



SCHWEIZERISCHER VERBAND FÜR FUSSREFLEXZONEN-MASSAGE
Integrative Reflexzonenmassage am Fuss

Stress and Illness in the Workplace

All employers wish to maximise their staff efficiency. Unfortunately, present day demands on businesses lead to increasing pressure upon staff at all levels. It is estimated that up to 75 % of all illness is stress-related. The effects of stress can substantially reduce efficiency and accuracy not only in the performing of physical tasks, but also in the area of abstract planning, decision-making and creativity. Prolonged stress can lead to tiredness and irritability, a weakening of the immune system and the development of physical illness.

In 1995 there were more than 2 million cases of work-related illness in the UK, costing the country nearly £ 16 billion. The head of the Civil Service Occupational Health Service has warned employers that they could face a spate of legal claims for stress-related conditions, unless they act swiftly to defuse stressful work environments.

What can be Done?

Some countries overseas, notably Denmark, have been addressing this problem for a number of years. Their occupational health services have been working closely with employers to provide a flexible approach to the reduction of stress and work related illness. As part of this initiative, some firms now involve complementary therapists in the maintenance of well-being amongst their workforce. Reflexology has proved very successful in this field, and reflexologists are increasingly employed by companies in Denmark, with impressive results.

Case Report: Odense Post Office in Denmark which has employed a full-time reflexologist since 1990 reports saving around £ 100'000 a year due to a 13,3% reduction in sickness and absenteeism.

Case Report: Ishøj Municipal Health Department recorded 2'499 fewer sick hours over a 6 month period in which employees received reflexology, giving a saving of £ 21'490.

Case Report: SAS Cargo estimated a financial saving of £ 2'000 a month when employees were receiving reflexology.

Case Report: Fonss and Hove, Solicitors in Kolding, found that employees receiving treatment showed greater motivation and enhanced working ability. After a four year period, the need for treatments declined because of minimal sickness and absenteeism.

Firms in the UK are now beginning to follow suit by offering reflexology to their staff. They include such organisations as a large supermarket; a major city council; a computer firm; a dance company; an oil company; a large chemical multi-national; a fire station; a major league football team; schools and hospitals; and many small businesses.

How can Reflexology Benefit your Company?

Regular reflexology treatments not only help to reduce stress and tension, but they can also speed recovery from a wide range of acute and chronic illnesses. Benefits to your company can include:

- the ability of staff to cope more effectively under pressure;
- speedy recovery and return to work after illness, accident or surgery;
- pain relief for stress related conditions, such as headaches, migraine, etc;
- can enhance staff resilience and resistance to infection and disease;
- works well with conventional medicine so offers optimum care for your staff;
- increases the moral, satisfaction and loyalty of the staff;
- enhances concentration, efficiency and accuracy;
- improves creativity, planning and decision-making;
- promotes better relationships amongst staff and between staff and management.

Reduced sickness and absenteeism, increased productivity and financial benefits for the company are the visible results. Less obvious, perhaps, are the positive effects on morale amongst employees who feel they are being treated with respect and a caring attitude.

How can Reflexology be used in your Organisation?

The benefits of reflexology can be made available to your staff in a number of different ways, depending on the degree of input your organisation wishes to have – from simply helping staff to become aware of the help that reflexology can offer, to providing subsidised treatments in-house for your employees. Options include:

- Talks by a local practitioner and leaflets made available to educate staff in the benefits of the therapy; in this case, the organisation's involvement would be minimal, and might be confined to making a room available and publicising the talk; any employee take-up would be a purely personal matter.
- Staff could be encouraged to attend for a course of treatment, and incentives could be offered by the organisation to enable them to attend regularly.
- Working times could be made flexible to accommodate daytime treatment sessions for staff who wished to participate; or treatments could take place after working hours.
- A room could be made available within your premises from which the practitioner can work.
- Employees can be fully responsible for the cost of their own treatment; or treatment can be subsidised in part or in fully by the organisation.

What Evidence is there to Validate Reflexology?

The system of applying pressure to points on the feet to affect health is an ancient form of therapy, which originally appears to have developed in China alongside acupuncture. Various forms of pressure point therapy have been used around the world ever since. At the beginning of this century the practice received scientific support from an American ear, nose and throat specialist, who documented the analgesic, anaesthetising and healing effects of such pressure work.

Nowadays a growing number of hospital departments and medical practitioners are involved in undertaking research to validate reflexology. A range of medical benefits have so far been identified by clinical studies, medical tests or monitoring, including effects on blood pressure, the immune system, respiratory function amongst asthmatics, blood sugar levels amongst diabetics, labour times in pregnancy, premenstrual syndrome, post-operative recovery, the relief of musculo-skeletal problems including non-specific back pain, improvements in bowel function (e.g. with constipation

and irritable bowel syndrome), relief of headaches, migraine and sinus problems, relief from jet-lag, and a reduction in stress, anxiety and depression. More specific research references are available from the Association of Reflexologists upon request.

How to Find a Suitable Practitioner

The Association of Reflexologists can supply names of suitably qualified practitioners in your area. All our members are trained to high standards, work to strict Codes of Practice and Ethics, and are fully insured against Public Liability and Malpractice claims. Full members use the letters MAR after their names and are listed in the Association's Register of Practitioners.

If your organisation has in-house medical or nursing staff, they may be interested in the Association's leaflet "Reflexology within Medical Practices" designed specifically to answer questions from the medical view-point.

Quelle:

Association of Reflexologists Member of the International Council of Reflexologists and the Reflexology in Europe Network

Last Revised 10th April 1997