

REFLEXOLOGY AS A PROFESSION

Reflexology is a holistic art and science that has been practiced as a health enhancing modality in different forms all over the world since antiquity. Reflexology is now recognized as a career in the natural health field that offers a non-invasive, integrative healing alternative and is at the forefront of alternative therapies.

Reflexology is based on the principle that there are reflex points in the hands and feet that relate to all the organs and parts of the body. Specific stimulation with pressure on these points is used to help the body maintain homeostasis, improve circulation, and relieve stress. In order to effectively access these reflex points, the practice of Reflexology involves using finger and thumb techniques that are unique to its field and are different than foot or hand massage. In Western culture, reflexologists use the zonal theory to look at the body holistically. Ten longitudinal zones that start with the head and end in the tips of the fingers and toes are a guide to a map of the body mirrored onto the feet and hands. When areas of the feet or hands are tender, trained Reflexologists apply their skills to work out this tenderness and stimulate nerve impulses, thereby helping the whole body to normalize. A Professional Reflexologist never diagnoses or prescribes, but uses the reflexology techniques to complement other health and wellness care clients are doing for themselves. Reflexology can also be used as a way to keep the body systems tuned up and operating at their peak performance, and relieving stress that can be a precursor to disease.

As a health practice, Reflexology is continuing to grow and gain popularity in the United States, earning its place as an effective alternative modality. Many states have instituted a professional registry with certification requirements and rules in response to the public's interest in receiving quality reflexology. The state of Tennessee now requires completion of an approved reflexology certification program of a minimum of 200 hours to become a Registered Certified Reflexologist. The American Commission for Accreditation of Reflexology Education and Training (ACARET) has now set the national standard for professional reflexology training at a minimum of 300 hours. The American Reflexology Certification Board (ARCB) offers national certification to candidates who meet requirements for education, hands-on practice and who pass a certification exam. To practice as a reflexologist in another state, you should check with that state's Department of Health Related Boards for their rules and regulations. Some states regulate reflexology and some do not. The Reflexology Association of America (RAA) provides a summary of state laws.

There are many varied opportunities to work in the field of Reflexology part or full time. You may choose to operate a private practice in your home or office, travel to clients' homes, work in health clubs, chiropractors' or doctors' offices, salons or spas, senior centers, or onsite at businesses. Upon completion of the NAR Professional Reflexology Certification Program, students will be prepared to be employed as a Reflexologist.

You can expect reflexology salaries to correspond closely to massage therapist salaries in the area where you plan to practice. Of course, the field offers a lot of scheduling flexibility, and the number of hours you work per week will impact your income. Salaries will also vary based on your geographic location, employer type and experience level.

According to the current U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, the median national annual salary for massage therapists is \$43,620. In the metropolitan Nashville area and surrounding counties, the median salary is \$44,120. Actual salaries may vary greatly based on specialization within the field, location, years of experience and a variety of other factors. People working part-time may earn up to \$30,500.