

A healing touch

Nikke Ariff explains facial reflexology – a unique combination that unites traditional healing methods from the orient and South America with the modern science of neurology

Your face is richly supplied with nerves and blood vessels. Its closeness to the brain ensures that facial stimulus has the shortest route to this important organ and can help to rebalance your body.

Facial Reflexology Sorensensistem™

Facial Reflexology Sorensensistem™ is the brainchild of Lone Sorensen. Early in her career as a CAM therapist, her experiments with facial acupressure points on children with special needs yielded such remarkable results that Lone began a quest to develop a healing therapy involving the face.

That was 28 years ago. Today, Lone's work is taught in 14 countries and has earned her three honorary awards from the Organization Mundial Humanitaria para la Salud (World Humanitarian Organisation for Health, Argentina).

Facial Reflexology Sorensensistem™ is a marriage of several healing systems – the oriental meridian system (incorporating the use of acupuncture points), facial maps, which are based on those used by a South American tribe in the Andes, and clinical neurology. It also incorporates aroma, music and colour therapy to appeal to the senses of smell, hearing and sight.

The oriental meridians

The principal oriental influence on facial reflexology is via the Chinese meridians. These are 12 major energy channels that are mirrored on each side of the body – six on the arms and six in the torso – and named after what the Chinese, thousands of years ago, deemed to be the major and essential organs of life, without which we would die. Each meridian is part of a pair, so one is Yang and the other is its Yin partner. The six pairs are:

- Stomach / Spleen and Pancreas
- Liver / Gall Bladder
- Large Intestine / Lung
- Heart / Small Intestine
- Hormonal (Triple Burner) / Circulation (Pericardium)
- Kidney / Bladder.

The energy that runs through the meridians is called chi or qi. It is believed that the energy of the organ after which the meridian has



been named is what will determine the strength or weakness of the energy flowing through that meridian. So, for example, the functional and energetic health of the bladder will determine the quality of the chi within the Bladder meridian as it traces its major pathway from the little toe, up the back, through the neck and head, and eventually to the outside corner of the eyes.

In facial reflexology, working the areas of the face that represent the various organs will not only address the organ itself but the quality of the flow of chi energy throughout the meridian pathway. Each meridian is also associated with specific muscles, emotions, seasons, bodily fluids and hormonal glands.

Acupuncture points are specific points where the meridians, and consequently chi, lie closest to the surface of the skin. Therefore, in addition to the body maps, facial reflexology also uses 35 acupuncture points on the face to access the meridians' energy as it flows through the body.

Further into a treatment session, a therapist will use treatment protocols based on

6th century Vietnamese facial body maps representing the organs, nervous system and physical body on the face.

The South American face maps

In 1988, Lone Sorensen moved to Bahia Blanca in Argentina where she perfected facial reflexology.



The healing traditions of South America are not generally known in Europe, but for thousands of years the natives have used ancient bio-energetic principles to heal themselves and maintain their health. Their reliance upon flowers, leaves, stems, barks, roots and various styles of manual treatment means the native tribes have preserved a pure and natural system that has been passed on through an oral tradition.

A visit to a remote area in the Andes, famed for its volcanic lakes, brought Lone in contact with a tribe of nomadic Indians called the Mapuche. Lone noticed two women – one was sitting cross-legged and massaging the face of another whose head was cradled in her lap. At this high altitude, the indigenous Indians use rosehip (rose mosqueta) oil on their skin for protection from the sun, and this oil was being used on the face.

Lone made several visits to the camp, gained the tribe's confidence and was taught their massage routine.

The techniques and face maps being used by the Mapuche correspond with neurologically rich areas of the major body systems (and meridians). These maps now form the basis on which Facial Reflexologists assess the client for imbalances within the body, which in turn establishes the groundwork for the focus of the rest of the treatment session.

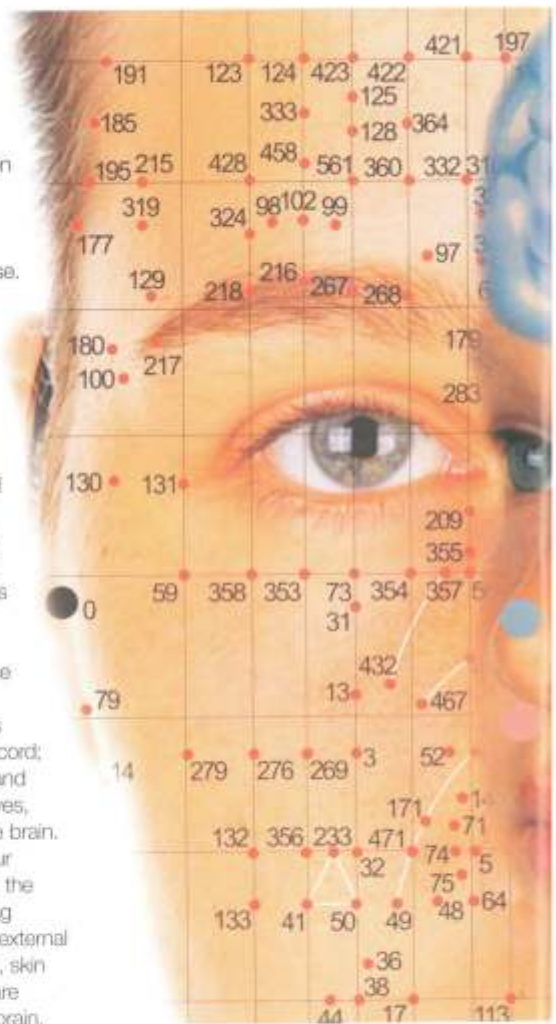
The nervous system

The nervous system is the major communication system of the body, with every thought, action and emotion reflecting its activity. Its signalling device is made up of electrical impulses, which are rapid, specific and cause almost immediate response. The nervous system does not work alone in maintaining homeostasis but works with the slower endocrine system to regulate the workings of the body.

The nervous system is classified into two main divisions: the central nervous system (CNS) and peripheral nervous system (PNS). The CNS consists of the brain and spinal cord, which together act as the integrating and command centres of the nervous system. They interpret incoming sensory information and issue instructions based on past experience and current conditions.

The PNS consists mainly of nerves that extend from the brain and spinal cord; spinal nerves that carry impulses to and from the spinal cord; and cranial nerves, which carry impulses to and from the brain.

The face is an important area of our anatomy because of its closeness to the brain. The brain is constantly receiving information from the PNS about our external environment via the eyes, ears, nose, skin and tongue. These sensory organs are positioned on the face, close to the brain, in order to ensure instantaneous communication of information along the shortest access route to different areas of the control centre of our body. It is here that the effectiveness of facial reflexology lies – by stimulating specific points on the face, impulses reach the CNS by the quickest route possible, helping the body to rebalance itself in a gentle yet highly efficient manner.



The treatment

Our face is the canvas by which we are judged – intelligence, mood, age, demeanour, even our personality. To convey our desired image to the external world, we decorate our face with make-up, embellish our appearance with jewellery, frame our image with hair and fix our face with a repertoire of expressions to convey or conceal emotion. The face is an organ of communication through which we receive external information and relay our responses through facial expressions and appearance to the outside world.

As a result of how we use our face, an extraordinary amount of physical, energetic and emotional tension accumulates within the musculature. Every single life experience will have an emotional impact on a cellular level in our body and will be recorded on each of our organs and reflected on the body maps on our face. With time, creases, lines and blemishes appear on the surface of the face but of much more importance to the Facial Reflexologist is the texture and condition of the underlying skin (dermis) and how this corresponds to the body maps found on the face.

At the initial appointment, there would be a full consultation, including questions that are



The power of rosehips

In keeping with the traditions of the Mapuche, Facial Reflexologists use rose mosqueta oil imported from the Andes via Argentina, where a small industry has grown to supply Facial

Reflexologists. This oil is an important part of the therapy and honours the traditions of plant alchemy used by the Mapuche. Rose mosqueta oil (rosehip) is scentless, so rose essence from the flower petals is added for the pungent rose aroma. The oil is light, non-greasy and quickly absorbed. Scientific studies confirm that due to the high essential fatty acid content of rosehip oil, it is highly effective in the treatment of premature ageing, producing a dramatic effect on fine lines and wrinkles in just a short period of use.

Rosehip oil also helps to reduce pigmentation and raised scar tissue (even on non-recent scars) and can be used to treat skin damaged, marked or scarred by surgery, minor burns, acne and sun-exposure, prompting *The Sunday Times* (4 August 2002) to write that rose mosqueta is 'the single most effective natural remedy to help fade scars that are the result of acne, accidents or surgery'.



specific to the face. (For cautions and contraindications, see table.)

Using the fingers with varying degrees of pressure, speed and length of massage

Case history – IBS

MT came for facial reflexology after suffering from constant diarrhoea and abdominal cramps for three months. The doctors had diagnosed irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) 12 months before. She was on medication that was no longer helping. Her known triggers were stress and comfort eating 'the wrong foods' and facial reflexology was MT's 'last ditch' attempt to heal herself before going back to the doctors. The day after her first treatment, MT had fewer abdominal cramps. By the third treatment 14 days later, MT was pain free, had no need for the medication for seven consecutive days and her bowel movements were normal. MT's fourth treatment was one month later, due to travel plans. In the intervening month, she had been eating foods that would have normally triggered her IBS, but she was not affected and had no diarrhoea or cramps. MT is now on a maintenance programme and looking more vibrant, too.

PICTURE: ISTOCKPHOTO/ FOTOLIA



Facts about Facial Reflexology Sorensensistem™:

- A choice of 564 nerve points on the face can be used during or after treatment to help symptoms.
 - There are eight different sets of points especially for wrinkles.
 - Cranial points and lines are great for learning issues, including forgetfulness.
 - A muscle stimulation technique used by Facial Reflexologists is particularly effective for cases involving impaired use of facial muscles and facial paralysis.
- After a 45-minute treatment your client's skin and face will glow from improved blood and lymphatic supply and it should make them look younger.

stroke, the Facial Reflexologist will work to identify and grade the imbalances within the client's skin, which take the form of deposits. These deposits are the result of deteriorated connective tissue within the dermis layer of skin and can be graded on a scale of one to five, with grade one being a grain of rice and grade five being a hard, immovable pearl. The grades, from lower to higher, reflect an acute irritation of the body area through to a chronic condition, and the worst deposit will be the root cause of your client's health issues.

Once the therapist has graded the entire facial body maps, he/she then selects the worst imbalance, as this is usually the most chronic, and focuses the treatment session on restoring homeostasis within the client. Using a knowledge of the Chinese Five Elements, which interlink all the meridians and their associated characteristics, the therapist can then directly address the main Yin/Yang meridian pair associated with the worst imbalance.

For example, if the client's worst imbalance is linked to the Stomach meridian, the therapist would work this meridian together with its Yin pair, the Spleen and Pancreas. This meridian pair will also have an allocated colour (yellow), music (Mozart) and aromatherapy oil (lemon – oil burner only) that

the therapist can also bring into the treatment environment. More specifically, the treatment plan tailored for this client would include balancing other points associated with the Stomach, Spleen / Pancreas meridians, including neurovascular points, acupuncture points, plexus points (affecting the hormonal system), nerve points, and cranial lines and points.

The treatment concludes with a gentle facial massage.

Benefits of treatment

When I am asked 'What conditions or symptoms can facial reflexology benefit?', I find it difficult to answer. This is because I believe that complementary and alternative therapies address the individual on all levels – physical, emotional, mental and energetic – and therefore facial reflexology can potentially benefit all health issues to some extent.

However, it has been noted that hormonal imbalances, digestive problems and symptoms relating to stress, such as migraines and muscle tension, can dramatically improve with treatment, depending on the individual.

Facial Reflexology Sorensensistem™ has a long history of success with children, especially those with learning/ behavioural difficulties. A group of Facial Reflexologists, including myself, are working with children who have been diagnosed with autism, Asperger's syndrome and hemiplegia, and we have made remarkable inroads to improve the quality of life of these children. Another team is also working at a secondary school in Dulwich, with children experiencing learning and behavioural issues. The therapy has yielded a dramatic improvement in the children's personal development and interaction within the class environment – to such an extent that a research project with Kingston University is under way. FHT will report the result in a future issue of IT.

Cautions and contraindications

Cautions:

- recent dental work
- previous injuries to the face
- epilepsy.

Contraindications:

- recent surgery (less than three months previously) to the face, including implants
- unhealed injuries, including bruises
- severe acne
- infectious diseases.



Nikke Ariff practises facial reflexology in central London and is the only approved tutor for Facial Reflexology Sorensensistem™ in the UK and Ireland. She teaches in London and Sheffield but will travel to other UK locations for groups of at least 10 people. Tel: 07981 154321, email health@facereflexology.com or visit www.facialreflexology.com