

Lesson 8: Mapping the Reflexes of the Feet

OBJECTIVES OF THIS LESSON

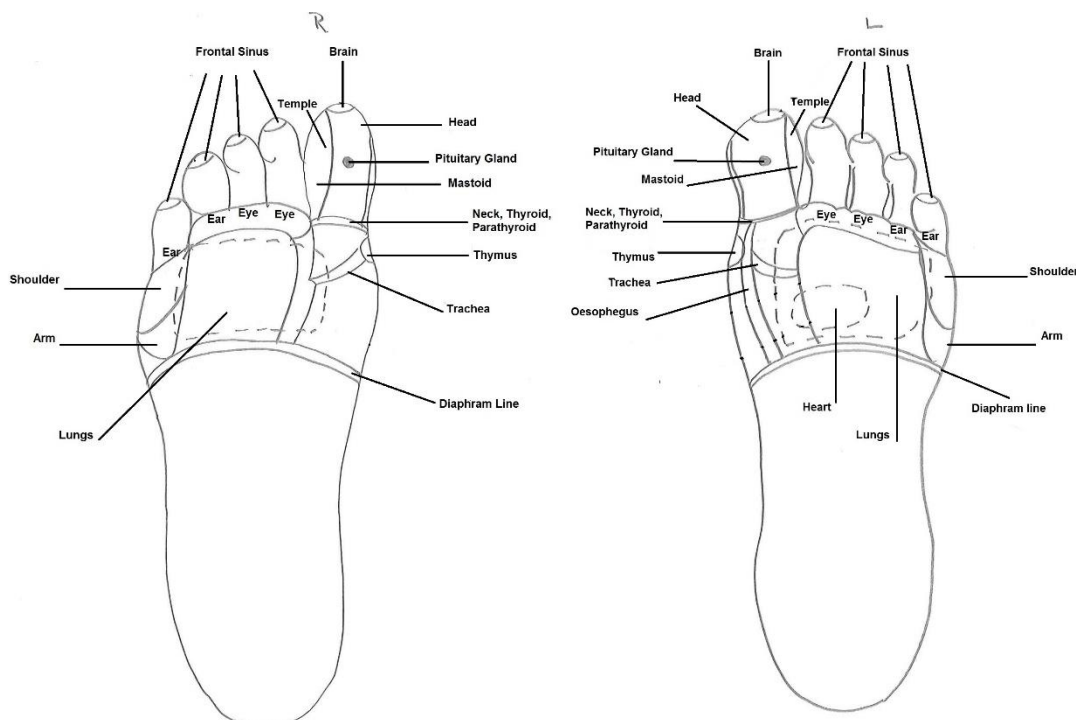
- Understand the relationship between areas of the body and their associated reflex on the feet.

The body itself is divided horizontally into four parts: the head and neck area; the thoracic area from the shoulders to the diaphragm; the abdominal area from the diaphragm to the pelvic area; and the pelvis. These areas can be clearly delineated on the feet and provide a precise picture of the body as it is reflected on the feet. We will therefore examine the situation of body organs in horizontal divisions as this facilitates easy study and reference.

The Head and Neck area – the toes

The toes incorporate reflexes to all parts of the body found above the shoulder girdle. If you imagine the two big toes as two half heads with a common neck, the positions of the reflexes are placed very logically. Obviously some reflexes, overlap, as they do in the body. Each big toe contains reflex points for the pituitary gland, pineal gland, hypothalamus, brain, temples, teeth, the seven cervical vertebrae, sinuses, mastoid, tonsils, nose, mouth and other face reflexes as well as part of the Eustachian tubes.

The other four toes on each foot contain reflex points for the eyes, ears, teeth, sinuses, lachrymal glands, speech centre, upper lymph system, collarbone, Eustachian tubes, chronic eyes and ears.



The Head and Brain

Reflexes of the head and the brain are on the pads of the big toes from the tip behind the nail down over the metatarsal bone; reflexes for the sides of the head and brain are on the sides of the big toes. On the top of the toes are the face reflexes including the mouth, nose, teeth and tonsils. At the base of the big toe are the neck reflexes.

Sinuses

The sinuses are cavities within the skull bones situated above and to the sides of the nose, in the cheekbones and behind the eyebrows. They communicate with the nasal cavities through small openings. They act as protection for the eyes and the brain and give resonance to the voice. The reflexes are situated on the tips of all the toes.

The Pituitary Gland

This gland, known also as the 'master gland' is considered the most important in the body as it controls the functions of all the endocrine glands. About the size and shape of a cherry, the pituitary gland is attached to the base of the brain. Numerous hormones are produced by this gland: these influence growth, sexual development, metabolism, pregnancy, mineral and sugar content of the blood, fluid retention and energy levels.

The reflex point is found on both feet where the whirl of the toe print converges into a central point. It is usually situated on the inner side of the toe and often requires a little searching. More often than not, this reflex is found to be off-centre. Since the hormonal system is extremely sensitive and easily thrown off-balance, this reflex is usually very tender.

The Hypothalamus

A number of bodily activities are controlled by this part of the brain. It regulates the autonomic nervous system and controls emotional reactions, appetite, body temperature and sleep.

The hypothalamus reflex areas are found on both feet on the outer side and top of the big toe – the same reflex point as the pineal gland.

The Pineal Gland

The pineal gland is a small gland situated within the hypothalamus section of the brain. Its functions are not completely understood but it is known to stimulate the cells in the skin to produce the black pigment melanin. It is thought to play a part in mood and circadian rhythms, and is sometimes referred to as the psychic 'third eye'.

The reflexes are on both feet on the outer tip of the big toes – the same as the hypothalamus reflex.

The Teeth

The reflexes to the teeth are exactly distributed over the ten toes.

These reflexes are in the same position as the sinus reflexes.

The Eyes

The eyes are important sensory organs – the organs of sight. The nerve tissue of the retina receives impressions of images via the pupils and the lens. From this the optic nerve conveys the impressions to the visual area of the cerebral cortex where they are interpreted.

These reflexes are on both feet on the cushions of the second and third toes and may extend slightly down the toes. Reflexes for chronic eye conditions are on the 'shelf' at the base of these two toes.

The Ears

The ear is the organ of hearing. It is a highly complex system of cavities, bones and membranes, constructed in such a way that sound waves in the atmosphere are caught up and transmitted to the hearing centre in the temporal lobe of the cerebral cortex. The ear also plays a part in maintaining balance.

The reflexes are situated on both feet on the cushions of the fourth and fifth toes and may extend slightly down the toes. The reflexes for the Eustachian tubes extend from the inner side of the big toe along the base of the second and third toes to the fourth toe. Reflexes for chronic ear conditions are found on the 'shelf' at the base of these two toes – the same section as the Eustachian tubes. The mastoid – the part of the skull behind the ear, which contains the air spaces that communicate with the ear – is also treated on these reflexes.

The Tonsils

These are paired organs composed of lymphatic tissue and thought to be involved in defence of the throat area.

The reflexes are found on both feet – on the top of the foot at the base of the big toe near the web between the big and second toes.

The Lymphatic System

The lymphatic system is a network of lymphatic vessels situated throughout the body, which drain tissue fluid surrounding the cells in the body. Lymph nodes filter the lymph to prevent infection passing into the bloodstream and add lymphocytes, which are important for the

formation of antibodies and immunological reactions. The main sites of the lymph nodes are in the neck, armpit, breast, abdomen, groin, pelvis, and behind the knee.

On the front of the foot, the web between the toes, are the reflexes for lymph drainage in the neck and chest region of the body. Lymph reflexes for the groin area are linked to the reproductive system and found in the same area as the reflexes for the Fallopian tubes and vas deferens described later in this chapter. These reflexes run across the top of the foot from the inner anklebone to the outer anklebone and incorporate the six main meridians.

The thoracic area – the ball of the foot

This section of the foot corresponds with the thoracic area in the body from the shoulder girdle to the diaphragm. Several vital reflexes are situated here: the heart, lungs, oesophagus, trachea, bronchi, thyroid and thymus glands, diaphragm and solar plexus.

The lungs

The lungs are cone-shaped, spongy organs, which lie in the thorax on either side of the heart. The lung reflexes are found on the soles of both feet from the second toe (stomach meridian) to just past the fourth toe (gall bladder meridian). Reflexes of the trachea and bronchi are found below the big toe and second toes (stomach and liver meridians) connected to the lung reflex. These same reflexes are also found in similar positions on the tops of the feet.

The heart

The heart is a hollow, cone-shaped, muscular organ, which lies in the chest on the left side of the body in a space between the lungs.

The reflex to the heart is situated on the sole of the left foot only.

The thymus gland.

The thymus gland is situated in the thoracic cavity. It is quite large in childhood, reaches maximum size at 10-12 years, then slowly regresses and almost disappears in adult life. It is involved in the immune system, but its only function is the formation of lymphocytes.

The oesophagus

A muscular tube passing from the pharynx down through the chest, and joining the stomach below the diaphragm. Food and fluid are propelled through it by peristalsis, the wave-like contractions of the intestinal walls.

The trachea

This is the windpipe. It passes down from the larynx into the chest where it divides into two bronchi, the main divisions of the trachea, which enter the lungs.

All these reflexes are found on both feet in the same area – on the soles of the feet in a vertical band between the first and second toes.

The thyroid gland

The thyroid gland is located in the neck. It controls the rate of metabolism and maintains the correct amount of calcium in the blood.

This reflex is situated on both feet at the base of the big toe, down around the ball and into the groove below the bone. The most important part is the section along the bone. There is also a ‘helper’ reflex on the second toe – the stomach meridian.

The parathyroid glands

These are four small glands situated around the thyroid gland. Their main function is to maintain the correct amount of calcium and phosphorus in the blood and bones. The reflex is situated on both feet at the base of the big toe on the outer side.

The diaphragm

The diaphragm, one of the muscles of respiration, is a large, dome-shaped wall, which separates the thorax from the abdomen. It is the most important muscle for breathing.

This reflex is situated on the soles of both feet, extends across all six meridians at the base of the ball of the foot separating the ball from the arch.

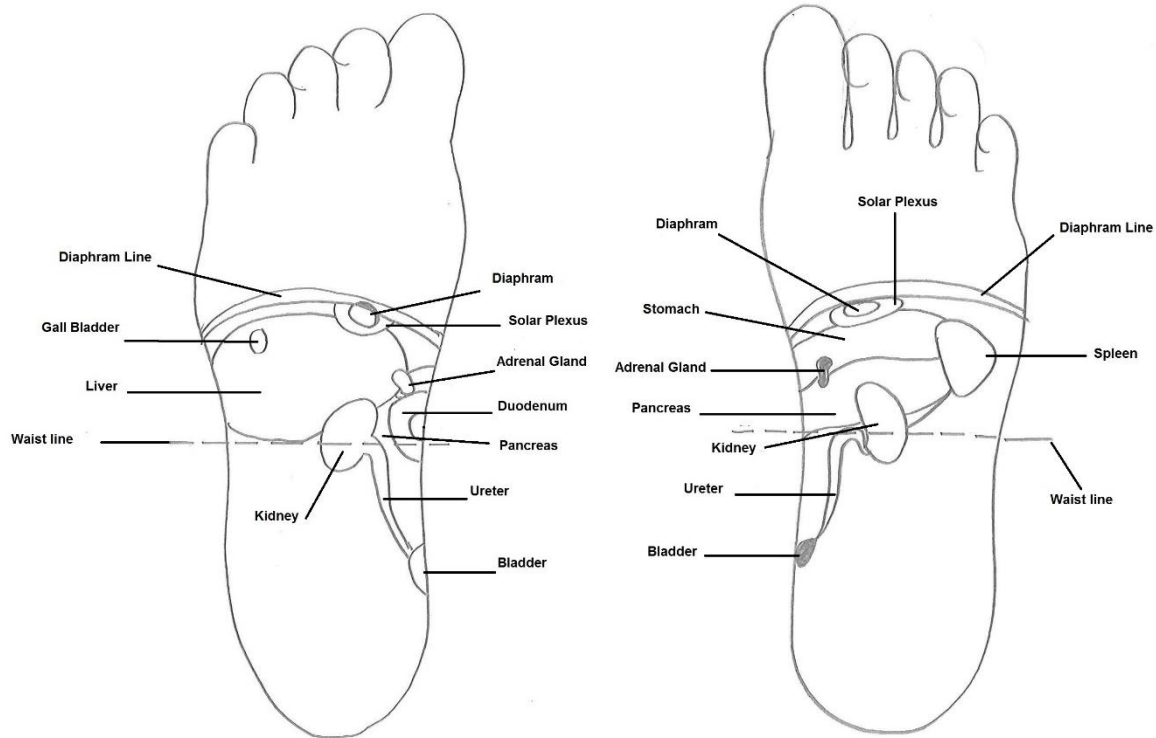
The solar plexus

The solar plexus is a network of sympathetic nerve ganglia in the abdomen and is the nerve supply to the abdominal organs below the diaphragm. It is sometimes referred to as the ‘abdominal brain’ or the ‘nerve switchboard’ and is situated behind the stomach and in front of the diaphragm.

The reflex is at the same level as the reflex to the diaphragm, located at a specific point in the centre of the diaphragm reflex. This point is visible on the foot as the apex of the arch that runs across the base of the ball of the foot. This reflex is most useful for inducing a relaxed state. It can relieve stress and nervousness, aid deep regular breathing and restore calm.

The abdominal area – The arch of the foot

The arch of the foot is clearly visible on the side- raised area, which extends from the base of the ball to the beginning of the heel. It is divided into two parts: the upper part corresponds to the section of the body from the diaphragm to the waistline; the lower part corresponds to the section of the body from the waistline to the pelvic area.



The liver

The liver is the largest and most complex organ/gland in the body. It controls many of the chemical processes and has many functions.

The reflex is found on the sole of the right foot only, below the diaphragm level, extending from the spleen/pancreas meridian on the inside of the foot to below the little toe. It extends just above the waistline.

The gallbladder

This is a small, muscular, pear-shaped sac attached to the under-surface of the liver. Its function is to excrete bile for food digestion. The gallbladder reflex is on the sole of the right foot only, embedded within the liver reflex, beneath and between the third and fourth toes.

The stomach

The stomach is a large, muscular sac, which lies below the diaphragm mainly to the left side of the body.

The reflexes are found on the soles of both feet – extending from the big toe to the second toe on the right foot and the big toe to the outer edge of the fourth toe on the left foot. Horizontally, they are situated just below the diaphragm level.

The pancreas

The pancreas is a large glandular structure in the abdomen. It is probably best known for the production of the hormones insulin and glucagon, which are important in the control of sugar metabolism.

The reflexes are situated on the soles of both feet – more on the left foot than the right foot – below the stomach and above the waistline. On the right foot it extends to just below the big toe, and on the left foot as far as the fourth toe.

The duodenum

This is the first, c-shaped part of the small intestine, about 20-25 cm long. It extends from the pyloric sphincter of the stomach to the jejunum. Pancreatic and common bile ducts open into it, releasing secretions responsible for the breakdown of food.

The reflexes are on the soles of both feet immediately below the pancreas, touching the waistline and extending inwards to the second toe.

The spleen

The spleen is a large, very vascular, gland-like but ductless organ found on the left side of the body behind the stomach. It plays an important part in the immune system, and is part of the lymphatic system. It contains lymphatic tissue, which manufactures the white blood cells, breaks down old red blood corpuscles and filters the lymph of toxins.

The reflex is found on the outer side of the left foot (opposite the liver reflex on the right foot), beneath the fourth toe (gallbladder meridian) just below the diaphragm, in line with the stomach reflex.

The kidneys

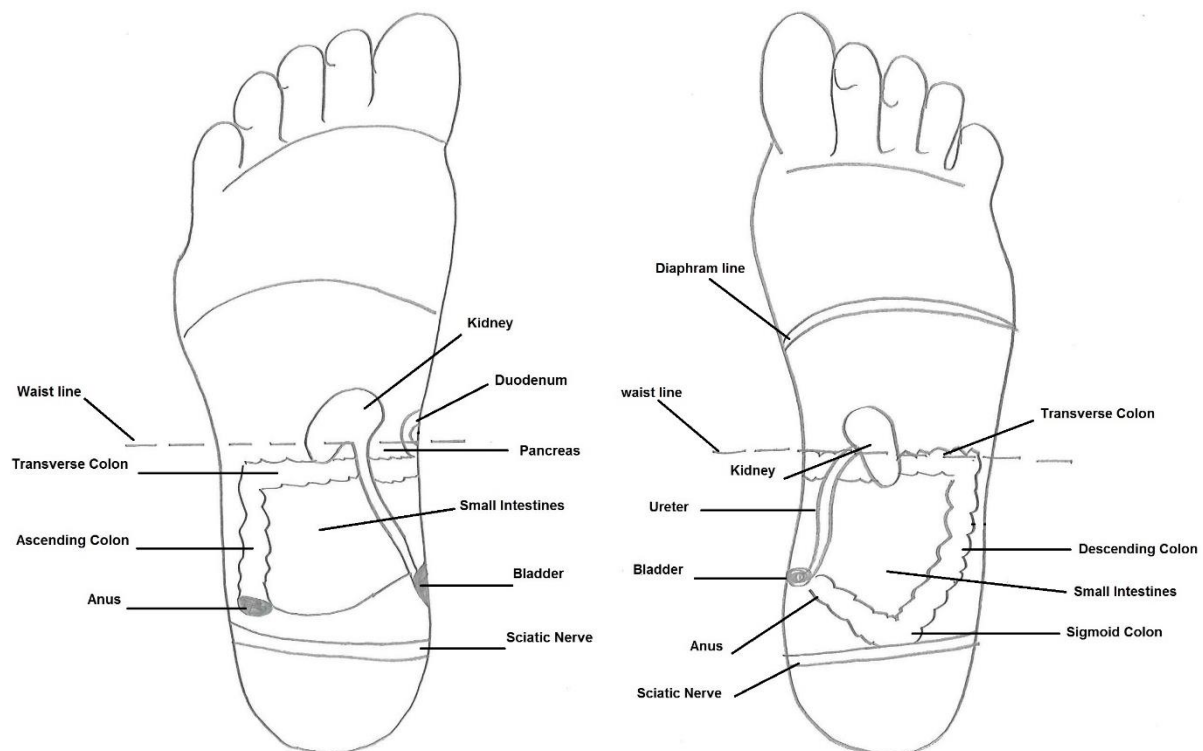
The kidneys are part of the main excretory system of the body. They are two bean-shaped organs, which filter toxins from the blood, produce urine and regulate the retention of important minerals and water.

The reflexes are found on the soles of both feet, positioned just above the waistline on the kidney and stomach meridians, just below the stomach reflex. The right kidney is positioned slightly lower than the left kidney.

The adrenal glands

These are two triangular endocrine glands situated on the upper tip of each kidney. As part of the endocrine system they perform numerous vital functions. The adrenal cortex produces steroid hormones, which regulate carbohydrate metabolism and have anti-allergic and anti-inflammatory properties. The cortex also produces hormones, which control the re-absorption of sodium and water in the kidneys, as well as the secretion of potassium and the sex hormones testosterone, oestrogen and progesterone. The adrenal medulla produces adrenaline and noradrenalin, which work in conjunction with the sympathetic nervous system. The output of adrenaline is increased at times of anxiety and stress and is responsible for organ changes in the 'fight or flight' situation. The reflexes are situated on the soles of both the feet on top of the kidney reflexes.

Below the waistline



The small intestine

This is a muscular tube about 6-7 metres in length and is the main area of the digestive tract where absorption takes place. It leads from the pyloric sphincter of the stomach to the caecum of the large intestine and lies in a coiled position in the abdominal cavity surrounded by the large intestine. The small intestine is divided into three sections – the duodenum, jejunum and the ileum.

The reflex is situated on the soles of both feet, under the large intestine reflex, extending horizontally across the arch to below the fourth toe.

The ileocecal valve

This valve is situated where the small intestine and large intestine join, and therefore controls the passage of contents of the small intestine through to the large intestine. It prevents backflow of faecal matter from the large intestine and controls mucous secretions. The reflex is found on the sole of the right foot below and between the third and fourth toes, just above the level of the pelvic floor.

The appendix

The appendix is a worm-like tube about 9-10 cm in length, with a blind end projecting downwards from the caecum of the large intestine in the lower right part of the abdominal cavity. Located directly below the ileocecal valve, it helps lubricate the large intestine, is rich in lymphoid tissue and secretes anti-bodies.

The reflex is situated on the sole of the right foot only, in the same areas as the ileocecal valve.

The large intestine

This is a tube about 1.5 metres in length, which surrounds the small intestine. It starts on the right side of the body at the caecum (ileocecal valve), goes up the right side to below the liver where it bends to the left and passes across the abdomen as the transverse colon. At the left side of the abdomen, it bends down below the spleen to become the descending colon, which passes down the left side of the abdomen. It then turns towards the midline and takes the shape of a double S-shaped bends known as the sigmoid flexure. This leads into the rectum, which in turn becomes the anus.

When the residue of food reaches the large intestine it is in fluid form. The function of the large intestine is to remove some of the water and salts by absorption and to convert the waste material into faeces ready for excretion.

The reflexes are found on the soles of both feet. On the right foot this begins just below the reflex for the ileocecal valve and extends upwards (ascending colon), turns just below the liver reflex to become the transverse colon, which extends across the entire foot. It continues across to the left foot and turns just below the spleen reflex to become the

descending colon. Just above the pelvic floor it turns again into the sigmoid colon, which ends at the reflex of the rectum/anus.

The ureters

The ureters are muscular tubes about 30 cm in length, which connect the kidneys and bladder and function as a passageway for urine. There are two tubes, one from each kidney, which pass downward from the abdomen into the pelvis where they enter the bladder.

The reflexes are situated on the soles of both feet linking the kidney reflexes to the bladder reflexes, which are situated on the inner side of the instep. The ureter reflexes can often be seen as distinct lines running down the arch.

The bladder

The bladder is an elastic muscular sac situated in the centre of the pelvis. Urine for excretion passes from the kidneys down the ureters and is stored in the bladder until it is eliminated via the urethra.

The reflexes are found on both feet, on the side of the foot below the inner anklebone on the heel line. This reflex is often clearly visible as a puffy area.

The pelvic area – the heel of the foot

Few organs are represented here, but this area is of vital importance as all six main meridians traverse the pelvic section of the heel. As a result congestion can be traced to meridians and their organs.

The sciatic nerve

These are the largest nerves in the body. They arise from the sacral plexus of nerves formed by the lower lumbar and upper sacral spinal nerves. They run from the buttocks down the backs of the thighs to divide just above the knees into two main branches, which supply the lower legs: These are actual nerves in the feet as well as reflexes.

The sciatic nerves and reflexes are found on the soles of both feet, in a band about a third of the way down the pad of the heel extending right across the foot.

The reproductive area – the ankle

The outer ankle contains the ovaries/testes reflexes, and the inner ankle contains reflexes of the uterus, prostate, vagina and penis. The reflex points for the fallopian tubes, lymph drainage area in the groin, vas deferens and seminal vesicles are found in a narrow band

running below the outer anklebone across the top of the foot to the inner anklebone. The kidney/bladder meridian is situated on both sides up the back of the Achilles tendon.

The ovaries

These are the female gonads or sex glands. They are small almond-shaped glands about 2-3 cm long. There are two ovaries – one on each side of the uterus. These are part of the female reproductive system and produce ova as well as the hormones oestrogen and progesterone.

The reflexes are found on both feet on the outer side, midway between the anklebone and the back of the heel – the right ovary on the right foot, the left ovary on the left foot. The 'helper' area is the heel due to the presence of the meridians.

The testes

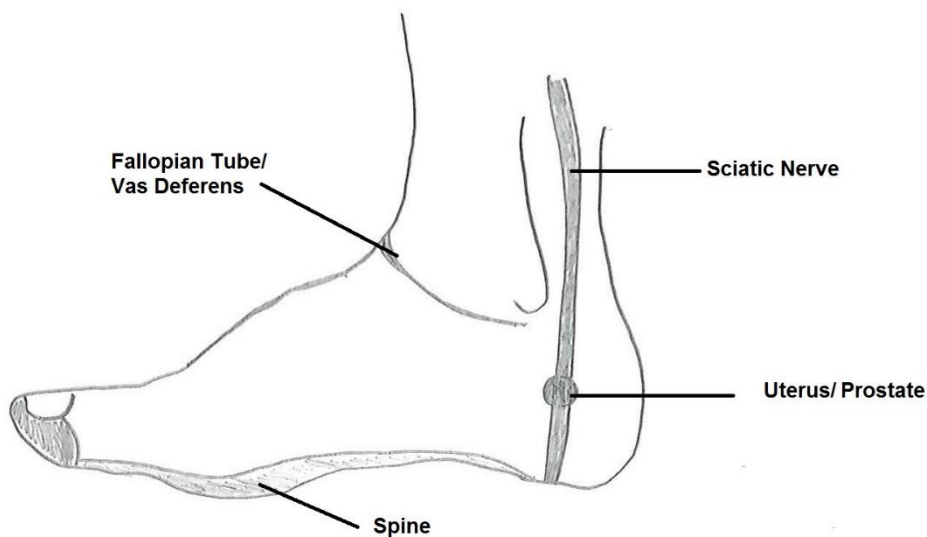
The testes are the male reproductive glands, which produce spermatozoa and the male hormone testosterone. There are two testes suspended outside the body in the scrotum – a sac of thin dark-coloured skin, which lies behind the penis.

The reflexes are found on males in the same areas as the ovaries in females.

The uterus

The uterus is a hollow pear-shaped organ about 10 cm long, situated in the centre of the pelvic cavity in females. Its function is the nourishment and protection of the foetus during pregnancy and its expulsion at term.

The reflex points are located on both feet on the inside of the ankles, midway on a diagonal line between the anklebone and the back of the heel. The 'helper' area is the heel.



The prostate gland

This gland lies at the base of the bladder in males and surrounds the urethra. It produces thin lubricating fluid, which forms part of the semen to aid the transport of sperm cells.

Reflexes are found on both feet in the same place as the uterus reflex on females – midway in a diagonal line between the inner anklebone and the heel.

The fallopian tubes

In females these two tubes connect the ovaries with the cavity of the uterus. Their function is to conduct the ova expelled from the ovaries during ovulation down to the uterus.

These reflexes are found on both the feet. They run across the top of the foot linking the reflex of the uterus to the reflex of the ovaries. This area is usually massaged in conjunction with the reflexes of the ovaries and uterus.

The seminal vesicles/vas deferens

The seminal vesicles lie next to the prostate and store semen. The vas deferens is a pair of excretory ducts which convey semen from the prostate to the urethra. The reflexes are located in the same area as the fallopian tubes in females – across the top of the foot from one anklebone to another, linking the prostate and testes reflexes.

The spine – inner foot

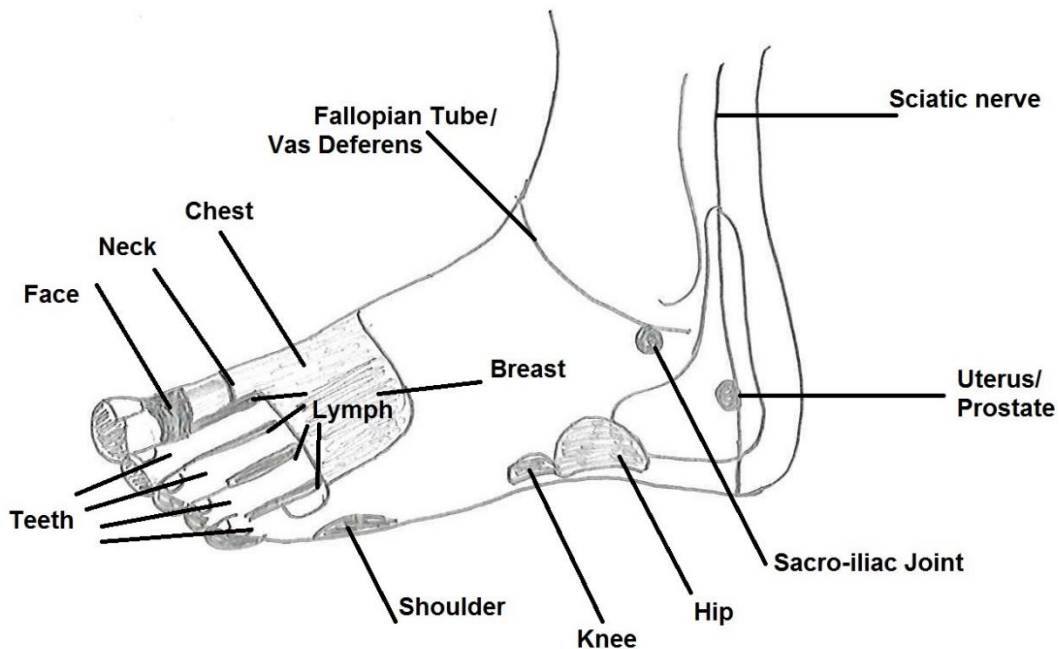
The inside of each foot is naturally curved to correspond to the spine.

The spinal column encloses the spinal cord, the central channel of the nervous system, which is a continuation of the brain stem. It carries the nerves from the brain to all parts of the body. Associated with each vertebra is a pair of spinal nerves. These nerves arise from the spinal cord and affect the level of the body at which they arise – thoracic nerves affect the thorax, lumbar nerves the lower abdomen and legs. These nerves supply specific organs so any constriction or damage to them will directly affect the connected body parts.

The spine reflex runs along the inner sides of both feet – half the spine being represented on each foot. The cervical vertebrae reflex runs from the base of the big toenail to the base of the toe. The thoracic reflex runs along the ball of the foot below the big toe, the arch from the waistline to pelvic line corresponds to the lumbar region, and the heel line to the base of the heel to the sacrum/coccyx.

The outer foot – the outer body

The outer edge of the foot corresponds to the outer part of the body – the joints, ligaments and surrounding muscles. From the base of the toe to the diaphragm line = shoulder and upper arm; diaphragm line to waistline = elbow, forearm, wrist and hand; waistline to end of heel = leg, knee and hip.



The knee

Reflexes are found on both feet on the outer side, just below the bony projection of the anklebone, which is usually quite prominent on the side of the foot, again, remember the six meridians run through the knee, so by pinpointing the exact location of the knee pain, one can relate it to a specific meridian and locate the problematic organ.

The hip

The reflex is found on both feet extending towards the toe in front of the knee reflex. It covers an oblong shape, moving out from the line up the side of the foot, in line with the fourth toe. A number of hip problems may be gall bladder related, as the gall bladder meridian passes directly through the hip.

The elbow and shoulder

The reflexes to the elbow are situated on both feet on the outer side along the arch and the ball. The shoulder and surrounding muscles are found on both feet at the base of the fifth toe covering the sole, outer side and top.

The top of the foot

Reflexes found on the top of the foot include the circulation and breasts. Most of the reflexes represented on the soles are also found on the tops of the feet in the meridians.

Breasts

On top of the foot

Special circulation points

These points are to stimulate the heart, circulation and body temperature. They are situated on the top and soles of both feet at the web between the second and third toes. As these are points on the stomach meridian, they have an effect on the thyroid, which in turn affects the body temperature, heart and circulation.

