

Membership Network Newsletter

No 45 SPRING 2017

Dear VRT Practitioner,

This is a bumper issue and we have an interesting resumé of an article which illustrates the benefits of students living in an older persons' home: the students live there very cheaply but offer their time in different ways to help the residents remain active and stimulated.

I hope you are enjoying the Spring blossoms and, at this lovely time of the year, we are often reminded that many of our clients are incapacitated and are unable to enjoy certain pleasures in life that we take for granted. Some older people especially become more and more limited in what they can do and reflexology/VRT can play a major role in helping to keep them supple. Many of us can now expect to live into our 90's as life expectation increases. Self-help reflexology skills, especially those that include VRT, are some of the greatest gifts we can give to our clients, family and friends. My article gives you lots of hints and reminders of how we can help ourselves.

Many of us completed our Reflexology Diplomas a long time ago and regulations and criteria from professional bodies have changed dramatically from the early 1990's when I trained. Then, as now, it was vitally important to obtain a thorough and professional training and I was very fortunate indeed to qualify under Tony Porter, in his last year as tutor for the International Institute of Reflexology (IIR). Tony went on to develop Advanced Reflexology Training (ART).

I am sometimes surprised at the wide range of reflexology Diploma classes on offer. Many reflexologists qualify as practitioners having studied to Level 3 and are excellent and well read therapists. However, there are also a few schools that have a wider-ranging and stimulating curriculum where their Diploma classes teach to Level 5. I invited Allison Walker, who has founded the highly successful Contemporary Reflexology College, to tell us about the options available for reflexology

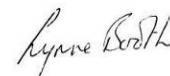
vocational study these days and to also tell us how her personal career path evolved. I am sure you will be fascinated by the comprehensive article she has written and researched. This article is a great resource for those intending to study reflexology and also for those who are qualified and wish to see the strides that reflexology as a profession has taken in the previous decade or so. I hope, more colleges will offer Level 5 modules to qualified reflexologists as an add-on so they can enhance their education and practice.



Come and join me for a [London VRT refresher](#) at Pax Lodge NW3 - June 18th 2017. Only £60.

There is still time to book the VRT Reflexology Retreat in Spain. Eire 25-26 June with Britta Stewart Dolan and 2017 dates in Belgium and Holland with Suzy Jacobs plus Toulouse – Oct.

With best wishes from all the VRT tutors



Lynne Booth

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Self-Help Reflexology Empowerment for Holistic Health

Lynne Booth



A Child Learns Reflexology Rocking Technique to Help Sleep Patterns

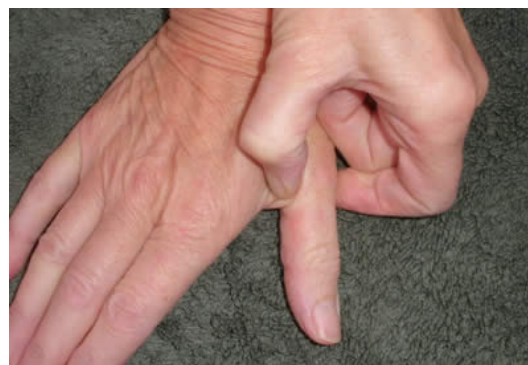
Reflexology is one of the more accommodating therapies when it comes to self-help techniques. Osteopaths and masseuses, for example, are often unable to minister to their own needs very well and have to rely on other colleagues to treat them. In the case of reflexology, a person can easily access their hands and feet and work them very effectively. Reflexologists can teach their clients, family and friends basic self-help reflexology techniques with good results between treatments. One does not have to be a qualified therapist to benefit from the simple self-help instructions that can be found in many reflexology books. Hand reflexology has often, mistakenly, been considered a less effective form of reflexology. This is not correct, although the sensation or responses from the hand reflexes are slightly delayed and may take a few seconds longer to be experienced. Secondly, the hands are not only far more accessible, no garments need removing and it is very much easier for a person to work their own hands than their feet (which is impossible for those with mobility issues).

Qualified Reflexologists often comment that, when they work their own feet, they obtain reasonable results but cannot feel much sensitivity. Vertical Reflex Therapy

(VRT), where the weight-bearing hands or feet are briefly worked for a few minutes, can give a quick added dimension to treating personal ailments quickly and effectively as the reflexes become more sensitive and responsive. I teach postgraduate VRT / Reflexology classes and always encourage the therapists to give their clients homework in the form of 3 or 4 precise instructions regarding working on their own hands or feet: twice a day for two or three minutes, especially if they are in a weight-bearing position. A few simple reflexology techniques working on the pressure points of the hands is often easy to apply and the results may be very positive in maintaining mobility in a limb, for example.



Quick Self-Help Applications



Working base of thumb for Headache

A Reflexologist might treat a client for a full hour using foot reflexology only, but can show the person how to work their own hands, for only 1-2 minutes, to help a neck pain by pressing and pinching round the base of their thumbs.



Working first thumb joint for Headache

If someone is suffering from a headache they can work the first thumb joint on both hands - below the nail which may ease a throbbing sensation



Reflexology Diaphragm Rocking

One of the most effective reflexology treatments for sleep is Diaphragm Rocking which is a technique I devised for the passive feet or hands. Anyone, from small children to older people, can be taught to gently and rhythmically rock their hands, one by one, backwards and forwards with their thumb pressing on their palm. The pressure is on the diaphragm, chest and lung reflexes and appears to relax the person and helps to reset their body clock.

Gentle pressure on the adrenal reflex, situated on the thenar muscle on the palm, may help to boost energy or reduce the level of stress.



Working the Adrenal Reflex

Self-help and Reflexology in the Workplace

In 2002 I undertook a small survey to assess whether a 25 minute hand and foot reflexology treatment could produce an positive outcome for employees who had suffered from a variety of conditions ranging from pain and mobility issues to chronic eczema in the ear. Six persons from a large company were invited to take part in this small survey comprising 4 weekly reflexology sessions. None had received reflexology before, and in each case there was a positive response to the treatment within the first 1-2 weeks; after 4 weeks some conditions had improved by well over 90% even though some of the problems were long standing and had resulted in time off work.

Each person's treatment session began with 3 -4 minutes of basic Vertical Reflex Therapy on the feet and the hands, then their feet were treated with conventional foot reflexology. Their treatments culminated in a period of concentrated hand reflexology plus tuition on which reflexes to work themselves. One female member of staff, who had been in a bad car accident, received only hand reflexology as she could not bear her feet

to be touched and she was one of the employees who improved the most. Each employee kept a record of their reaction/improvement to each treatment and was given a Hand Reflexology Chart marked with specific reflexes to treat with self-help hand reflexology twice a day for a few minutes between the weekly treatments. After four treatments both the client and myself made an evaluation as to the progress made since the survey commenced. My own conclusion was that the good results were obtained partly due to the daily self-help hand reflexology which was a constant trigger on specific reflexes which helped the body to heal itself.

Reflexology Techniques to Support the Musculo-skeletal System

In the short workplace survey, an administration manager in her late 40s, client CM, felt she was over-treating herself at first by working her hands twice daily for a few minutes as she was aching more, not less, in the first few days. She had suffered from intermittent back, hip and neck problems for years, had a demanding job and, at times of stress, she could feel muscular tension throughout her body. She was highly sensitive to all forms of therapy, conventional and complementary, but was so impressed with the way she felt after her first reflexology session that she had no intention of stopping the programme. She deduced that the self-help twice per day was too intense, so stopped and the pain ceased. Her back and hips gradually felt better than they had done for a years and she re-introduced a single short hand treatment every other day.

CM's neck problems flared up one weekend but the reflexology treatment eliminated them almost immediately. Her osteopath was so impressed with the improvement in her back that it was suggested that she extended the time between her regular osteopathic treatments for the first time ever. It is interesting that I chose not to treat any of her conditions specifically in the first two sessions, but aimed to simply balance the

body by helping the musculo-skeletal system to adjust. Once there was a general positive response throughout her body, it was possible to precisely help her hips, neck and shoulders to respond quickly and naturally.

Never Limit the Power of Self-help for Older People

Showing clients how to use reflexology for self-help can be very empowering, especially when a person has chronic pain issues. Many begin by helping to manage their condition by introducing some daily self-help reflexology, and then start looking at other ways to improve their health. Mrs LK was in her early 80s when she came to me for reflexology. She was overweight, with high blood pressure and swollen ankles. She was also very sceptical as to how reflexology could help her chronic condition. She is always willing try self-help reflexology on her hands and took her health seriously once she realized that the older body is capable of a positive response. She reported, "Within three months of fortnightly reflexology treatments my blood pressure was back to normal, my ankles less swollen and I felt mobile and energetic. The reflexology sessions inspired me to take responsibility for my own health. I have also started taking nutritional supplements, given up coffee and drink more water. I went to the gym for gentle exercise and started driving and gardening again." Now at 96 Mrs LK is less mobile than she was, but is still living in her own home, driving and doing her own shopping. An exceptional and inspiring case.

References

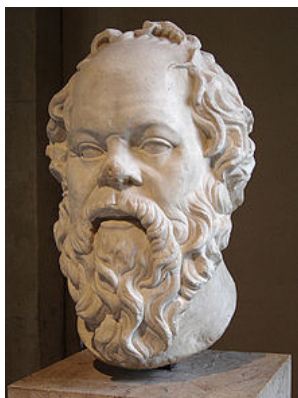
Books

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2. Booth Lynne. Reflexology in the Workplace - a small observational study on hand and foot reflexology and VRT. June 2002.

Originally published in Positive Health Journal Issue 191 - February 2012 www.positivehealth.com

Philosophy:
**Perhaps the purveyors of
 so-called Fake News should
 contemplate this conversation
 with the Greek philosopher,
 Socrates!**



A bust of Socrates in the Louvre, Paris

In ancient Greece, Socrates was reputed to hold knowledge in high esteem. One day an acquaintance met the great philosopher and said,

"Do you know what I heard about your friend?"

"Wait", said Socrates, "before telling me anything, I would like to pass it through this little test called the Triple Filter Test. Before you talk about my friend it might be good to filter what you are going to say. The first filter is Truth. Have you made absolutely sure what you are going to tell me is the true?"

"No" said the man, "actually I just heard about it and....."

"So" said Socrates, "You don't really know if it's true or not. Now let's try the second filter, the filter of Goodness. Is what you want to tell me about my friend good?"

"No, on the contrary...."

"So" continued Socrates, you want to tell me something bad about him, but you are not sure it is true. It may still pass the last filter test: the filter of Usefulness. Is what you want to tell me about my friend useful to me?"

"No, not really"

"Well" concluded Socrates, "if what you want to tell me is neither true nor good nor even useful, why tell it to me at all?"

Reflexology Outreach International (ROI)



ROI was set up in 2000 to provide free reflexology training in the developing world. We target carers who are responsible for looking after people who have HIV/AIDS or other serious illnesses, and our emphasis is directed at helping people who are poor. To this end we train a range of people from family members through to nurses and doctors. We also provide free reflexology treatments when we have time after training sessions.

www.roi.org.uk



Membership Renewal Notice

Members can now use the VRT logo on their leaflets and website. The membership fee is £25 per annum for UK and international or £20 if you pay by Standing Order from a UK bank.

For those members whose annual subscriptions were renewable on 1st March you will receive an email request to renew online or send a cheque. If you pay by Standing Order already you will receive your new certificate automatically. To renew online or pay by cheque please visit:

www.boothvrt.com/vrt-membership

Members are first to hear of new courses and priority booking, their names are the only ones on our website and there are often special offers, reduced prices for courses and lots of hints and information in the newsletters.

Why not re-take a previous VRT class as a Refresher for only £60 per day? Usual price £65.

For current courses see online:
www.boothvrt.com/course-dates-booking/
Contact us on:
contact@boothvrt.com
www.boothvrt.com
 or phone 01179626746 for more detail

Linking techniques around the Spine

By Dorthe Krogsgaard and
Peter Lund Frandsen

Back pain is one of the most widespread health problems with major costs for the individual as well as the society. It has been estimated that 80 percent of the adult western population suffer from at least one incidence of back pain and 10 percent experience a period with chronic low back pain. (Archives of Internal Medicine Feb. 2009).

Our approach to the treatment of back pain includes a wide palette of reflexology techniques. We work with spine reflexes from various reflexology traditions, we look at connections between the back and other parts of the musculoskeletal system and we bring in reflexes for specific muscles and joints. We also introduce Nerve reflex points (courtesy of MNT-NR International) which provide a rapid analgesic effect and relaxation of tense areas.

In this article we describe the concept of working with multiple reflexes simultaneously. By linking two reflex areas you can often achieve a faster and deeper treatment effect. Here we use back pain as an example.

Linking of foot reflex and body area

Find the sore area on the back (in the picture it is thoracic 10), and the equivalent reflex area on the foot. If there is acute pain, try to hold a gentle static pressure with the hand on the back, while treating the foot reflex with the other hand. This linking provides an additional energy exchange between the areas, while at the same time increasing the client's focus on the therapy.

You can vary the technique so that the static hold is on the foot reflex, while you massage the back. Or you can hold still in both places and let the energy flow do the work.

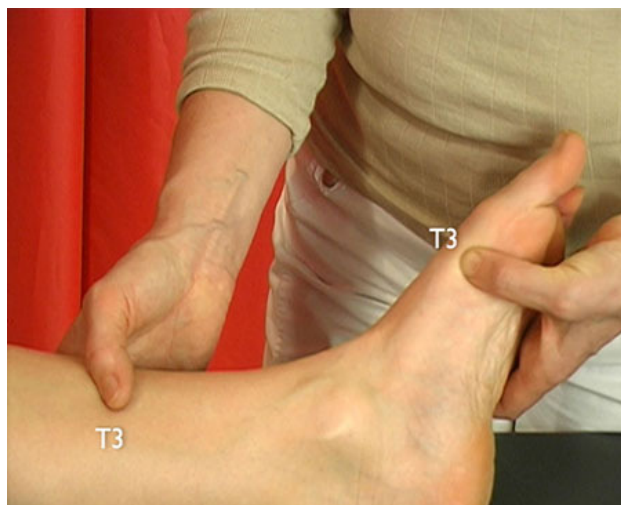


Linking T10 with the T10 foot reflex. Linking spine reflexes on the foot and lower leg

A fascinating technique is to treat the spine using two different reflex systems together. In this example we combine a spine reflex on the lower leg (see box) with the classic spine reflex on the foot.

Again, you may choose to keep a steady grip on one place while you treat the other or vice versa, you can hold steady in both places, or you can even work both areas together.

By comparing the findings (i.e. texture of the tissue, pain, moisture, etc.) from the two different reflex systems you often acquire useful information about the client's condition.



Linking T3 reflex on the lower leg with T3 reflex on the foot.

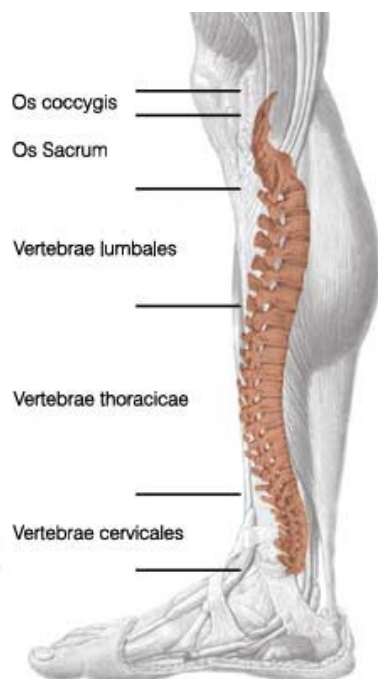
From the DVD "Round about: The Spine" © Touchpoint
2010

Facts box – The spine reflex on the lower leg

This spine reflex on the lower leg was discovered by Swedish Karl-Axel Lind and is part in a reflex system where the lower legs and

feet reflect the entire body. The feet correspond to the head and the body stretches up along the lower leg.

The spine reflex is situated on the medial edge of the Tibia (shinbone). The medial malleolus corresponds to the first cervical vertebra (Atlas) and the tail bone is at the top of the Tibia just below the knee joint.

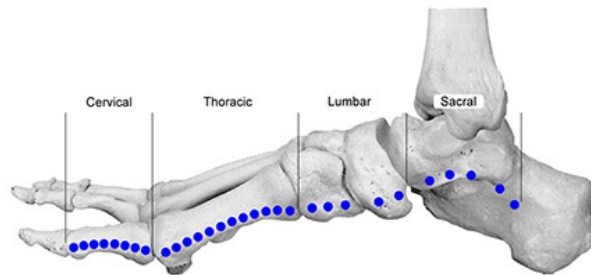


Spine reflex on the lower leg.

© Touchpoint and Medika Nova AB,
Anna-Kaarina Lind, Finland

Linking spinal nerve points to other reflexes

One can also exploit the fact that all nerves to the entire body (except the head) comes from the back. One way is to link reflex points for the spinal nerves with other reflex areas, such as organ reflexes or other reflexes that react with pain and/or tissue changes.



Nerve reflex points for the spinal nerves - © Touchpoint and MNT-NR International

These linking techniques can be used during the course of a normal reflexology session. It is natural to use them when you encounter a particularly congested reflex area, and/or if the client has many acute pains.

Round about: The Spine

The workshop includes a wide variety of reflexology techniques, in addition to linking you learn nerve reflex points for the spinal nerves, precise reflexes for back muscles, treatment of the sacro-iliac joint, analysis and correction of posture and gait, assessment of spinal mobility, spine reflexes on the lower leg, and more.

Due to the central nervous system connections, an effective treatment of the back is also the gateway to the treatment of most other problems in the body.

More info: You can find more information about the **"Round about: The Spine" workshop** [here](http://uk.touchpoint.dk). For course schedule including July 2017 Summer school <http://uk.touchpoint.dk>

Students living in nursing homes - a solution to our ageing populations?

Lynne Booth comments: *Most reflexologists will have some older people as clients and we often observe their struggles to remain independent and to avoid loneliness and increased frailty in old age. Many of us will have seen these issues within our own families, friends and neighbours. In an ageing population it behoves us all to think laterally to see how we can support the older age groups. These new ideas below, where young and old*

*live together to the benefit of both, is an encouraging bold new step. The article below, by **Johanna Harris** Senior Lecturer in English, University of Exeter, can be read in full online.*



From Dutch students living in nursing homes, to projects at the University of Exeter students can have a lot to offer older people

In today's society both young and old increasingly find themselves living in a bubble of like-minded and similar-aged peers. This is especially true of university students who leave home at 18 to live with people of the same age – who have quite often had similar life experiences.

Given this, the report that a Dutch nursing home has established a programme providing free rent to university students in exchange for 30 hours a month of their time “acting as neighbours” with their aged residents is unusual.

The programme has seen students in their early twenties sharing lives with residents in their eighties and nineties. As part of their volunteer agreement, the students also spend time teaching residents new skills – like how to email, use social media, Skype, and even graffiti art.

Reducing loneliness: The incentive behind Humanitas Deventer's “exchange” programme is the research base that shows that reducing

loneliness and social isolation improves well-being and extends life expectancy in the elderly.

And though research on the impact on students seems yet to be explored, from my own experience of running a similar project at the University of Exeter, I know that it is overwhelmingly positive – giving young people a sense of connection with older generations, and significantly increasing the likelihood that they will continue to volunteer after university.

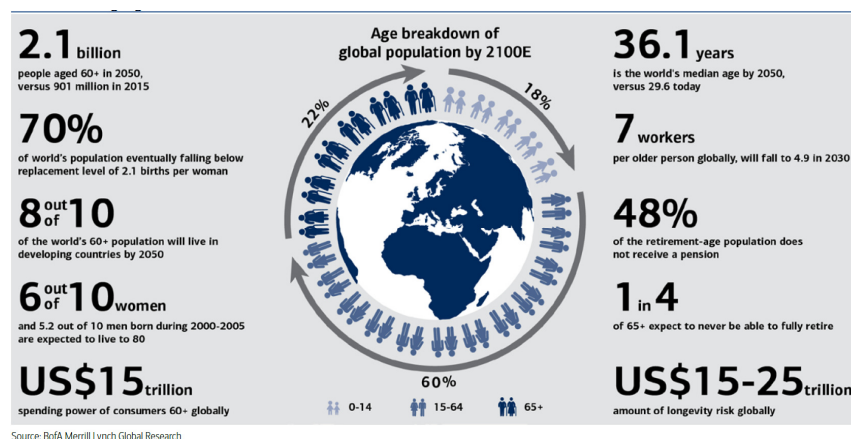
Since 2011 student volunteers from the university's Department of English and Film donate their time to bring conversation, literature, and friendship to the residents of over ten residential care homes across the city. And since the project's inception it is estimated that around 250 active volunteers have reached over 500 elderly residents – at least half of whom have dementia.

The Care Homes Reading Project draws upon the natural skill set of its target volunteer community – which includes a love of reading and an understanding of the power of literature to impact lives positively.

Research shows reading poetry with dementia sufferers – many who learned poetry by heart when they were younger – brings comfort and reassurance through hearing and reciting familiar verses.

[Click here](#) to read the full article

Written by Johanna Harris, Senior Lecturer in English, University of Exeter. 30.11.16
This article is published in collaboration with The Conversation. World Economic Forum



Taking Reflexology to the Next Level

by Allison Walker FMAR, PRM, ART (Reg'd), CRM5 VRT Tutor

'Taking Reflexology to the Next Level' is the strapline of my reflexology school called Contemporary Reflexology College. It embodies what I strive to achieve and the qualification that I now teach.

It has been quite a journey to having my own reflexology college and I am so blessed to now be supporting so many amazing people on their journeys to reaching their potential with reflexology.

We need more reflexology teachers to raise the standard of teaching in the UK as we have been falling behind many of our Continental counterparts where the minimum hours of learning are generally a lot higher and controls more stringent. In the USA for example you need to have in depth massage training before you can practice Reflexology, in South Africa Reflexology comes under statutory control and RIEN (Reflexology in Europe Network) only recognises reflexology schools who offer 150 contact hours of reflexology training and 100 hours of Anatomy and Physiology training.



Centralia the UK Accrediting body for the Level 5 Diploma in Practitioner Reflexology was set up by Sue Evans and Paul Steward who were become increasingly concerned by the falling and varying standards of reflexology training in this country.

I am sure that you have all come across people practicing 'reflexology' where the feet are slathered in cream and you have little more than a relaxing foot massage. No medical history is taken, no treatment plan devised and the same simple routine is given to all. This is not what **Eunice Ingham** (1889 – 1974) spent 40 years of her life developing and refining so that people could benefit physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually from a bespoke in depth treatment.

Originally called 'Compression Massage' Reflexology was based on the Chinese method of 'Zone Therapy' as explained in 'Stories the feet can tell thru Reflexology' written by Eunice Ingham in 1938. Eunice Ingham named Reflexology ('Ology' meaning 'the study of' and 'reflexes' to describe the points that are worked and connect to specific parts of the body. Reflexology today covers such varied treatments that it must be very confusing for the public to know what it really is and can encompass.

There have been steps taken to increase the professionalism and standardise reflexology in the UK. In July 1999, Reflexology organisations across the UK came together under the independent chairmanship of Simon Mills, from Exeter University's Department for Complementary Health Studies. This paved the way for a regular series of meetings and the **Reflexology Forum** was formally constituted on 20th September 2002. Its role included:

- Development of National Occupational Standards
- Conducting and reporting research into reflexology
- Developing regulation of the profession
- Developing standards of CPD and training
- Developing Codes of Conduct and a list of contraindications
- Providing a safeguard for the public
- Act as a single/lead body for Reflexologists in the UK

The Core Curriculum in Reflexology produced in 2006 by the Reflexology Forum and edited by the late Clive O'Hara (available from Amazon) is an in depth benchmark manual for reflexology training. It was a huge step forward and offers an excellent guide to what should be included in practitioner training courses. The Level 5 Diploma course is the only course currently in the UK to deliver on all aspects covered in this core curriculum.

The CNHC (The Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council) and the **GRCCT (The General Regulatory Council for Complementary Therapies)** are UK regulatory bodies to help protect the public and raise the profile of complementary therapies but Reflexology is self-regulated meaning that there is no statutory requirement for membership and therefore regulating standards is voluntary.

There are also membership bodies for reflexology and all complementary therapies, these have the members' interests foremost as well as aiming to raise awareness and promote progression in reflexology through CPD (Continuing Professional Development). I am sure that you all know of the membership bodies, AoR (The Association of Reflexologists that now includes Indian Head Massage) and PR (Professional Reflexology, created by reflexologists for reflexologists).

To regulate reflexology practitioner training we have Awarding Bodies that themselves are regulated by government and independent organisations responsible for regulating qualifications. There are hundreds of Awarding bodies to be regulated.

The regulatory bodies are **Ofqual** in **England**, the **Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment** (CCEA) in **Northern Ireland**, the **Scottish Qualifications Authority** (SQA) in Scotland and **Qualifications Wales(QW)** in **Wales**.

The **Quality Assurance Agency** covers all higher education providers in the UK and maintains the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).

The Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) replaced the Qualifications and Credit Framework, and National Qualifications Framework in October 2015. Each qualification must be recognised as part of one of the UK qualifications frameworks:

England is OFQUAL

Northern Ireland it is CCEA

Wales it is CQFW (The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales)

Scotland it is SCQF (The Scottish Qualifications Framework)

Once a qualification is recognised by a qualifications framework and regulated by an approved Awarding body the course is then provided, usually by a body authorised and accredited to teach by the Awarding Body.

When a course is approved by an Awarding body it is levelled, that means given a Level that leads to a specific qualification. The length, content, structure, learning outcomes and mapping of each part or unit of the course is scrutinised prior to levelling. Each course is continually verified to ensure that standards are uniform wherever the course is taught. Internal verification is when someone inside the teaching organisation monitors and assesses the work of the learners and external verification is when an independent verifier scrutinises the work to ensure that standards are reached and maintained.

The chart below taken from <http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/qualifications-and-credit-framework-qcf.html> demonstrates how each qualification is levelled:

		UNIVERSITY		
LEVEL 8	<div>Doctorate PhD</div>			
LEVEL 7	<div>Master's Degree MA, MSc, MPhil</div>			
LEVEL 6	<div>University Degree BA, BSc</div>			
LEVEL 5		<div>Foundation Degree FdA, FdSc</div>	<div>HND</div>	
LEVEL 4			<div>HNC</div>	
LEVEL 3	<div>A-Level</div>	<div>A2</div> <div>AS</div>	<div>L3 Extended Diploma (National Diploma)</div>	<div>L3 Diploma (National Certificate)</div>
LEVEL 2	<div>GCSE Grades A-C</div>	<div>L2 Diploma (1st Diploma)</div>		
LEVEL 1	<div>GCSE Grades D-G</div>	<div>L1 Diploma (Foundation)</div>		
ENTRY LEVEL 3	<div>Key Stage 3</div>	<div>E3 Diploma (Foundation)</div>		
SCHOOL / 6TH FORM		F.E. COLLEGE		

The next table updated in 2017 and available at:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_Awarding_Bodies shows how the levels compare between England, Northern Ireland and Wales with Scotland and Europe:

Ofqual/CCEA/CQFW/FHEQ level	SCQF level	EQF level
8	12	8
7	11	7
6	10 and 9	6
5	8	5
4	7	5
3	6	4
2	5	3
1	4	2
E3	3	1
E2	2	N/A
E1	1	N/A

Hopefully now when I discuss the Level 5 Diploma in Reflexology you can understand how it compares with the Level 3 that has historically been the accepted route for reflexology practitioner training.

Level 3 is recognised as an 'A' level equivalent and Level 5 as a foundation degree or HND equivalent.

The initial Level 5 reflexology course was created by Sue Evans in conjunction with Agored Cymru, a progressive Welsh awarding body with over 30 years of experience and expertise in developing qualifications and supporting learning, assessment and verification in Wales. Sue is Welsh and an experienced reflexology university lecturer however she had no idea that her newly created course would be levelled at 5. Sue had long been saddened by the dilution of reflexology training and frustrated that accredited reflexology courses seemed to be including topics that were not specific to reflexology. In her effort to raise the standard of reflexology training and make it 100 per cent specific to becoming a professional reflexologist she has created and continues to refine and develop an exceptional pathway to becoming a professional reflexologist.

The qualification comes under the Sector - Nursing and Subjects and Vocations Allied to Medicine - this is the only reflexology course in the UK under this sector.

Each unit studied consists of credits that learners can, on successful completion of the course, put towards a full degree in an associated field of study. The Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology and Business Planning sections of the course are specific to reflexology and levelled at 4.

To study to Level 5 you must be over 18 years of age for Level 3 it is 16 years of age.

The other huge differential between level 3 and 5 is the TQT (Total Qualification Time). The TQT is the number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could reasonably be expected to be required in order for a Learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of the qualification.

TQT for Level 3 appears to vary depending on the provider. VTCT state that their guided learning hours are 266 and City and Guilds 296. The Level 5 has 790 hours of guided learning with a minimum of 160 hours of contact teaching.

Part 2: Allison Walker's reflections on her career path and interests that led to her developing her wide ranging professional reflexology diploma training to Level 5.

I was working a busy Sales Manager when I trained to become a reflexologist in 1998. I loved learning from a wonderful man (John Morley-Kirk) with the IIR (International Institute of Reflexology) and was glad that I had then chosen to learn the Original Ingham Method of Reflexology which was very much as Eunice Ingham had worked, with deep thorough pressure.

However I found that there was much to learn on completion of the course and realised quite quickly that I needed more knowledge on Anatomy and Physiology, Pathology and particularly nutrition and the emotional aspects of illness. I was treating up to 50 people a week (not something I recommend to my graduates now!) but it gave me brilliant learning opportunities at the time. I also recognised that not one style of reflexology suits all and that when working with pregnant women or fragile cancer sufferers I needed to adapt my treatments quite drastically. I didn't feel confident in some areas and booked myself onto many CPD courses including VRT and ART. I was always drawn to the more scientifically based treatments with a firm pressure until I discovered Reiki and EFT when I began to realise that some people had dramatic shifts with light pressure and a more energy based approach. Over the years I



have developed many different techniques and ways of working with clients and include (as many tutors do) a lot of my own experience based techniques.

I didn't think about becoming a reflexology teacher but was approached at a CPD day when I was trying to explain to my practical partner for the afternoon how to perform the techniques we had been shown. I was overheard by my Tutor's successor Marion Murphy and asked to come and give a talk to her group on how I started my business. Marion then suggested that I work shadow her for a year while I did my teacher's training. This I did and then set up my own courses teaching in Staffordshire and Warwickshire, then Manchester and Birmingham and finally Nottingham when Marion retired.

After teaching with the IIR for several years I left to focus on my practice and Energy Psychology training becoming a Master Practitioner Trainer. I was also teaching ear candling (Thermo-Auricular Therapy) and became a Reconnective Healer, it was a time of personal and spiritual growth and development. But I missed reflexology teaching and felt that I had developed so many of my own techniques and ways of working that I wanted to share them. David Wayte asked me to join his reflexology college - Jubilee College taking over his Manchester course and developing a Birmingham course. This I did and thank goodness as it was such a time of change within the reflexology teaching world as the level 3 went through two big changes to a seven module course and then back to a four module and then the Level 5 arrived! There was so much writing and rewriting of course material that it was really helpful to work with David and his other tutor Melanie Thompson (pharmacist turned reflexologist now running Lotus Holistic Academy). We made a good team sharing all of the course writing and discussing how to interpret the base guidance notes. We each had areas of special interest that we could develop and include to make the courses unique.



Illustration of a Hand Reflexology session

In 2013 it was mutually agreed that I should set up my own college and I spent some months sorting out a name, logo, website, DVD's, College foot, hand, ear and meridian charts, handouts etc.

Contemporary Reflexology College was launched in January 2014. This May I am about to start my 8th Level 5

course and it is developing all of the time. I love it because I can include what I have found most useful over the years in clinical practice and also what I found was lacking in my own training such as how to help someone who is terminally ill and who is pregnant. It is not caring to turn clients away because you don't know how to help them, so I want all of my graduates to feel confident in treating anyone who contacts them and ensure that they have a good list of contacts to signpost them to in other modalities for additional support.

As well as plenty of practical reflexology and practitioner skills, the course includes integrated Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology, Business planning and Marketing, Entrepreneurial skills and how to give safe nutritional and lifestyle advice. Research is so important in today's world where quantitative and qualitative measures are needed to substantiate anecdotal evidence, so we have a day on research and learners have a research assignment to do as well as including MYCaW forms in their person study work.



Additionally there is a weekend on Adapting Reflexology for Palliative Care which everyone loves as the techniques are so gentle and relaxing. It is a good opportunity to discuss supervision and to realise the importance of self-care, so we have a session on EFT (The Emotional Freedom Technique) in case talking about terminal illness presses anyone's buttons. This weekend is based on the Christie hospital's course with additions as well as covering the Lymphatic and Immune systems in detail. The Christie is a specialist cancer care hospital in Manchester that has a very pro-active complementary

Reflexology Group Work

health department. Inner Intent Reflexology is included on this weekend which is a way of working that I have developed over the years incorporating energy techniques to release emotional blockages through focussed intent, guided visualisation and affirmations. It can be used with all clients and indeed most graduates would not think of working without Inner Intent.

Our weekend on reflexology to support fertility and maternity care is a lovely journey from pre-conception care to reflexology for a new baby! The men on the courses find it fascinating and quite hilarious when they have to pretend to be pregnant as we practice treatment planning and treating different issues through each trimester. The aim is to empower the practitioner to work safely with couples trying to conceive and to be able to support them throughout pregnancy and beyond. Some learners choose to specialise in this rewarding area on completion and go on to take CPD courses with specialists such as Barbara Scott at Seren Natural Fertility and, of course, VRT with Lynne Booth!

Meridian and Five Element Reflexology is covered over a weekend so we can only touch on TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) but it really helps the learner to understand that if you are not progressing with a client working the meridian channels may help and that if they find a tender spot it may actually be an acupressure point. The college charts are comprehensive and it is easy to locate and understand what each point can help.

Auricular Reflexology is included! I had been studying Auricular acupuncture and reflexology since 2001 and developing CPD courses in Auricular Reflexology so it is great to include it in the Level 5 course. AR is just brilliant for pain relief and I had always focussed on helping people with emotional and physical pain throughout my practice.

Lastly we include a new unit which is a practical treatment protocol specifically aimed at helping clients with stress. It is based on scientific research into neuropeptides and how the mind and body are integrated and therefore how the mind impacts on our health.

So the Level 5 course is very comprehensive and is not for the faint hearted or those who haven't got the time to immerse themselves in reflexology for a year or more. It isn't about simply adding in CPD as some think. Each aspect of the course is included for a reason and that is to ensure that every graduate who completes all of the essays, assignments and in depth studies are fully confident professionals. It is a structured progression of learning specific to reflexology.

The course now attracts many people from healthcare backgrounds such as nurses and midwives. One midwife had 75% of her course paid for and is now employed as a Reflexology Birthing Midwife where she uses her skills to induce labour and support throughout labour. I also have several reflexologists on the course that trained to level 3 but didn't feel confident to practice or knew that they were missing something. One graduate was running a very successful beauty therapy business and had a Level 3 in reflexology. Reflexology constituted 12% of her business, within a year of retraining it grew to over 70%.

A couple of learners who came to my CPD courses decided that they needed to retrain to Level 5 when it became evident that they didn't know even the basics of body dynamics, hand holds and leverage and didn't know how to create a treatment plan. I feel so sorry for those people who want to train in reflexology but who are confused by the qualifications and don't realise that the course they have chosen may be very superficial. I am passionate about raising the standards of practitioner training.

There are some excellent Level 3 courses with some equally passionate tutors and I applaud them because it is not easy to prepare and deliver an in depth course. I am concerned over the lack of regulation and the misconception that the public must have about reflexology when they visit some therapists. This needs to change and with all passionate tutors whatever the level of the course and good CPD training this can happen.

There are some amazing CPD courses available now as reflexology goes from strength to strength – VRT is a must! This is why we need well trained practitioners, not only to help more people but so that they can progress and develop reflexology. I believe that we need to build on the foundation of best practice in reflexology to push the boundaries and see how far we can go in helping the body to heal.

Vertical Reflex Therapy

I am lucky in that when I am going to have a physical problem I feel it sharply in my feet and ears. I don't ever get signals in my hands but my reasoning is that I need my hands to work my feet and ears! I have been awoken by sharp pain across the base of both big toe nails with an accompanying pain across the occipital ridge. Some quick VRT to the base of the nails stopped the back of head pain.

Recently in the night I had a sharp pain on the nerves in my ear that innervate my intestines and pelvis. I wasn't sure why until I felt below my naval and found a sharp painful area. By working the ear the pain shifted and moved – it was trapped wind! Like many of you I am always amazed at the results that we get working with clients and how much more there is yet to learn and discover.



Last Autumn I was helping a friend relocate to Devon from the Midlands and had made some brownies full of hazelnuts and walnuts. The removal man ate a brownie saying how delicious they were then suddenly stopped and asked if they contained nuts. He started going into anaphylaxis! I asked if he had an epi-pen on him but he didn't, there were no anti-histamines around and the shops were closed. He didn't want me to 'phone for the paramedics as he said it usually passed in a couple of hours but he still had most of the van to unload! I asked him if he was left or right handed, he managed to gasp that he was right handed so I grabbed his right ear and started working on his allergy point just under the apex of the ear. Within two minutes he said that his throat had stopped closing and his tongue had stopped tingling, he looked and sounded better. I kept working the ear for another few minutes until his voice and breathing normalised, he was amazed and overjoyed to think that he could

eat Nutella again, this I did not advise! I was relieved and yet again amazed at the body's powers of recovery given the right signals. How could I not include Auricular Reflexology in my course when I know that it is a potential life saver!

I hope that you now understand a little more about the qualification structure in the UK. Quite serendipitously I am teaching the Level 5 Diploma course in Practitioner Reflexology and although it is hard work with masses of marking and preparation I feel so lucky and blessed to be able to help train the reflexologists of the future. It was obviously meant to be!

If you are inspired to explore teaching options then I recommend you look at the Centralia website for more information. There are Centralia Partnership Reflexology schools all over the UK now. We are a friendly group who meet and discuss the way forward in Reflexology training, so do let people know if they are thinking of becoming a professional reflexologist.

Links to organisations mentioned in the article:

Agored Cymru <https://www.agored.cymru/>

AoR www.aor.org

Centralia www.centralia.org.uk

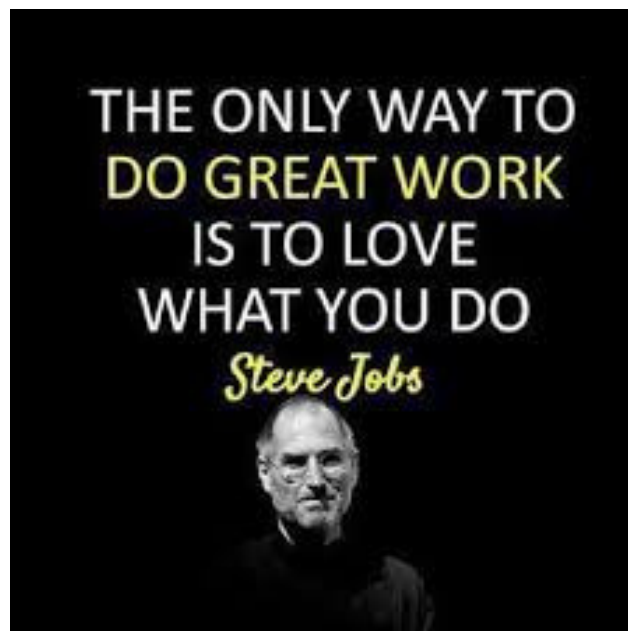
CNHC <http://www.cnhc.org.uk/>

Contemporary Reflexology College www.contemporaryreflexologycollege.com

GRCCT <http://www.grcct.org/>

PR <http://www.professionalreflexology.org/>

Rien <http://reflexology-europe.org/>



Reflexologists never need to really retire as this long-standing member tells us and VRT appears to be helping to overcome neuralgia.



I still offer help to friends as and when and do a regular exchange with a friend who is still a real cynic about the value of it but loves to receive it as part of the treatment session! I am so pleased that I made the effort to come to courses as I have found it so helpful. Keep up the good work!

Jenny Wright

I'm currently working with a client who has had neuralgia for over 2 years. She's now had 4 sessions and last week said she was pain free all week - something she hasn't known for a very long time. Her body is definitely 'clearing out' with healing responses and I definitely think she's responded so well because of the VRT work - so thank you

Lorraine Prescott

Special date for your diary – Spanish Retreat with Lynne Booth, September 2017

*Lynne Booth writes: Come and join me on a very special week long reflexology retreat, organised by Equilibrio, in the southern Spanish mountains from **Sun 24th to Sat 30th Sept 2017. Limited places.***



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By participating fully in the activities provided during the week you can achieve up to 20 CPD points in the category of Self Directed Learning.

See [Equilibrio](#) website for more details of their retreats including Hagar Basis joining them for a week this May

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I think your VRT courses are always worth attending. The work you do is exceptional, professional and above all inspired.

Hilary M, North Bristol



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