

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF REFLEXOLOGY

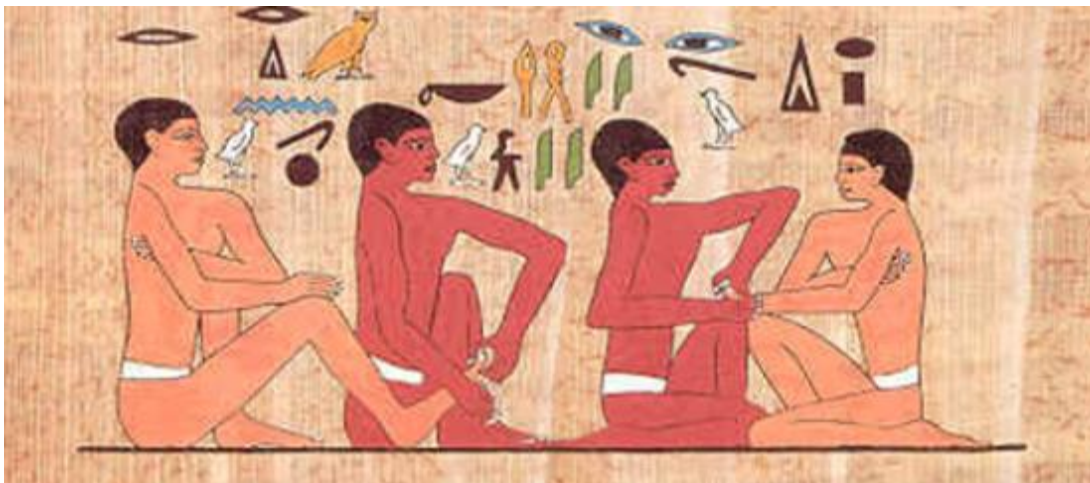
The origin of reflexology can be traced back 5000 years to the countries of Japan, China, India, and Egypt. The oldest document found detailing reflexology was found in the tomb of the pharaoh's physician. Included in this find were six pictographs. These pictographs include the following:

### Reflexology



The inscription reads: "Don't hurt me." Physician's response, "I shall act so you praise me."

### Childbirth



The pictographs also include Dentistry, Pharmacology and Embalming (not available).

Reflexology became popular in western cultures during the last century due in large part to the efforts of two people. In 1902, a Boston City Hospital doctor, Dr. Fitzgerald, hypothesized that 10 vertical lines or zones run through the body from head to toe. He coined the term "zone therapy" after theorizing that all organs in a zone are affected by working any reflex in that zone, as well as working the specific reflex thought to stimulate a specific organ. Dr. Fitzgerald detailed his findings in a book written in 1917.

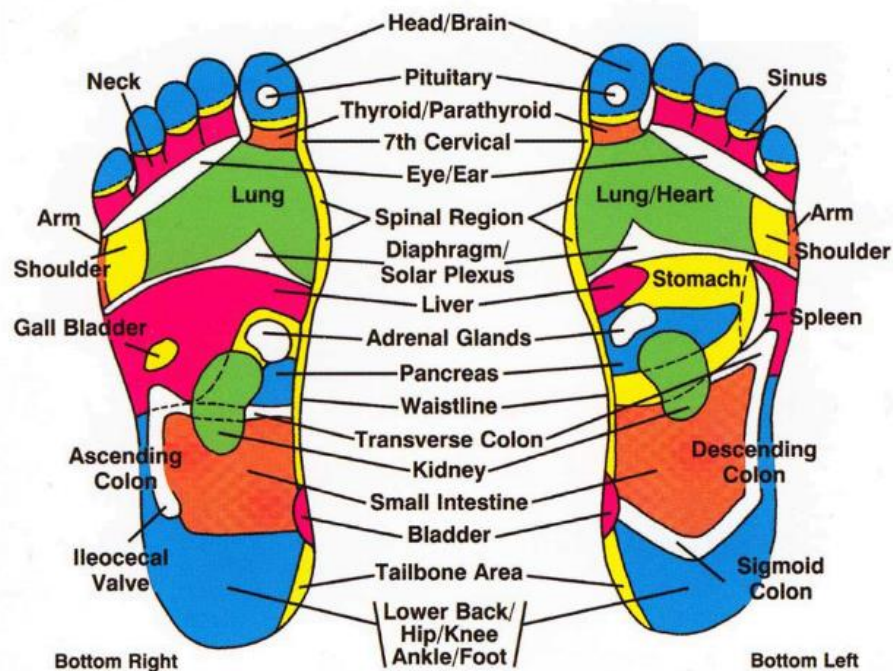
After reading Dr. Fitzgerald's book, a young therapist named Eunice Ingham became obsessed with the zone theory. In the early 1930s, she decided to investigate. Ingham theorized that if Dr. Fitzgerald had such good results with just using the hands, what kind of results might she get using the feet? The feet which are the most sensitive part of the body, have over 7000 nerve endings in each foot. Ingham mapped out and charted what is now known as the Original Ingham Method of Reflexology®, which is the most widely used method of reflexology in use today. Over the next 40 years, Ingham lectured, taught, and wrote three books on reflexology. Eunice Ingham's legacy lives on today at the International Institute of Reflexology located in St. Petersburg, Florida under the leadership of nephew, Dwight Byers.



Dwight Byers, International Institute of Reflexology  
<https://www.reflexology-uk.net/about-reflexology/reflexology-history>

Reflexology, also known as **zone therapy**, is an **alternative medical** practice involving the **application of pressure** to specific points on the feet, ears, and/or hands. This is done using thumb, finger, and hand **massage** techniques without the use of oil or lotion. It is based on a **pseudoscientific** system of zones and reflex areas that purportedly reflect an image of the body on the feet and hands, with the premise that such work on the feet and hands causes a physical change to the supposedly related areas of the body.

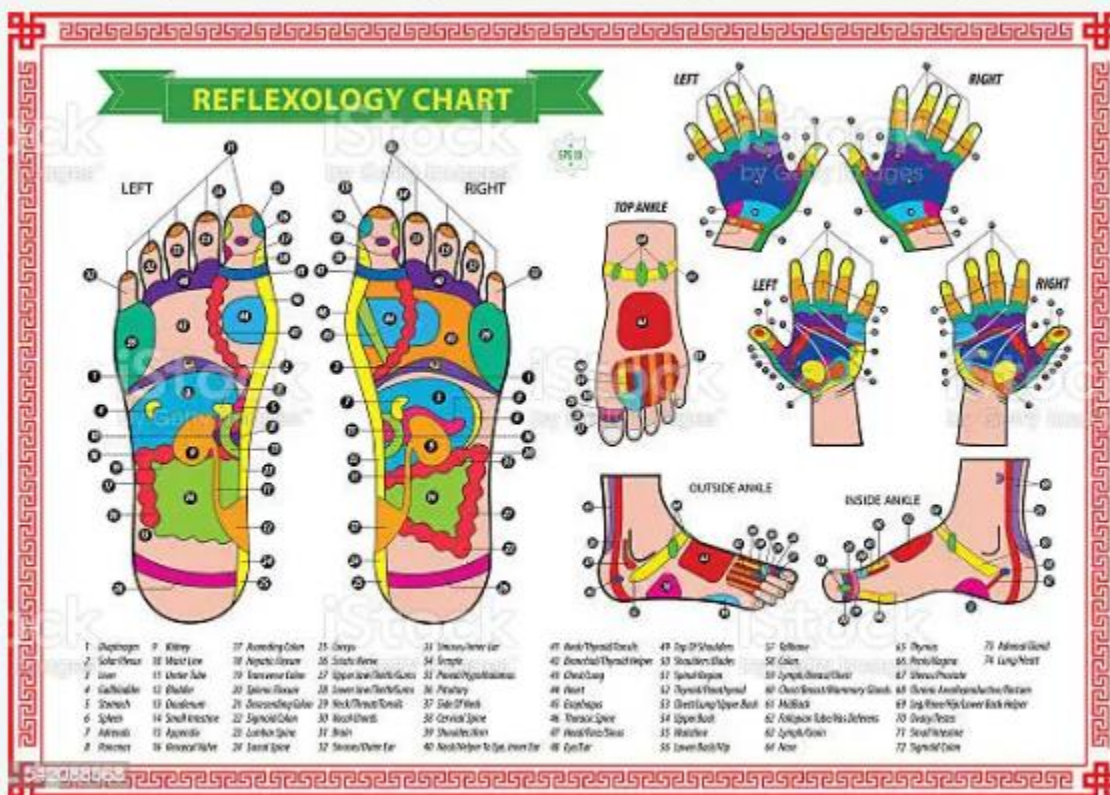
There is no convincing scientific evidence that reflexology is effective for any medical condition.



## Definition

In a **Cochrane Collaboration** review, reflexology is defined as follows: "Reflexology is gentle manipulation or pressing on certain parts of the foot to produce an effect elsewhere in the body."

The **Australian Government's Department of Health** define reflexology as "a system of applying pressure, usually to the feet, which practitioners believe stimulates energy and releases 'blockages' in specific areas that cause pain or illness."



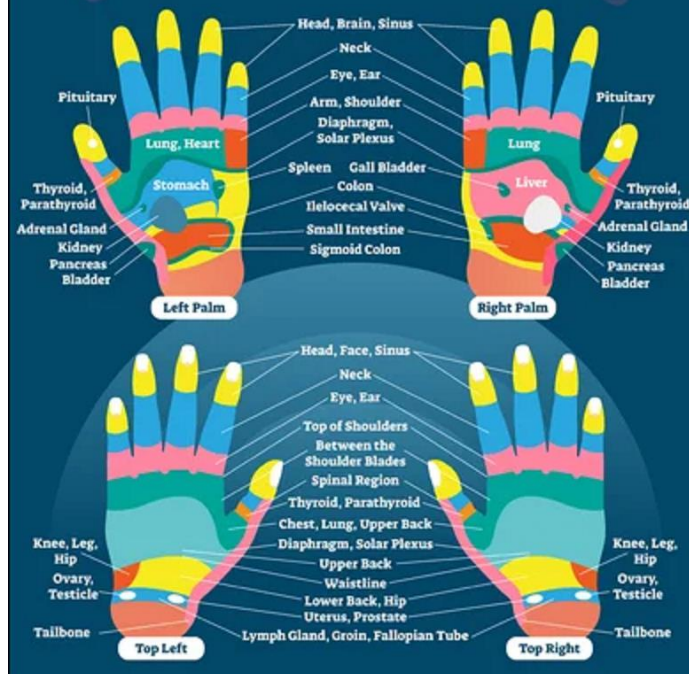
## History

Practices resembling reflexology may have existed in previous historical periods. Similar practices have been documented in the histories of [India](#), China and Egypt. Reflexology was introduced to the United States in 1913 by [William H. Fitzgerald](#), M.D. (1872–1942), an [ear, nose, and throat](#) specialist, and [Edwin F. Bowers](#). Fitzgerald claimed that applying pressure had an [anesthetic effect](#) on other areas of the body. It was modified in the 1930s and 1940s by Eunice D. Ingham (1889–1974), a nurse and [physiotherapist](#). Ingham claimed that the feet and hands were especially sensitive, and mapped the entire body into "reflexes" on the feet, renaming "zone therapy" reflexology. Many of the modern reflexologists use Ingham's methods, or similar techniques of reflexologist Laura Norman.

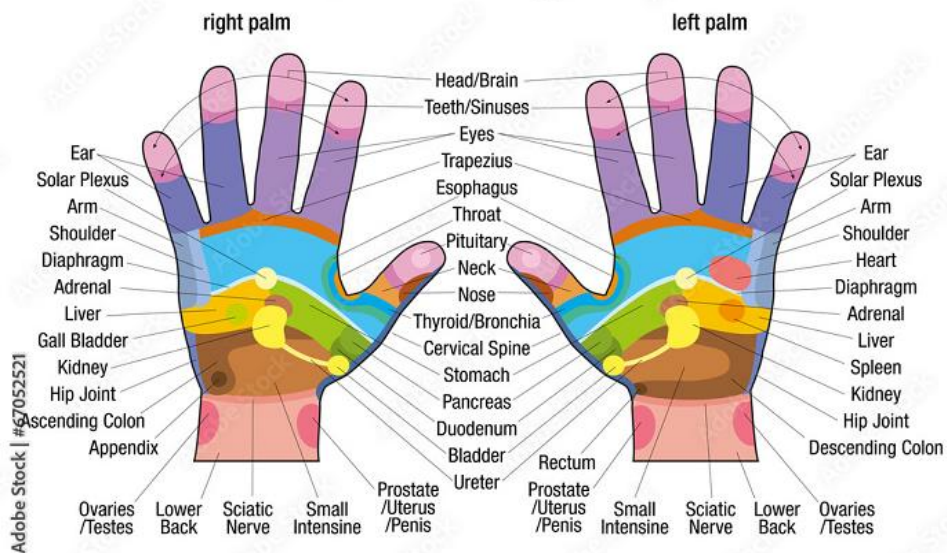
## Effectiveness

In 2015 the Australian Government's Department of Health published the results of a review of alternative therapies that sought to determine if any were suitable for being covered by [health insurance](#); reflexology was one of 17 therapies evaluated for which no clear evidence of effectiveness was found. Accordingly, in 2017, the Australian government named reflexology as a practice that would not qualify for insurance subsidy, saying this step would "ensure taxpayer funds are expended appropriately and not directed to therapies lacking evidence"

# HAND REFLEXOLOGY



## Hand Reflexology Chart



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