is located along the medial aspect of the proximal phalange of the big toe (Image 2B).

Massage the spinal reflexes with the thumbs, fingers, or knuckles using effleurage motions, moving from the heel toward the big toe in a continuous motion. You may also use press-and-release motions. Use circular friction motions on any tense areas. When massaging tense areas, pinpoint the curve of the spine (and even the vertebra) you are working on.

3

PITUITARY GLAND ▲

The pituitary gland is the master gland of the endocrine system. It sends messages to the other glands of the body to regulate hormone production. The pituitary gland reflex is located on the distal phalange of the big toe (Image 3). To find this reflex, find the widest part of the big toe, move to the center, and massage it using circular friction motions.

PINEAL GLAND ▼

The pineal gland is associated with the intuitive faculties of the brain. It produces melatonin and helps the body adjust to the circadian rhythm. The pineal gland reflex is located distal to the pituitary gland reflex on the distal phalange of the big toe (Image 4). Massage this reflex at a 45-degree angle using circular friction motions.

4

LIVER ▼

The liver produces bile; stores glycogen, minerals, and vitamins; and converts one nutrient into another. It is the largest internal organ in the body, therefore, the liver reflex stretches across a large area. Because the liver is located on the right side of the body, the liver reflex is located on the right foot only. Specifically, the liver reflex is located in the fifth zone proximal to the diaphragm reflex and distal to the tuberosity of the fifth metatarsal along the lateral plantar fascia and abductor digiti minimi muscle. To find this reflex, find the tuberosity of the fifth metatarsal, and move into the fifth zone. The reflex continues distally to the diaphragm reflex in the fifth zone and then medially to the fourth zone. Massage the liver reflex using deep effleurage motions, moving from the fifth zone toward the fourth zone (Images 5A and 5B). Use circular friction motions on any tense areas.

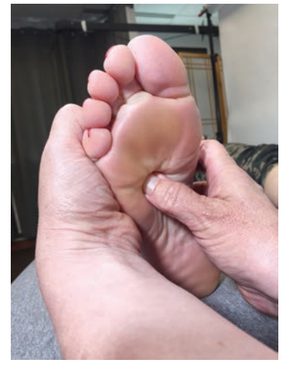
5A

5B

GALL BLADDER ►

The gall bladder reflex is located on the right foot in the fourth zone proximal to the head of the fourth metatarsal and proximal to the area where the liver reflex crosses into the fourth zone at the flexor digiti minimi brevis muscle and lateral plantar fascia (Image 6). The gall bladder releases bile into the digestive tract in a medial inferior direction; therefore, when stimulating this reflex, massage in the direction of the medial inferior arch.

6



7

SPLEEN ▲

The spleen is a secondary lymphoid organ that acts as a blood filter and regulates the amount of B cells used during immune responses. Because the spleen is located on the left side of the body, the spleen reflex is located on the left foot only.

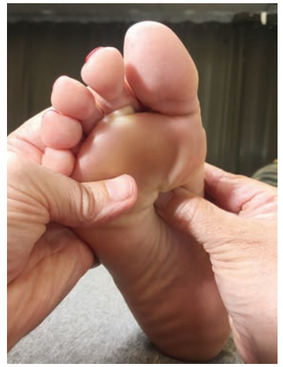
Specifically, the spleen reflex is located in the fifth zone proximal to the head of the fifth metatarsal and proximal to the diaphragm reflex at the lateral plantar fascia and abductor digiti minimi muscle (Image 7). Massage this reflex using circular or back-and-forth friction motions.

STOMACH ▼

The stomach reflex is located in the first zone along the first metatarsal proximal to the diaphragm reflex along the digital slip of the plantar aponeurosis and flexor hallucis brevis muscle (Image 8). The stomach begins at the cardiac sphincter on the left side of the body. The fundus and body of the stomach stretch across the left side of the body to the pylorus, which crosses the midline to the right side of the body. When you stimulate the stomach reflex on the left foot, you are working on the upper stomach. When you stimulate the stomach reflex on the right foot, you are working on the lower stomach. Massage the stomach reflex using circular effleurage motions in a proximal direction. Massage the right foot using a "C" motion and massage the left foot using a reverse "C" motion.

8

9



PANCREAS ▲

The pancreas is both an endocrine gland that releases hormones to regulate blood glucose levels and an exocrine gland that secretes digestive enzymes. In the body, it is located behind and just inferior to the stomach.

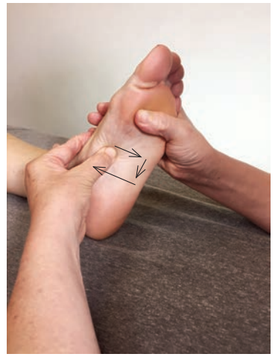
The pancreas reflex is located deep to the stomach reflex, proximal to the head of the first metatarsal in the central area of the stomach reflex at the flexor hallucis brevis muscle (Image 9). Massage this reflex using back-and-forth friction and deep press-and-release motions.

COLON ▼

The colon reflex consists of five parts. On the right foot, the ascending colon reflex begins in the fifth zone just distal to the heel along the lateral band of the plantar aponeurosis and abductor digiti minimi muscle. The reflex stretches across these muscles until the level of the tuberosity of the fifth metatarsal, at which point the reflex is the hepatic flexure of the colon where the ascending colon becomes the transverse colon (Image 10A).

10A

10B



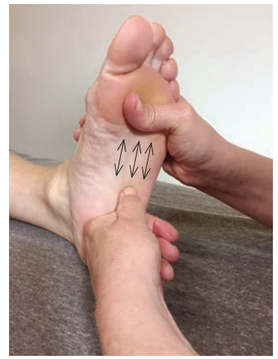
10C

The transverse colon reflex stretches across the zones at the level of the tuberosity of the fifth metatarsal to the inside arch of the foot. The transverse colon continues on the left foot at the inside arch and stretches across to the fourth zone at the level of the tuberosity of the fifth metatarsal. In the fifth zone, the reflex is the splenic flexure of the colon and moves distally to the spleen reflex.

The transverse colon reflex becomes the descending colon reflex and moves proximal in the fifth zone toward the calcaneus. The descending colon reflex becomes the sigmoid colon reflex just distal to the heel and moves medially to the first zone distal to the heel. The sigmoid colon reflex becomes the rectum reflex and ends in the first zone distal to the heel. Massage the colon reflex using effleurage motions. On the right foot, begin at the ascending colon reflex near the heel and move distally, then move medially along the transverse colon reflex. In other words, move up and over. On the left foot, begin at the transverse colon reflex, move laterally to the descending colon reflex, then proximal to the sigmoid colon reflex, then medially along the sigmoid colon reflex to the rectum reflex (Images 10B and 10C). Use circular friction motions on any tense areas. Spend extra time on the hepatic and splenic flexures, as these are often the most congested areas.

If you're interested in learning more about reflexology or want to explore more reflex points, watch the author's two-part webinar series "Foot Reflexology" on demand in the ABMP education center at www.abmp.com/ce.

11A



11B

SMALL INTESTINE ▲

In the body, the small intestine generally moves back and forth (laterally and medially) on the right side, and up and down (superior and inferior) on the left side. The small intestine reflex is located in the center area formed by the colon reflex at the plantar aponeurosis and flexor digitorum brevis muscle. Massage the left foot in proximal and distal directions (Image 11A), and massage the right foot in lateral and medial directions (Image 11B).

Reflexology is a great tool to have at your disposal. Whether addressing specific issues or more global concerns, reflexology has something to offer both client and therapist. **m&b**

Marc Zollicoffer has practiced in the massage and spa industry for 27 years. He is an educator with 24 years experience teaching reflexology, ayurvedic philosophy, deep tissue, and body treatments.