

# FOOT MASSAGE AT HOME: AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE 腳底按摩圖典

*Clear instructions paired with easy-to-understand illustration make reflexology giant Chen Ming-Jen's book the home Bible of do-it-yourself foot massage.*

As modern life poses newer and greater challenges to our bodies and minds, the ancient art of foot reflexology has slowly gained popularity as an all-natural personal health practice. Yet if we can't afford to go to foot massage parlors, how do we reap the benefits? Reflexology master Chen Ming-Jen's book is here to show us how to do everything we need to do using only the tools we have at home.

Drawing on four decades of experience in Chinese foot reflexology, Dr. Chen lists 50 common illnesses and conditions that can be greatly eased by a regular reflexology practice. In this book, he covers everything from men's and women's issues to anemia, tinnitus, and heart disease, describing how to correctly stimulate the reflex zones in your feet that will help your body fight these imbalances. Techniques are taught using clear illustrations and simple step-by-step instructions.

Everyone knows how satisfying a good foot rub can feel. Now, armed with the best of Dr. Chen's expertise, you can get even more out of this holistic healing practice – by yourself or with someone else!

## Chen Ming-Jen 陳明仁

Chen Ming-Jen has spent nearly forty years in the reflexology trade. Once a professor in the College of Homeopaths at Southwest University in the United States, he founded the very first labor union for massage professionals. He currently serves as a consultant for the Chinese Foot Reflexology Association.



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# FOOT MASSAGE AT HOME: AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE

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At the outset, did you think that the miraculous effects of foot massage could cure any kind of pain? Did you ever cause pain or feel no positive effect because of poor technique? After a massage, did you think it wouldn't matter whether you drank hot or cold water? Let's take a closer look at some common misunderstandings.

#### **Question 1. Can foot massage cure all health problems and diseases?**

At 60 years old, Mrs. Tien has heart disease and a host of complications. She cannot walk even a few steps without panting, and her blood sugar and blood pressure are both high. For many years, Mrs. Tien has used medications along with dietary restrictions to control her symptoms, but her physical strength and emotional wellbeing have steadily declined. After hearing a lecture about foot massage, she decided to experience it for herself. After finishing a course of treatment, she not only found that her blood sugar and blood pressure had lowered, but breathing had also become much easier. She was so happy she began spreading the word about the positive effects of massage.

#### **Answer:**

Many patients who suffer from chronic diseases that doctors are unable to cure have found foot massage to be an effective treatment. Generally, the main cause of illness is a lack of balance in the visceral system. Foot massage has six major functions: stimulate the nerves, strengthen muscles, activate cells, increase immunity, promote intestinal movement, and help correct endocrine imbalances. By stimulating the nerves, foot massage can bring an imbalanced system back to its normal state, and offer successful treatment for illnesses.

In the body, there are four basic groups of cells (epidermal, muscle, nerve, and connective cells). All cells can regenerate, with the exception of nerve cells. With the right stimulation and metabolic action, damaged cells can regenerate, repair themselves, and

reorganize. This is why there are many examples of foot massage being used to treat cancer. For serious illness, we recommend that foot massage be used as a secondary therapy, helping the body slowly reduce its dependence on medicines, and increasing its ability to heal itself.

If someone remains in bed for three days, his feet will stop following orders from the brain. The body's many organs, groups of cells, and systems need to preserve a dynamic equilibrium; otherwise, there will be a lack of blood flow and illness. Simply put, the purpose of foot massage is to restart the command system in the body. People need to eat, drink, excrete, and sleep in order to survive. If foot massage becomes part of one's daily life, it will clear the pathways for all of the bodily functions, leading to health and happiness.

Every person's physiological state is different, as are the causes of every illness. Other highly variable factors include different treatment methods, severity of illness, and so on. We cannot guarantee that foot massage will be able to cure every illness, yet it can improve most conditions. Regular foot massage can prevent all kinds of inner organ pathologies. The severely ill must coordinate with their physicians about how to include foot massage as an additional therapy, in order to reap the benefits of integration between Western and Chinese medicine.

### **Question 2. Can beginners get hurt while performing foot reflexology on themselves?**

Ms. Ti works in a trading firm, where she is faced with a mountain of work each day. She spends many hours staring at a computer and her back is often sore. Recently she's had trouble concentrating, and her sleep is restless and full of dreams. She tried foot massage on a friend's recommendation, and that night she slept better than she had for a long time. After that, she wanted to have a daily massage, but when she couldn't make time for it, she began to think about doing it on herself. But she worried about learning from a book and injuring herself by exerting pressure on the wrong places.

#### **Answer:**

In our contemporary world, many people have busy jobs and face a lot of pressure at work, and this can lead to problems. Doctors often have difficulty diagnosing the cause or prescribing a proper treatment. An emphasis on stimulating nerve endings can help fill a gap in contemporary medical care. Most importantly, massage is simple to learn and can easily be incorporated into a busy lifestyle, so it can easily become a habit. However, while performing pressure reflexology on oneself, one may frequently experience sharp pain, which inexperienced or self-taught practitioners may suspect is an "injury to the body." In fact, as long as one has proper knowledge of massage techniques and a sufficient understanding of the anatomy of the foot, follows the three basic principles of reflexology, and uses the appropriate movements when massaging the feet, one may attain the expected result and need not worry about injuring oneself.

In addition to an understanding of foot reflexology, one must also internalize the three basic principles of "slow, deep, and unidirectional" when performing massage. Some people have the mistaken idea that more frequent massage is always better, which can cause injury to the skin and muscles. Some are afraid of pain, and massage superficially instead of stimulating a deeper level of tissue. This kind of massage will not succeed in releasing the nerve pathways.

Others will apply repeated but uneven pressure, which may be less effortful, but can also cause harm to muscles.

Any reflexology pressure must adhere to the principles of “slow, deep, and unidirectional,” and must be applied in the proper position. With self-massage, it is common to see a bent leg position. This often leads to numbness in the leg, and the massage will prove ineffective. In this kind of situation, we can use a tool or other equipment to achieve the desired result. For example, the practitioner can put a foot up on a table, and use the table edge to massage the sole of the foot. The two feet can be used to massage each other’s insteps, while the practitioner reads, watches TV, or simply relaxes.

When massaging a severely ill patient, one must pay careful attention to his or her response. For example, overstimulation might cause to a heart disease patient to go into shock. While performing massage, one must closely observe any changes in the patient’s expression, and adjust pressure in order to avoid accidental injury. When a severely ill patient can relax and enjoy a massage given by a professional or a family member, they may benefit from the easing of symptoms and enhanced closeness in the family.