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**ASSOCIATION of  
REFLEXOLOGISTS**

# Careers in Reflexology

## **Intention**

This booklet is intended to provide further information to those thinking of seeking a career in reflexology. It contains information on what the work is like, what hours you would expect to work, the environment in which you would expect to work, the salary you could expect as a reflexologist, the personal skills, qualities and interests that best suit the job, and how to get in to the profession if it still sounds like the one for you!

## **What is the work like?**

Reflexology is a complementary therapy widely acknowledged by the public in the UK and is recognised by the NHS, GP's and hospices as a viable complementary therapy. It identifies areas in the feet and hands, known as reflexes, which correspond to different parts of the body. Reflexologists stimulate these reflexes by applying pressure to the reflex points on the hands or feet. As a result the blood circulation may be improved, while the body relaxes and organs and glands become rebalanced. It reduces stress and tension which are the cause of many of our health problems.

Reflexology is certainly not new. The art of Reflexology can be traced back to 2330 B.C. in ancient Egypt and also in India and China. It is not a beauty therapy or a foot massage but is a holistic treatment with some scientific evidence of effectiveness.

During a reflexology session a reflexologist will...

- take a full medical history on the client's first visit
- discuss and record any health problems, symptoms or diagnosis from a conventional medical practitioner
- use this information to decide whether reflexology is suitable for the client
- explain the treatment to the client
- examine their bare feet or hands
- apply pressure with the thumb and fingers to treat both feet or hands
- if appropriate, show the client simple reflexology techniques to use at home between reflexology sessions
- write up full details of the treatment on the client's record card
- on the client's next visit, discuss and record any changes that they may have noticed in their symptoms
- refer the client to their GP, if necessary.

Treatments usually last about one hour, although first visits usually take longer because of the detailed consultation with the client. The number of treatment sessions may vary according to individual requirements.

Self-employed reflexologists also spend time promoting their businesses and dealing with administration and accounts.

Earnings start from around £12,500 a year, although it is difficult to put numbers on Reflexologist's earnings as it is dependent on how much work they do – in actual fact, due to advertising etc, first year income can be very low.

## Hours and environment

Working hours can vary. Many reflexologists offer evening or weekend sessions. Many reflexologists work part time.

Reflexologists work in a range of settings. Some have treatment rooms in their own homes or in complementary therapy centres. They may also work in fitness centres, beauty therapy centres, hair salons, health spas, luxury hotels and on cruise ships. They may also work in hospices, care homes and GP practices. Some visit clients in their own homes or give treatments to employees in their workplaces. They spend much of their day sitting down, talking to clients, or giving treatments. A driving licence and car will be useful for visiting clients.

## Salary and other benefits

These figures are only a guide, as actual rates of pay may vary, depending on the employer and where people live.

- A reflexologist building a new practice may earn around £12,500 a year, although initially the income can be much lower than this, as you will need to promote your business and gain all of the tools and materials you will need for your career ahead.
- Experienced reflexologists with a **large** number of regular clients may earn £20,000, or more.
- Someone with a large, established practice may earn £40,000, or more, although there are very few instances in which a reflexologist's client base will be large enough to support this – usually, when one reaches this stage, one would also be writing books and delivering courses as well

Most reflexologists are self-employed so their income depends on the number of clients they see and the amount they charge for each session. This is usually between £20 and £40. Outgoings like rent, heating, lighting, professional memberships and insurance must be taken into account.

## Skills and personal qualities

A reflexologist needs to...

- be a good communicator, able to explain treatments to clients and ask appropriate questions
- have good listening skills
- be comfortable touching people's feet
- be able to make clients feel relaxed and comfortable
- have empathy with clients
- be able to respect professional boundaries
- know when to advise clients to seek conventional medical advice
- co-operate fully with healthcare professionals
- keep accurate written records
- respect confidentiality
- have business skills if they are self-employed.

## Interests

It is important for a reflexologist to...

- be interested in human biology and health
- have a genuine desire to help people.

## Getting in

There are about 35,000 reflexologists practising in the UK at the moment. As more people become interested in complementary therapies, demand is only likely to increase. Most reflexologists are self-employed, but some are employed in private clinics and treatment centres and by the National Health Service (NHS).

Vacancies are advertised in Jobcentre Plus offices and local and national newspapers, as well in health and fitness magazines.

### ***How to get in for young people...***

Many short courses in reflexology are offered by local authorities and other lifelong learning organisations. These provide a basic introduction to the therapy and may help an individual to decide whether they are interested in further study, but they are not designed for people wishing to practice as professionals.

Professional reflexology courses are offered by a wide range of organisations. There are usually no formal entry requirements other than an understanding of written and spoken English, but students must be able to produce written assignments and cope with the study of human anatomy and physiology. Course providers often stipulate a minimum age of 18 or 19 for entry and some relevant GCSEs/S grades, or the equivalent would be helpful to you.

Many professional reflexology courses are available on a part time basis, but they also demand a great deal of home study. They usually last at least a year.

Subjects included in courses normally incorporate tuition on the following subjects:

- reflexology techniques
- an understanding of when it is appropriate to use reflexology
- reactions to treatment
- human anatomy and physiology
- general disorders and diseases
- how to set up a reflexology business
- rules, regulations and professional ethics.

Courses consist of a mixture of theory and a substantial amount of practical experience. They are usually assessed by written case studies, projects, examinations and practical assessments of reflexology treatments.

Several universities and colleges offer full-time higher education courses in, or containing modules on, reflexology.

In general, applicants to a degree course usually need a minimum of two A levels/three H grades and five GCSEs/S grades, or the equivalent. There are no set entry requirements for Foundation degrees. Candidates are advised to contact individual institutions.

### ***Entry for adults***

There is no upper age limit for this career. Many people take up reflexology as a second career. Universities may relax entry qualifications for mature students.

## Training

Reflexologists who have successfully completed a professional training course are considered fully trained and ready to practice, although those entering employment may need to work under supervision for a set period. Reflexologists working for the NHS and private clinics and treatment centres may need to receive induction training to introduce them to their employer's organisation and culture. To find a list of reflexology training courses please visit the Association of Reflexologists website on [www.aor.org.uk](http://www.aor.org.uk). If you would like to become a member of the Association of Reflexologists after your training, it is very important that you check before starting the course if the qualification is eligible for membership.

Professional reflexology bodies offer a range of workshops, conferences, seminars and continuing professional development opportunities to their members.

Self-employed reflexologists may find it useful to take additional training in business-related subjects such as accounts or marketing. For more information contact Learn Direct on 0800 100 900 or visit [www.learndirect.co.uk](http://www.learndirect.co.uk).

## **Getting on**

There is no formal career path for reflexologists and there are few opportunities for promotion. Self-employed reflexologists often start with just one or two clients and must be prepared to spend a lot of time and effort promoting and building their business if it is to succeed. Some give talks and demonstrations to raise awareness of reflexology and make contact with potential new clients.

Training in other complementary therapies allows reflexologists to offer a wider service to clients. Those with several years' professional experience may take a recognised teaching qualification and teach reflexology.

There may be opportunities to work overseas, but it is important to check that UK qualifications are recognised in the country where the reflexologist intends to work.

## **Further information**

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[www.aor.org.uk](http://www.aor.org.uk)

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<http://www.connexions-direct.com>