

# REFLEXOLOGY improving health feet first

A therapist told me she felt considerable tension in my neck area. That was no surprise to me. The surprise was she was working on my feet at the time.

"I like the concept of relaxing the body through the feet because everything in the feet relates to the body. It's fascinating," says Margo Nielsen. She's practiced reflexology for 10 years, working mostly in her North Surrey home office.

Nielsen explains reflexology is based on the theory that zones and reflexes in the feet correspond to other parts, glands and organs in the body. By applying controlled pressure to specific areas of the feet, the reflexologist relaxes muscles and improves circulation to promote healing. Homeostasis (or harmony) is restored throughout the body.

Nielsen also detected soreness in

my lower back. I woke up that morning with stiffness there. The area she indicated corresponded with the spine and she picked up on my tenseness – affirming to me even more how reflexology works. Either that or she's clairvoyant.

Nielsen explains it's important for blood to flow freely through the body – to carry oxygen and nutrients to the cells, and remove waste and toxins. Stress and tension can restrict this vital flow of blood. Reflexology allows the blood vessels to regain their proper flow of blood supply.

Reflexology was one of the "steps" she herself had taken in seeking relief from her own health problems. She'd once been put on drugs for sinus trouble, wondering why they weren't investigating the real root of the problem. Nielsen explored various healing practices, eventually regaining her good

health. She'd been pondering ideas for starting her own business and settled on her interest with reflexology.

Her work is also gratifying, "I love seeing people relax as I work on them. I see them begin to feel better and begin making other lifestyle changes, because for most, it spirals into following other practices like diet and exercise."

Reflexology's benefits can be enjoyed by anyone, of any age. The treatments can relax, stimulate the body's circulation and enhance everyday activities. Nielsen has treated a variety of ailments: lower back injuries, both chronic and acute, like her husband's successful treatment of back strain. She's also treated children and teenagers, including her 14-year-old daughter's neck tension after a car accident.

"I have several elderly clients as well. Many of them are dealing with health issues and other problems. They talk to me and share what they need to say – things they can't say to family members. But they can say it to me," says Nielsen, adding she becomes very good friends with her clients. "I dearly love them all. And they teach me so much!"

Reflexology is simple, safe and pleasurable. It's becoming popular as a complementary therapy used in conjunction with other forms of medical treatments. Some find the side effects and dosage of many prescribed drugs are decreased when combined with reflexology.

"That's due in part to increasing the circulation and helping the liver to function better, which in turn speeds metabolism," says Nielsen.

After surgery, reflexology stimulates healing, making the recovery quicker, explains Nielsen, "Because the body relaxes, releasing any tension. But at the same time, energy levels may increase and that improves mood. Both are needed in healing."

Reflexology sessions last about an hour. Several treatments may be required, depending on the individual. Nielsen often recommends about four to five sessions. She tells her clients to pay attention to their body and they'll know if they need more sessions or not. After each session, there may be



some temporary reactions as the body readjusts or releases toxins, says Nielsen. Lethargy is a common reaction, she informed me as I struggled to stay awake. I knew I'd be taking a nap when I got home. However, an energy increase can also result. "It does what your body needs to do," says Nielsen. She said I felt relaxed probably because I'm a very "go-go-go" person. Nielsen is active with the Reflexology Association of BC and was the group's president for several years. She's also trained in Reiki, Geotran (working with energy fields), Chair Massage, Herbal Healing and Indian Head Massage. And she's calling me a "go-go-go" person!

When I got home, I noticed I really did need a nap. And as I snuggled into my comforter I suddenly noticed something else: The stiffness in my neck and lower back was gone.

For more information on Reflexology, contact Margo Nielsen 604-589-3599 or healthyenergy@shaw.ca ■

*Eve Lees, a former newspaper editor, has been a health and fitness professional for over 20 years. She is a Certified Nutrition & Wellness Specialist, a Certified Personal Trainer, a health speaker, and a health writer for several publications.*

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