

fingertips for the client

BY LAURIE CHANCE SMITH



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5 SELF-MASSAGE FOOT RUBS

Between massage therapy sessions, practice self-massage on one of the most sensitive areas of the body—your feet. A brisk foot massage in the morning can stimulate energy for the tasks ahead. In the evening, slow massage on the feet can help soothe the day's stress. Follow the entire sequence in order, or try each separately.

1. ANKLE CIRCLING

To begin, remove shoes, socks, and jewelry. Wash your hands and feet in warm water and sit in a comfortable, quiet place. Place your right foot on top of your left thigh. Using both hands, rotate your foot at the ankle.

2. SOLE RUB

Place one hand on top of your foot and the other on your sole. Rub your hands back and forth across your foot in short strokes. Tailor your self-massage to your needs by using brisk strokes to stimulate (especially helpful for cold feet) or gentle strokes to soothe. Concentrating on the entire foot, toe to heel.

3. TOE STRETCH

With one hand, gently stretch your toes back. With the other hand, use a loose fist or an open palm and gently tap the sole of your foot to stimulate blood circulation.

4. T-SHAPE FAN

Wrap both hands around your foot, with thumbs meeting at the bottom of your sole and fingers curled lightly onto the top of the foot. Press your thumbs into the sole, then sweep them up the center of your sole. Near the toes, fan the thumbs out toward the sides of the feet to complete the T-shape and stretch the foot outward.

5. THUMB CIRCLING

With hands wrapped around the foot, move your thumbs in rhythmic, kneading circles across the sole of the foot.

Complete your self-massage with long, slow strokes over the entire foot. Then, repeat the sequence on the opposite foot. Between professional massage sessions, practicing foot self-massage helps relieve stress by soothing the nerve endings in the feet and relaxing the entire body.

For clients unable to reach their feet, certified massage therapist Robyn

Derbabian of Clinton Township, Michigan, suggests rolling the foot on a tennis ball while seated. "It's a gentle and effective massage for the whole foot," she says. You can also place a handful of marbles on the floor and rub your foot across them with gentle pressure. **m&b**

6 *Laurie Chance Smith is a Texas-based writer and photographer who works for national and international markets on a plethora of topics. She can be reached at lauriechancesmith@yahoo.com.*

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