

FACIAL REFLEXOLOGY by Sue Ehinger

Finally a form of reflexology perfectly suited to the beauty therapist! Imagine being able to balance the body's energy system, treat almost any condition or symptom whilst at the same time deeply relaxing your client with a soothing yet stimulating facial treatment.

Commonly we associate reflexology with the feet or hands where each organ and gland has a corresponding reflex point or area. Like acupuncture, reflexology is a form of pressure-orientated massage. A variety of pressure techniques are applied to specific points just under the skin in a particular sequence so that all the body systems are stimulated. The goal is to encourage the body to find balance itself and in order to bring this about the therapist takes a comprehensive health history and then decides which reflexes may require additional emphasis during the treatment.

Through the stimulation of these reflexes, special nerve receptors, meridian points and the circulation, reflexology has an holistic effect on all body systems. The overall result is deep relaxation. However, reflexology works by relaxing you where **you** hold your particular tension – perhaps you are a worrier and hold it in your stomach; perhaps you grind your teeth at night and hold it in the jaw. Your tension will show up in the reflex area in your feet and the therapist will firstly find it there, and, secondly manipulate the tissue to relax it. As the tension leaves the jaw reflex, so it leaves your actual jaw. And you feel profoundly relaxed.

Facial Reflexology works in a similar fashion except that because of the close proximity of the face to the brain, it has the added benefit of having an almost instantaneous effect in many cases. A good example of this occurred when my husband and I had just arrived back in Sydney on an interstate flight. Whilst attempting to retrieve the in-flight baggage my husband twisted his knee badly and was in a quite a lot of pain as he limped off the plane. I quickly stimulated the knee reflex (found in the hollow under the cheek bone) for about 30 seconds and he was able to walk normally with no return of the pain.

Facial Reflexology is the brainchild of Lone Sorensen, evolving over the course of her 30 years experience as a complementary health therapist.

The face has fascinated Lone for reasons of its proximity to the brain. Early experimentation using foot reflexology and facial acupuncture on children with special needs yielded such remarkable results that it started Lone on a quest to develop a healing therapy on the face that has earned her three honorary awards from the Argentinean office of the World Health Organization in 2001.

Facial Reflexology is a marriage of several healing systems: the oriental reflex areas, acupuncture points, South American facial maps and clinical neurology.

Lone began her study of reflexology in Denmark in 1978 where she was amongst the first to study the discipline. She also studied acupuncture and laser therapy, then ran a clinic and school in Denmark for about ten years. She was always very interested in facial acupressure points because of the success of her work with children with hyperactivity and learning difficulties. With them, she used a combination of 16 facial pressure points and reflexology on the feet. She also felt disappointed with the lack of results from foot and hand reflexology when trying to treat certain conditions. She found that working on the face gave results more quickly. Lone believes that facial reflexology is so effective because it works in such close proximity to the brain and central nervous system.

Lone moved to Argentina, to find that reflexology was completely unknown there. She began to practice and teach reflexology and zone therapy on the feet, hands and face. While visiting a town called Cophau in the mountains between Argentina and Chile, she noticed American Indian women practicing a form of facial zone therapy. It was from these women that she learned the facial reflexology technique which she now uses as a diagnostic tool. Lone remained in Argentina for twelve and a half years during which time she founded three reflexology schools.

During further travels in Cuba, Lone learned a system using 564 nerve points and 31 acupressure points in the face, which she combined with the technique learned in Cophau. She also met Dr Chun, a Vietnamese doctor, who worked with the oriental system of charting the face to reflect body organs and systems. She then incorporated his methods and experience into her treatments.

The current method of facial reflexology and face mapping now also taught in Australia has been developed over twenty-three years of work with clients. It combines the following techniques to provide an holistic and comprehensive treatment:

1. Acupressure to stimulate nerve endings, the meridians, the blood circulation and lymphatic drainage.
2. American Indian Zone Therapy to stimulate the nervous system and identify any blockages or irregularities within the body systems.
3. Vietnamese Traditional Medicine to stimulate the general release of tension in facial reflexes and the clearing of any blockages within corresponding vital body organs.
4. The Vietnamese System to stimulate the brain cortex to:
 - a) improve movement in the physical limbs
 - b) improve the function of the senses
 - c) relieve pain, and to improve pain control
 - d) improve the general psychological state
5. The map of the muscles, tendons, joints and spinal chord are stimulated through using the zonal map of the physical body.

6. Facial acupressure points to stimulate lymphatic drainage.
7. Balancing the psychological “Body”.

The treatment procedure comprises these seven basic steps as well as up to six additional protocols which are used to tailor an individual treatment session for the client’s health requirements. A treatment begins with rotation work on thirty-three facial points, each of which fulfills three criteria: they are an acupuncture point, important blood circulation area and also rich in nerve endings.

There then follows an assessment of the entire surface of the face (except the eye lids) for deposits within the deeper dermis layer of the skin. A slow, deep massaging movement explores facial body maps, (based on those used in the Andes by a nomadic tribe called Mapuches). These maps are aligned with neurologically rich areas of the face that also connect with the various systems of the body. A five-scale grading system is used to assess the worst of the deposits and the area concerned dictates the focus of the rest of a treatment session.

Lone categorizes these deposits as follows:

1st Grade: "Sand"-like grit in facial zone - not serious indicates usual tension in body system or along relevant meridian.

2nd Grade: "Rice"-like grit in facial zone - indicates considerable tension in body system or along relevant meridian and should not be allowed to get worse.

3rd Grade: Swelling or tenderness in facial zone indicates a problem in the corresponding body zone or meridian.

4th Grade: "Pearl"-like lump in facial zone - indicates potentially serious health problem in the corresponding body system or along relevant meridian.

5th Grade: "Stone"-like lump in facial zone - indicates serious health problem in the corresponding body system or along relevant meridian.

Stimulation follows, using three oriental facial maps that address the nervous system and physical body culminating in the seventh and last stage of the treatment – a delicious harmonizing face massage that unites the mental, physical and emotional aspects.

Additional procedures include the use of cranial lines, acu-points, hormonal balancing, a choice of 564 facial nerve points and facial muscle stimulation.

Most of my clients are now Facial Reflexology converts. The majority are women who love the added benefit of how great their skin looks and feels after each session. Men request it too as they hold a much of their daily stress in the facial muscles. It is most satisfying to hear the gentle snoring not long after I commence the treatment!

A basic treatment takes about 35 minutes, or 45 – 60 minutes where additional procedures are used when focusing on a particular condition, for example, headaches, eczema or learning problems.

The facial work is extremely powerful as the following case from one of our Australian course attendees shows:

‘Today I was introduced to a man in a wheelchair and the first thing I noticed was how clenched and turned his right hand was. I asked him if he could open his clenched hand at all. He showed me in a most awkward way and he seemed to have to strain to do so. I then asked permission to touch the side of his face and worked on the right temple area which he loved, and whilst doing so we noticed his right hand was slowly softening and partially opening. I then worked the forehead arm zone. After only few minutes, his hand seemed even more open and when I asked him to open the fingers - amazingly, he was able to open the hand without having to move his shoulder up towards his ear and throw his arm out sideways as he had done the first couple of times. He himself noticed the ease of movement. I too couldn't believe the power of so little face work. He was smiling and laughing. He suffered meningitis as a young boy and has been in a wheel chair ever since.’

Facial Reflexology has wide applications in the health and beauty industry. There is a huge potential for healing the damaging effects of stress and tension on our body systems whilst at the same time addressing the health of the facial tissues and skin; a perfect combination.

No previous reflexology experience is necessary to train in this therapy. For more information about Facial Reflexology in Australia contact Sue Ehinger at the Australian School of Reflexology on 02 4976 3881 or go to www.reflexologyaustralia.com

Sue Ehinger, (MRRA, MATMS Dip. Reflex., Dip. Nutr.) has been practising reflexology since 1985. Sue completed her initial training in Switzerland followed by studies with the International Institute of Reflexology. She has studied Chinese methods of Reflexology in Beijing as a guest of the China Reflexology Association, as well as learning the Danish approach in Denmark. Sue founded the Australian School of Reflexology in Sydney in 1990 where she now conducts postgraduate training in reflexology. She practises reflexology and other related therapies from her clinics in Turrumurra, Sydney and Nords Wharf, Lake Macquarie.