

# 3 STRESS

Adolescence is no doubt a stressful time. You are growing—your body is changing; your mind is expanding; you are meeting more people; learning new ideas—many of them probably very different from what you have grown up with; getting to know yourself and discovering who you really are. Add to that the pressure of expectations, restrictions, conformity, and temptations placed on you by parents, schools, and friends...boy, its stressful!

Unfortunately many people lose themselves while trying to adapt to their high pressure environments and the demands that are placed on them from their parents, bosses, family, and friends. They become like chameleons and learn to masquerade through life with various faces—always trying to satisfy everyone around them, while not even knowing who they really are. For sensitive, thoughtful, and conscientious people this is probably what creates the most stress. This is why often extremely intelligent and insightful teenagers drift to drugs and alcohol. Some react inappropriately and are unnecessarily diagnosed with personality and mental disorders like bipolar, schizophrenia, depression etc.

When they can't make sense of things, they try to escape them. Sometimes it works, mostly it doesn't. I am not going to tell you that it's not all that bad, that would be judgmental and condescending on my part. But I can assure you, you will learn to swim the harsh waters, only if you give yourself a chance!

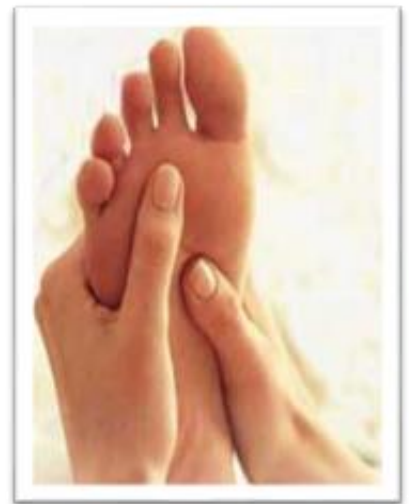
**P**ointer! Learn to relax and cope with stress. This will allow you to be more in control of your thoughts, emotions, and environment. And it will also allow you to discover yourself, instead of hurting yourself!

Here we go with some of our stress management strategies.

## REFLEXOLOGY

Reflexology is the application of pressure techniques to the hands and feet to affect another part of the body. These techniques stimulate sensors which trigger relaxation response throughout the body. Reflexology is a real stress buster! You can do it on yourself or have someone else do it or have someone else do it on you. Trust me, if you learn these techniques, you will become one of the most popular and *wanted* persons among your family and friends!

Reflexology sessions are available at spas and some healthcare facilities, but they can be pricey. There are tools available that you can use for self-help reflexology such as rhino ball, rollers, or golf balls. Roll them in your hands, on your arms, and under your feet. Their different textures help release pressure points and help you de-stress. You can order them online or purchase them from health and beauty stores.



# HAND REFLEXOLOGY CHART

For further information, visit us at [www.reflexology-research.com](http://www.reflexology-research.com) or write:  
Reflexology Research Project, P.O. Box 35820, Sta. D, Albuquerque, NM 87176

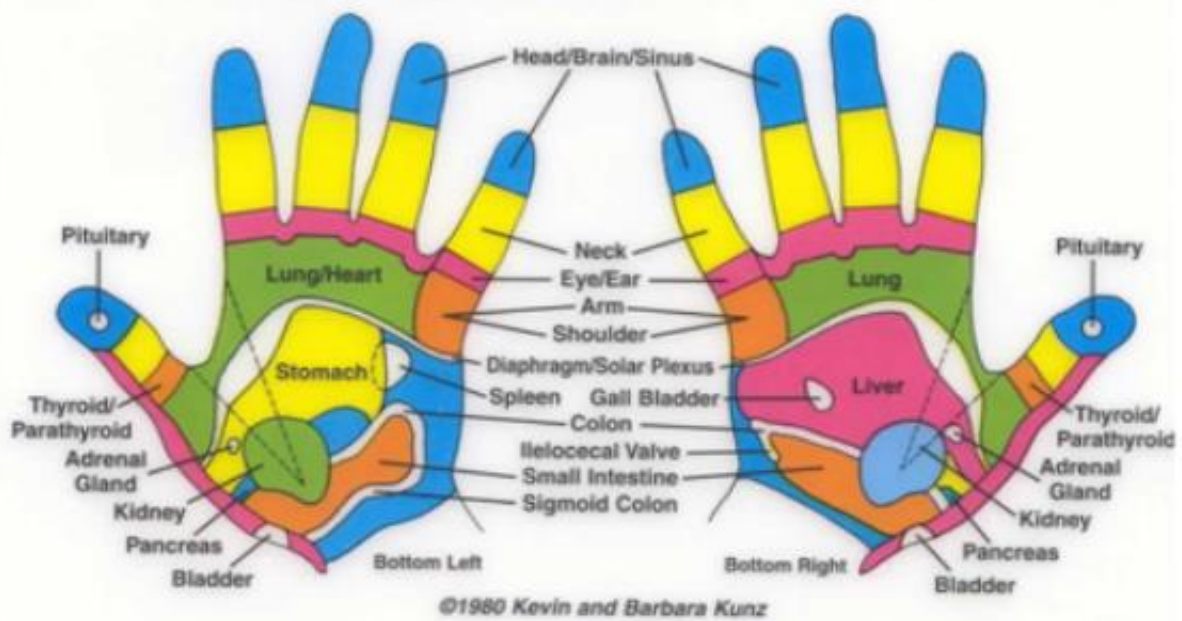
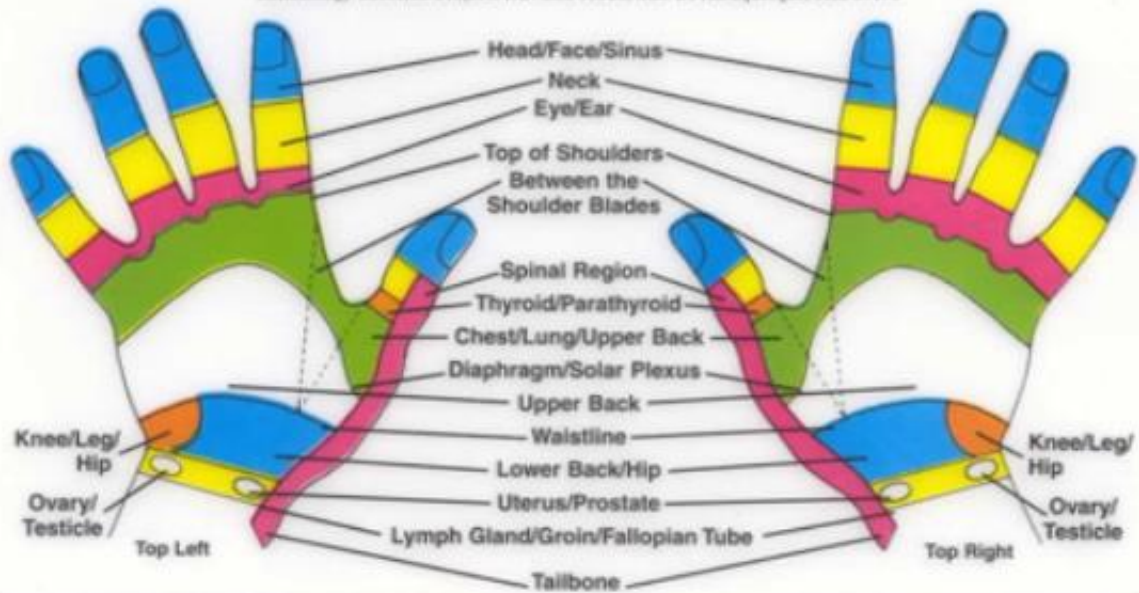
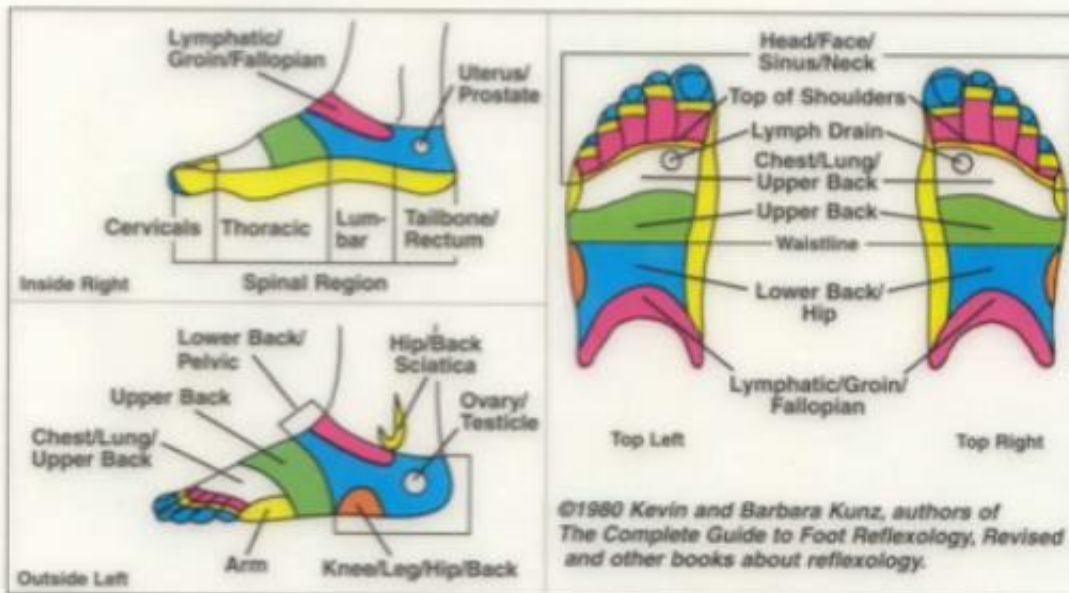
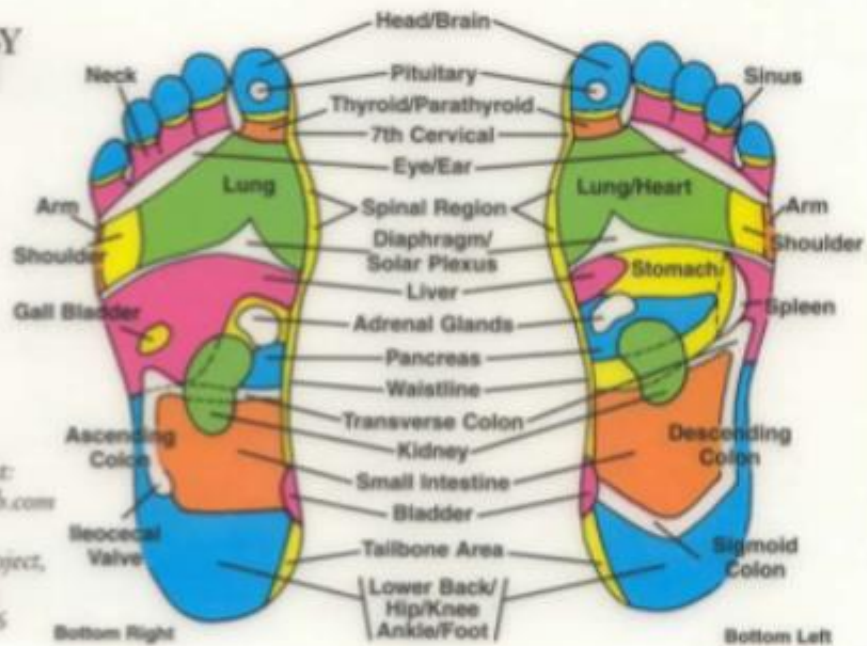


Image courtesy of [www.foot-reflexologist.com](http://www.foot-reflexologist.com)

# REFLEXOLOGY RESEARCH PROJECT

## Foot Reflexology Chart

For further information,  
visit us on the Internet at:  
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or write us at:  
Reflexology Research Project,  
P.O. Box 35820, Stn. D,  
Albuquerque, NM 87176



©1980 Kevin and Barbara Kunz, authors of  
*The Complete Guide to Foot Reflexology, Revised*  
and other books about reflexology.

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## MEDITATION, NOT MEDICATION

Faith is a pillar that helps many people stay upright and firmly rooted during difficult times. Most religious people tend to pray and reap its many benefits without even realizing it.

If you are not particularly religious minded and do not pray, you can still benefit from the many advantages of meditation. What's more...these benefits are scientifically proven.

Check out this infographic created by Giovanni Dienstmann which highlights various scientific benefits of meditation. You can read the entire infographic at <http://liveanddare.com/benefits-of-meditation/>



*What exactly is meditation?*

Meditation is the ability to control and focus your thoughts. It is the ability to contemplate, think, reflect, analyze without getting distracted.

Seems pretty simple, yeah?

It is actually not so simple!

It is becoming increasingly difficult to focus and relax. We are constantly surrounded by visuals and sounds, no matter where we are. Television, computers, music in the malls, billboards on the roads...our senses are overwhelmed. Meditation is a way to de-stress our senses.



My particular favorite meditation is to focus on one creation of God, be it birds, plants, water, or my own body, and think deeply about its many wonders. At first it is difficult to not let your thoughts drift and think about other things, but once you get a hang of it, it works wonders!



## BATHS

There is nothing like a soothing, hot bath to relax tired muscles, provide a relaxing atmosphere, and relieve stress. Baths are not only great stress busters, they have a lot of health benefits as well, especially if you add salts to your bath.



These are just few of the benefits of salt baths...

- Stress relief
- Muscle aches
- Improves circulation
- Better nutrient absorption
- Speeds up wound healing
- To help relieve poison ivy or skin reactions
- Improves skin hydration
- Relieves illness, especially respiratory illness
- Improves sleep
- For acne, eczema or other skin problems
- For joint pain relief

*Which bath salts should I choose?*

Bath salts can be very pricey depending on what kind you get, but they don't have to be. One of the most economical and effective salt to use is Epsom salt, which is easily available at most drug stores and super markets. You can also find scented Epsom salt at most places!

This is how you can take a simple Epsom salt bath...

- Fill the bath tub 2/3 of the way with hot water (as hot as you can bear without hurting yourself)
- Add 1 cup of Epsom salt and completely dissolve
- Soak in the bath for 20 to 30 minutes
- Shower and relax!

**P**ointer! Epsom salt bath can increase your heart rate and make you sweat profusely! Don't panic. It is your body getting rid of toxins through the skin. Get in bed and relax until your heartbeat is normal and you have stopped sweating. Then take a cold shower and you are good to go!

Once you learn how to use Epsom salt, you can add other ingredients to make your own fancy baths, like this one...

- 1 cup of Epsom salt
- 1/2 cup of Himalayan salt
- 10 drops of essential oil of choice ( I love eucalyptus oil in my baths)

Light a candle!

Meditate!

Read!

Do whatever it takes to help you focus and relax!

### Tip...

Make sure you clean the bath tub thoroughly with a disinfectant before getting the bath ready.

Have a drink handy as baths can make you thirsty!

## AROMATHERAPY

Aromatherapy is a type of alternative medicine that uses essential oils and other aromatic plant compounds which are aimed at improving a person's health or mood.

Its practice goes as far back as 6000 years ago to Ancient Egypt. However, it was Avicenna, an Arab scientist who lived from A.D. 980 to A.D. 1037 who invented the process of distillation to distill essence of rose flowers. That was the beginning of aromatherapy as we know it.



Different cultures practice aromatherapy in different ways. Some burn incense, others use oils in massages and diffusers. Scented candles are also a form of aromatherapy, though not as effective as essential oils.

*What are essential oils?*

An essential oil is a liquid that is distilled from the leaves, flowers, stem, bark, roots, or other elements of a plant. Even though they are called oils, they don't have an oily feeling at all. They are usually clear, though some are amber or yellow in color. Essential oils contain the true essence of a plant and very concentrated, that is why they are used in drops and a small quantity goes a long way. This also explains why they are expensive, but since they last a long time, they turn out to be not so expensive in the long run.

*How do I choose and use essential oils?*

The most effective aromatherapy oils for stress relief are lavender, frankincense, rose, chamomile, and vanilla, but of course you can choose any smell that you find soothing and relaxing.

**P**ointer! Essential oils should never be applied directly onto the skin as they can cause severe irritation. They first must be diluted with carrier oil. Almond and jojoba oil are great carrier oils.

Dilution formula: 12 drops of essential oil to 1 ounce (30mL) of carrier oil.

Once you dilute your essential oils with carrier oils, pour them in dark-color bottles, and label them. This way they are ready for you to use! The diluted oils can be applied directly onto the skin, as with a massage or reflexology, or onto a handkerchief or pillow. A few drops may also be burned in a diffuser or added to bath salts.

Only purchase your oils from respected companies. DoTerra and Young Living are two of the most reputable brands for essential oils.



## ADDITIONAL STRESS BUSTERS

There are various other things you can do to keep yourself happy, relaxed and stress free. What works for one might not work for the other, so always keep an open mind and notice what it is that uplifts your spirit and makes you happy.

A few additional things you can do to de-stress yourself are:

- *Take nature walks*
- *Read a good book*
- *Spend time with good friend*
- *Take a nap*
- *Keep a gratitude journal—daily write at least one thing that you are grateful for, even if it is just a smile from a stranger! Scientists have found that people who consciously focus on gratitude, experience greater emotional wellbeing and physical health than those who don't.*
- *Be productive and helpful. Volunteer at a soup kitchen, hospital, library, after-school help for younger children etc. When you serve others, you receive true happiness and contentment. As Mahatma Gandhi said, “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”*
- *Have healthy hobbies such as gardening, cooking, baking, arts and crafts, ceramics. Research suggests that working with your hands allows you to live a happier and healthier life.*
- *Learn martial arts like TaeKwonDo, Jiu Jitsu, Karate etc. as they are not only great exercises, they also help develop mental and physical discipline and focus.*
- *Be active. Leading an active life is a secret to happiness. Enjoy outdoor activities such as mountain biking, swimming, rock climbing, or whatever other outdoor activities are available in your area.*