

# AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF CHI-REFLEXOLOGY



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## Chi-Reflexology

By Moss Arnold

### What is Chi-Reflexology?

Chi-Reflexology is the combining of the Chinese philosophy, including Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Theory, and Acupressure Theory and practice to the science and art of Reflexology.

TCM is not solely a Medical Theory; it is the Taoist theory of the universe, applied to all aspects of life, including health and well being. It is designed to understand everything in the universe, including the human condition. And so it is, by design wholistic, in that it is a philosophy by which anything and everything can be understood. Its basic premise is that nothing stays the same; that change is the basis of existence, and that we aim for balance, yet do not wish and desire to achieve it. A contradiction you say, and you are right. But one that is true none the less.

Everything in the universe works towards a state of balance (a Yin state) but it is the contrasting Yang conflict that achieves movement. Therefore if we were balanced we would achieve nothing. We need both! The key therefore is to strive for balance, yet accept that it is a state that is constantly changing. IN other words, the basic premise of the Chinese philosophy is to accept change and flow with it, develop moderation in all things (a little bit of everything is “good” for us), and avoid the extremes, that we of the West constantly find ourselves following. Too much or too little of anything causes imbalance.

Remember, we are part of Nature and therefore Nature is part of us, or to put it another way, everything in the universe is interrelated. Each human being therefore is a universe unto him/herself and in unique, yet each of us is a microcosm of the macrocosm. Another contradiction! And yet it is true – just as strength is weakness, and weakness is strength!

Our western logical approach has great difficulty accepting these contradictions, which is why the Chinese philosophy cannot be fully grasped through the written word, but needs to be learnt and experienced.

Chi-Reflexology, like acupressure, is based on a hands-on, physical touch approach, as distinct from Acupuncture. In fact, Chinese Acupressure is the older of the healing arts, and acupuncture evolved from acupressure, but like two trees planted in the same soil, they have developed their

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own unique characteristics, and interpretations of TCM. The Theory is the same, but the application is different. Acupressure has emphasised working physically and consciously with the energy, or Chi (Qi) of both the giver and the receiver. For example, acupressure techniques for the use of acu-points and reflexes of the foot and leg are significantly different, and there are three basic and simple methods of treating any chi imbalance –

- Sedation or Yin techniques for treating Yang imbalances;
- Stimulation or Yang techniques for treating Yin imbalances; and
- Balancing techniques.

It is the latter that is emphasized in Chi-Reflexology, although all three techniques are used, as necessary. Yet the emphasis is placed squarely on balancing the chi of the receiver, which in turn encourages the human being, on all for levels (physical, emotional, mental and spiritual) of existence, to take care of its own needs. This emphasis is less invasive, and truly wholistic – working on all levels. To achieve this end, the three types of treatment mentioned above are used, as necessary.

Therefore, to be able to work with the human body, which is designed to heal itself, Chi-Reflexology must by design diagnose, i.e. work out what the body needs, and supply that need. This is another significant aspect worth mentioning here. Diagnose an imbalance and the type of imbalance and then select the appropriate treatment technique.

As the emphasis of the Chinese approach is balance, harmony or the Tao (“the Middle Way”), constant use of either deep or light pressure, in the long term leads to imbalance! Both are necessary to achieve a more balanced state of existence, and deep pressure tends to work on the physical and mental levels, while light pressure tends to work on the emotional and spiritual levels. Another reason for the use of both to achieve a wholistic balance. This is a significant consideration for all reflexologists and therapists.

## What then are the basic premises of this Chi-Reflexology?

### 1. Chi, Yin and Yang and the Five Phases Theory.

Chi – Much has been written about chi that needs clarifying. Chi is not simply Life Force, but the energy behind and within everything in the universe, including humans, but is not unique to humans. It is in everything that exists in the universe; it is energy just before becoming tangible, and therefore it is unseen, yet its manifestations are visible. It is, in this sense the building blocks of the universe. Everything has CHI! And Chi is made up of yin and yang, as is everything in the universe: For it is the Law of Duality that everything is composed of two parts! The Yin and the Yang! Yet these parts are inseparable.

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Briefly, yin and yang do not exist! They are not classifications, for example Night and Day, Positive and Negative, Male and Female. Yin and Yang are, in fact, the two aspects or components that exist in EVERYTHING. Therefore, nothing is yin and nothing is yang. Confused! Understood!

Yin and Yang is an attempt, not to classify, but to see, understand and interpret the dynamics, or interrelationships of change, of anything and everything. For example, a man is Yang compared to a woman who is Yin, yet these two same people, might be described as the opposite: he might be Yin in temperament when compared to her who is Yang, for she is aggressive, while he is gentle and passive. In other words, yin and yang are used to understand the “flavour” or direction of movement and change that exists within a given relationship. The Yin/Yang of said relationship is ONLY valid within and between give parameters. It is, like everything in the universe, in a constant state of flux and change.

The other important aspect of the theory is the Five Phases Theory, more commonly known as the Five Element Theory, which again leads to much misunderstanding, for it is again, like Yin and Yang, a system of understanding movement, dynamics and change rather than categories, or elements as such. The elements are of little use except for their “emblem” characteristics that lead to the yin organ/s. Once understood the Five Phases Theory and their more important yin organ chi is the method to diagnose the underlying cause of any and all given imbalances. The physical are the symptoms (which manifest in one or both of the “children”) and the cause is the “parent” Chi, which has no physical symptoms. This is the significance of the Five Phases Theory.

## 2. What then does all this have to do with Reflexology?

The Chinese philosophy is indispensable to any wholistic understanding of the human condition. Through this philosophy, a reflexologist can treat the whole person on all levels, bring the person into a more balanced state of existence, and treat both the symptoms and more importantly the underlying cause. Another significant aspect of this is that it is a fluid system, which by design encourages lateral thinking, and the development of reflexologist’s intuition. In fact it is designed to do this!

## 3. And Chi-Reflexology?

There are two aspects of relevance here. The first is the Chi (Qi) or energy points located on the sole of the feet, as illustrated below –

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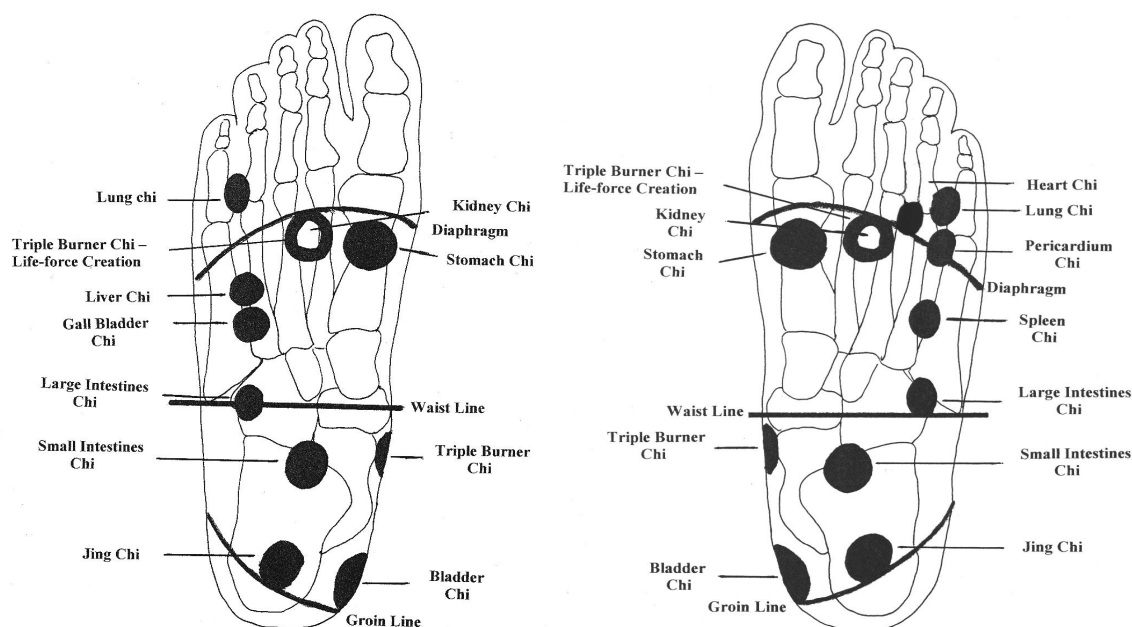
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**NOTE** – The Chart below replaces the Solar Plexus reflex with another. This is a reinterpretation of this reflex. The scope of this article is such that only a brief explanation is possible, which follows below the chart.



**Solar Plexus** – Is this reflex correct? The simple answer is NO! If the feet reflect anatomically (i.e. the Anatomical Reflection Theory) its location is at the least questionable. If it is not Solar Plexus, then what is it? It is the most important reflex on the sole of the feet – it is the beginning of the Kidney pathway (K.1 – “Bubbling Spring”); yet it is so much more, for Kidney chi is the “root of life”, the beginning of the process of chi formation and distribution throughout the whole body.

The second aspect is the “reflexions” (as distinct from the physical reflexes – “reflections”) of acu-points of the body in the feet. These include the acu-points from TCM, which are located on the feet, but as also the reflections of important and powerful acu-points of the body “reflected” in the feet. So the acu-points of the feet as well as the “reflections” of acu-points of the body found in the feet can be used to treat (stimulate or sedate) as well as to balance. Once understood, and the Yin/Yang and balancing techniques are grasped, excuse the pun, then the practice of reflexology is expanded – thus Chi-Reflexology!

As can be seen there is so much to Chi-Reflexology that it cannot be covered adequately in this article. Instead I have attempted to outline the main aspects, so that Reflexologists can begin to understand and appreciate the simplicity and complexity of Chi-Reflexology.

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## Chi-Reflexology – Part 2

By Moss Arnold

The strength of the Chinese philosophy is that its basic premise is change, that nothing stays the same, and that, with this as its basis, it is a fluid mosaic, which explains how it can be used to explain anything or everything (its strength and its weakness); and how TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) can be used in a multitude of ways. However, without this philosophical understanding it is no longer the Chinese system, but something else.

So, Chi-Reflexology is an attempt to combine an understanding of the original philosophical basis of the Chinese system, including but not exclusively TCM and acupressure, with Reflexology; and it is worth noting that the correlations are quite interesting. Unlike western massage techniques, the Chinese acupressure approach is that to move back and forth over the body (or feet) or effleurage, has the result of “scrambling” a person’s chi. So the Chinese would never use effleurage, but rather work back and forth as separate actions, i.e. move in one direction and stop, and then move back in the other direction – as two distinct separate actions. This balances the chi. One can immediately see the correlations with Reflexology, which also works one direction and then the other.

Also, anything and everything that occurs in a treatment has either a stimulating, sedating or balancing effect on the chi of the receiver. Therefore, with such knowledge, the reflexologist consciously works with the chi of the receiver and themselves. Nothing is done without an understanding and reason for doing it! It is a deliberate mental mechanism and is an integral part of the treatment and the philosophy. So as reflexologists we can expand our sessions, by learning to work consciously with chi.

But how do we do this? Firstly, by cultivating our own chi, through our own lifestyle, exercise and meditation and by consciously working with chi in our reflexology sessions. “As ye give, so shall ye receive!” For as we work on others and their chi, we are also cultivating our own, and working on our own imbalances! You cannot separate one from the other. As you give, you receive! Yin and Yang at work!

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It is worth noting that the often expressed popular attitude that the Reflexologist (or therapists) have to have “dealt with” their imbalances before they can help others is again contrary to the Chi approach, for we all have imbalances for as long as we are alive! They are a natural part of our existence. The problem is not imbalance, but the degree of imbalance! Remember, the key is to aim for balance and to avoid extremes, with moderation in all things and on all levels. A little bit of everything is “good” for us, rather than an extreme of “good” and “bad” however you wish to define these concepts; for, once again such categorization and classification is contrary to the philosophy. A “good” thing taken to an extreme becomes “bad”! Again a contradiction that is none the less true.

Health in the western industrial medicine model tends to be defined in purely physical terms, leading to a misconception of fitness equals health. And that health is simply the absence of dis-ease! Thankfully, this trend is slowly giving way to a broader definition of health and wellbeing. The Chi-Reflexology approach defines health in a wholistic way – fitness is part of health, but health is not just fitness. It is rather the whole person and all aspects of that person, both internally and externally, on all levels of existence. This is truly wholistic! So this definition includes everything about the person on all levels – physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. And each of these aspects is much broader than the western definition of them. For example, the environment we are currently in is more than the physical composition of the air; it is all aspects of that environment, including such things as the emotional state, the mental activities that are and have gone on, the chi of those present as well as the chi of the place itself, the local area, the region, the country, the hemisphere and ultimately the earth itself, and again at this present time, but also historically. The list is endless! And the majority of these factors are completely out of our control, and in fact are quite natural to the local environ! So then, when we breathe in air, we are breathing in “air chi”, which is everything on all levels in that environment, which has either a yin or a yang effect on our chi and out state of balance/imbalance. We have all experienced entering a place and immediately feeling uncomfortable. It is not that the place is “bad” or “negative”, but rather that the chi of the place on one level or another, is incompatible with our chi at that moment in time. So, you can see the complexity of this concept of health, which is truly all encompassing and wholistic.

## How Then Do Reflexologists Consciously Work with Chi?

Firstly, and most importantly, by consciously using chi! Simple! But also, by learning and then using both the philosophy and the techniques of Chi-Reflexology! There are a number of aspects that need to be grasped here. Obviously studying the Chi-Reflexology approach, and this article does not lend itself to a detailed analysis. But there are a few aspects that can be briefly covered here, including understanding pain, and its significance, Chi-Reflexology stimulation and sedating techniques and diagnosing chi imbalances through the feet.



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Firstly, to pain – a poorly understood dimension. Pain is simple a message; it is trying to tell us something, but what? There are many possibilities here worth exploring, again on a variety of levels. There are a whole range of pains, rather than a single entity. Initially there is a need to look behind the volume of pain. We tend to get caught in the volume, which is really meaningless, other than to indicate the degree of the urgency of the message! So we need to go beneath the volume, beneath the intensity of the feeling itself, to learn to define its characteristics, for both the reflexologist and the receiver!

Basically there are two groups of pain – a yin and a yang group –

- **Yin pain** is an indication of deficiency (low or not enough chi). It is characterised by dullness or emptiness – a “good” pain, an ache, a bruised or hollow feeling: emptiness! It tends to have a low pitched sound – “aahhh” and it is a pain that one can ignore!
- **Yang pain** is an indication of excess (too much) chi, and this is the pain of dis-ease! It is characterised by sharpness, hardness, an “ouch” feeling. It tends to have a high pitched sound and is a pain that cannot be ignored.

For the reflexologist it is imperative to develop sensitivity to pain (and the reflexes), its message and the body through the feet. To do this, one first needs to understand the balanced state. In theory, a reflex or acu-point should yield beneath your pressure and then respond with equal pressure. This is rather difficult to explain, for it also depends on the location, the amount of tissue and muscle or lack there of, as well as the closeness to the bone. But all reflexes and acu-points yield and then respond, once you know how to assess them!

A Yin imbalance, on the other hand, tends to yield too much, giving a feeling of emptiness, of being hollow, sometimes as if there is absolutely no resistance at all. You could push right through the reflex/acu-point. While a Yang imbalance tends not to yield at all, but rather pushes back immediately, quite often being painful and hard, “pea” like, a “clunk”, or an “X marks the spot” under the skin. There is, in fact, a whole range of such feelings, but the key is they all tend to be rather hard, solid, cause sharp pain and that they fight back! So the first step is to define the pain, learning to listen, and then educating the receivers is a significant step.

## **But how does the Reflexologist connect to reflexes or acu-points?**

This is done with sensitivity, intuition, an active silence and respect. Practically, find the exact point of the imbalance or pain (and it is always an exact points rather than an area) by pressing, under the skin, with the tip of your thumb or finger. You do this by connecting your breath with that of the receiver, breathe in, and as you both breathe out **slowly**, press into the reflex/acu-point

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taking your time and the full out-breath to connect. With practice and being conscious of working with chi, the reflexologist will know when the connection is made.

Another aspect is working with chi rather than muscle strength, by keeping yourself relaxed and using body weight. Flexed muscles actually block chi flow and so the key is connect your chi to that of the receiver. It is a relatively easy process to demonstrate but rather difficult to explain, but the difference is quite amazing, in that by using your chi the reflex/acu-point actually “lets you in” to connect, but when muscle strength is used the body rejects the invasion! Again it takes practise, with a sense of honour and respect for the person you are working with. To this end, it is advisable to work in silence as much as possible. This then is a philosophical perspective. It is not difficult to master, but it does take time and conscious effort. Once you have connected to the reflex/acu-point, your breath does not matter, until ready to release the reflex/acu-point, when once more your breathing matters. So, to release, match breathing patterns, breathe out and as you both breathe in **slowly** release the reflex/acu-point, again taking your full in-breath to release.

## **Once you have Connected to the Reflex/Acu-point, then what?**

There are three methods used – Stimulate a deficiency, sedate an excess or balance.

Deficiency of chi needs to be stimulated with strong pressure until you feel resistance, and with sensitivity you will “feel” the reflex/acu-point pushing back, and so slowly release your pressure accordingly. Now this stimulation method causes no pain. There is no need for pain! Alternatively, you can press strongly and circle clockwise, but this will cause intense pain immediately, which is not working with chi or with the body and is not used in Chi-Reflexology. Excess of chi responds to light and gentle pressure (but still under the skin) and with circling anticlockwise for six out-breaths (**NOTE** – six is the number of treatment!).

The final method is to balance the reflex/acu-point, and is useful for a variety of reasons, such as Chi-Balance through the feet, or when the reflexologist is unclear of what is needed. This is achieved by pressing on a reflex/acu-point; with united breathing, four (the number of physical and wholistic balance) or twelve (the number of spiritual and wholistic balance) times, pressing on the out-breath and releasing pressure (but not the point) on the in-breath. There are other methods of balancing and basically anything done equal number of times, back and forth but as separate actions, has a balancing effect.

As can be seen constantly using either deep or light pressure in the long term will cause imbalance, because you are either constantly sedating or stimulating EVERYTHING, when not everything is either DEFICIENT (Yin) or EXCESS (Yang), as each of us is made up of a unique degree of both. What is needed is a combination of both as required by the individual to achieve balance!



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It is here that the Organ Chi points (on the plantar surface or sole of the feet) of Chi-Reflexology (See Chart previous article) can be used in a variety of ways. They are be used to –

- Balance the chi of each organ, by pressing four times. A rather quick way to balance a person's chi, which can either be included during a Reflexology session as the relevant area of the feet is worked, or added at the end, as a concluding balance of each Organ chi.
- These acu-points can be used to diagnose the chi imbalance of the major organs of the body, and then, with the above mentioned techniques, bring the body back to a more balanced state of existence.
- Finally, they can be used in conjunction with an u
- Understanding of the Five Phases Theory, to determine the underlying cause, i.e. which organ's chi is the underlying cause, and therefore to treat the underlying cause as well as the symptoms, both physical and energy.

So, Chi-Reflexology combines the Chinese philosophy with Reflexology in a wholistic way, to expand the horizons of Reflexology. The practical implications of this approach are profound – working with the body rather than against it. An understanding and appreciation of the Chinese philosophy is imperative to any therapy that strives to be wholistic.