

Charlotte's Lockdown Beauty Masterclass

Foot massage

There are many health benefits of massage. Hand and foot massage can help reduce stress and anxiety.

Massage can also:

- support physical and mental health
- reduce pain
- aid relaxation
- support sleep

Reflexology is an alternative therapy that involves putting pressure on specific parts of the foot. It is not the same, as a regular foot massage.

There is no one way to carry out a foot massage. Different people prefer different techniques. You can test many techniques and learn what feels good for you, or someone else.

Before getting started:

- soak the feet in warm water, with or without a few drops of essential oil
- pat the feet dry with a towel
- rest the feet on the towel
- apply massage oil over the foot, up to the ankle

Here are some general foot massage tips to use as a guide:

- **Pay attention to parts that feel sore**- Work on sore areas for longer, with as much, or as little pressure as feels comfortable.
 - **Pay attention to parts that feel good.**
 - **Avoid injuring the thumbs**- Do not use so much pressure that your thumbs start to hurt. Use the strength of body weight, not muscles in thumbs, to apply pressure.
 - **Avoid using pressure that is too light, as this may tickle.**
 - **Focus on one foot at a time.**
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Before starting a foot massage, check the feet for:

- cuts
- verruca
- athlete's foot

Do not massage feet if you have any of these.

The Foot Massage

Here are some foot massage techniques that you can use on yourself or another person:

1. **Warmup twists** - are one way to start a foot massage.

- place the palms on either side of the foot
- gently pull the right side of the foot forward while pushing the left side back
- push the right side of the foot back while pulling the left side forward
- repeat this twisting motion, working the hands from the ankle to the toes

The gentle twisting motion helps warm up the foot.

2. **Arch rubs** - massage the underside of the foot.

- hold the top of the foot in one hand
- with the fingers of the other hand, rub the length of the arch
- do this repeatedly, from the heel to the ball of the foot.



This can be harder to do on yourself if you are less flexible. But trying stretches to bring one foot to rest on the opposite legs knee can help.

3. **Toe bends** - may encourage flexibility in the foot.

- hold the heel with one hand
- bend all the toes on one foot back and forth at the same time with the other hand

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- repeat this movement, gently increasing pressure and flexing the toes to their full range of motion

4. **Foot spread**

- hold each side of the foot
- pull each side of the foot outward
- repeat this motion, allowing the foot to spread



5. **Heel squeeze** - helps relieve tension at the back of the foot.

- hold the top of the foot in one hand
- hold the back of the heel in the other
- repeatedly squeeze and release the back of the heel

6. **Knuckle or fist work** - is a way to massage the bottom of the foot.

- hold the back of the foot with one hand
- hold a knuckle, or full fist of the other hand against the bottom of the foot
- use the knuckle, or fist to knead the bottom of the foot, using moderate pressure
- repeat this motion, working down from the ball of the foot to the heel

7. **Thumb work**

- hold the foot with one hand on either side
- place the fingers on the top of the foot
- place the thumbs under each foot, on the toe pads
- use the thumbs to stroke down each toe, using moderate pressure
- move to the ball of the foot, repeating the downward stroke motion with the thumbs
- repeat this motion in the arch of the feet and the heel
- continue for as long as it is enjoyable

8. **Pressure points** - on the instep is another relaxing foot massage technique.

- use one hand to support the top of the foot

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- use the thumb of the other hand to press and release the top of the instep
- gradually move down the instep, repeating this pressing motion
- continue pressing and releasing, down to the back of the heel

9. **Achilles massage** – can help relieve pressure on the Achilles tendon.

- grasp the Achilles tendon with the other hand, between the thumb and index finger
- use a stroking motion down toward the heel
- repeat this several times

10. **Top and side circles** - is a simple foot massage technique.

- using both hands, support the foot from below
- extend the fingers and use them to make circles around the ankle on either side
- using a continuous circular movement, move the fingers around the side of the foot
- keep circling the fingers, continuing up to the toes
- pay attention to the space between each tendon

11. **Toe massage** - may help relieve tension and cramps in the toes.

- hold the base of the foot with one hand
- with the fingers of the other hand, tug, twist, and pull each toe gently
- move from the outer to the inner toes
- repeat several times
- massage between each toe

12. **Finishing strokes** – you can use finishing strokes at the end of a foot massage.

- place the palms on either side of the foot
- gently pull the right side of the foot forward while



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pushing the left side back

- then push the right side of the foot back while pushing the left side forward
- repeat this twisting motion, working the hands from the ankle to the toes
- lighten the pressure each time, gradually lifting the hands from the foot completely

Summary

Foot massage is a great home treatment for tense or aching feet. It may also help you relax and unwind, supporting your overall sense of well-being.

Charlotte