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## REFLEXOLOGY

Hello, my name is Maureen McGonigle and I am the Reflexologist here at here at Swanfield. I have been treating people with MS, their carers and volunteers here since the year 2000. Many of you regulars may know me but for those who don't, you can find me in the therapy room nearest the front door on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

I have been involved in this therapy since 2000 after my own experience of ill-health and I'm additionally qualified in various other therapies as well. Complementary therapies, such as Reflexology, continue to be researched by the NHS. Anyone who is interested in these evidence-based findings can start by looking on-line at CAM in the NHS. The results explain why Reflexology has been of the fastest growing and most medically accepted of all the complementary therapies.

Reflexology is a compression massage of the feet (although the hands can also be treated). It owes its origins to the ancient Egyptians, was later practised by the Chinese as acupressure massage, alongside the development of acupuncture and was more recently redeveloped by the West. The points used in Reflexology are essentially acupressure points which were reformulated by an ENT surgeon Dr FitzHerbert in 19th century America. He discovered that by pressing certain points in the feet he was able to anaesthetise parts of the body. New maps of the feet were drawn dividing the body parts into zones rather than meridians. There are 7,000 nerve endings in the feet which are stimulated during a treatment to produce an effect on their corresponding body parts via their energy pathway. Western medicine then claimed this for its own and this work was furthered by the Russian scientist Pavlov in his work on reflexes and conditioned responses. Hence reflexology was born. Reflexology is practised on the hands and feet and there are even points in the ears. The body is mapped out into right and left sides and is represented in its entirety. It works by removing energy blocks along its pathways which cause pain and ill health. As a devotee of Traditional Chinese Medicine, I incorporate my knowledge of the subject into my treatments.

I have treated many of pairs of feet in my time at Swanfield and can honestly say that the power of Reflexology never ceases to amaze me. The benefits it can offer in terms of improvement in circulation, sleeping patterns, bladder control, constipation, muscular and joint pain, improvements in mobility, eye problems/pain, depression, spasms, stress management and boosting the immune system have to be experienced. A great benefit of this treatment is that it can provide a general feeling of well-being both physically and emotionally. We often are unaware how much stress and tension we carry around until it is removed, however briefly. People commonly feel very tired and relaxed after treatments, but generally they experience more energy the following day.

We are all aware of the mantra that prevention is better than cure. Although symptoms can be improved at any stage of the illness, the quickest and most benefit can be obtained the earlier treatment is started. Reflexology treats the person on a number of levels but primarily attempts to get the body into balance. Relaxation is of utmost importance here in calming down an overwrought nervous system and reducing the anxiety of a mind working overtime, thereby lowering the immune system. Reflexology addresses all these problems and although results may be more difficult for some to recognise, I always advise clients to think of results in terms of what is not happening rather than what is. We never notice when our health is good but can always notice when we have a new symptom or are feeling unwell.

Could this merely be a coincidence that people report improvements after treatment? I really enjoy it when people come for their first taste of this treatment full of scepticism but are amazed to discover an improvement in their condition either immediately or in the following days. I must stress that this improvement does not always last for a long time as this is natural medicine, but benefits can accrue with regular treatments. The benefits of a treatment last for seven days after which time further treatment is required and definitely desired.

As with any health problem, the longer that it has existed, the longer it may take to treat. Like MS, however, nothing is written in stone and results can often surprise. At the very least, this treatment offers relief from tension and stress and should be enjoyable, although minor discomfort is often felt when an area is particularly blocked. The more familiar you become with the treatment, the more attuned you become with your body's rhythms and the more you feel you are able to relax. I am convinced that learning HOW to relax is crucial in the battle against the progression of MS. This is a skill which we all think should be easy to achieve but I must stress that this is a skill which in most cases must be learnt. Once learnt, it is all too easy to forget its importance and how we must make the effort to practice this every day.

**To contact Maureen: call 07746 779 525**

**Extracts from Testimonials** (the full details are in the Centre and on the website):

- ⇒ "The main benefit to me from reflexology is a healthier digestive system. Prior to starting reflexology 5 years ago, I suffered stomach pains, bloating, heartburn and various other unpleasant symptoms....."
- ⇒ "As I have MS I have been having weekly treatments from therapist Maureen McGonigle for the past few years including Reflexology, Reiki, ear candles and Indian Head Massage. After any treatment I feel much more calm, relaxed and more in control generally and this feeling lasts for about four days. My MS so far has not deteriorated too badly and this I put down to Maureen looking after me so well."
- ⇒ "I started reflexology at the centre 2 years ago and it has helped me in ways I could not have anticipated. I have more energy and I'm able to relax more and sleep better. I had sciatica down my left side which had hampered me for more than twenty years. Some days I could hardly walk. After treatment on the reflexology couch the pain is almost completely gone and my mobility is much better."

## STAMPS!

Why are they important to the MSTC? Do you realise that last year the money made from stamps collected amounted to £139? Previously in 2009 it was £171 and so far this year we have £119. If we continue collecting stamps at this rate maybe we will raise over £200 this year, maybe more as MSTC has just found a new dealer who is paying 50% more than before.

I personally keep all stamps that my partner and I receive on letters. My mother's church, Colinton Mains Parish Church, collects all their stamps and give them to me. Raymond and Ali at my partner's works mail room at LTSB Asset Finance keep all their stamps which is a formidable task as they are a very busy office! Many thanks to June Falconer and the children at Holyrood High school, Lothian Health Board staff curling league, Prestonfield Golf Club and various Edinburgh Masonic lodges who also collect. This amounts to a huge amount of stamps, and so when I come to MSTC I am always able to bring some.

When I bring the stamps they have been sorted out into British stamps and foreign stamps but if you do not have the time to do this, do not worry as our new dealer will take them unsorted. If you can bring stamps to the MSTC that will greatly benefit us.

So a huge thanks.

**Linda White**

## Fundraising and Donations

### Donations:

Silvia Aitken Charitable Trust: £1000  
Friends of Mary Gray: over £300  
Martin Currie Charitable Foundation: £250  
Moffat Charitable Trust: £2000

### Fundraising activities: past and future:

- ◇ **Saughton Park Community Association Fair** raised £140. Huge thanks to Sheila and friends for battling with the wind and wet.
- ◇ The **Can Collection** in Ocean Terminal raised £430. Thanks as ever to Gordon for tirelessly arranging these dates and all the admin involved, and to Marjorie, Derek, Chris, Ben, Jim, Cynthia and Colin who took part.
- ◇ Otherwise, the main fundraising event at the moment is the **RAFFLE!** Keep selling those tickets! Many thanks to Anne who sold £96 of tickets at Dr Neil's Garden over two days.

## *Easyfundraising.org.uk*

Don't forget to do your online shopping at  
[www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk).

When you register, select 'MS Therapy Centre Lothian' as the charity you wish to support, and get shopping!

You can access *over 2000 retailers*, including Amazon, John Lewis, Argos, Sainsburys. You can book hotels, buy white goods, do your food shopping online on this site... and the Centre will receive a donation for each purchase you make.

**It's really as simple as that!**

## Raffle tickets

**Keep sending those raffle tickets back! Let us know if you need more...**

## Collection Cans

**Calling all Readers!** We have about 40 collection cans in the Centre which ought to be out in shops earning their keep (because they are not bringing in much money sitting in the attic!).

We've placed 10 recently, but there's still more to go. They could be in a petrol station, jeweller, pub, corner shop, retailer... any place is possible. Please could you all ask around, if you can? Sometimes you may need to ask 2 or 3 places, but keep at it because it's worth it. When you find somewhere, give us a call or drop into the Centre to pick up a can. Thank you!

## What's available?

A reminder of the therapies and services available at the MS Therapy Centre Lothian:

- **Oxygen therapy**
- **Physiotherapy**
- **Reflexology:** ring Maureen on 07746 779 525
- **Yoga:** Tuesday 6.30pm, Thursday 4.30pm
- **Group exercise sessions:** Thursdays: **1.30pm** (mild exercises, for high fatigue level), **2.00pm** (moderate exercises), **3.30pm** (wheelchair users) and **4.00pm**.
- Public computer access, with accessible software and a large keyboard
- Publications from MS Society, MS Trust, and local organisations
- General assistance with any questions—please ask anyone!

## Knockhill Event

**Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th August 2011**

The Centre has an incredible opportunity to raise funds and awareness, but needs several people to really maximise this, so we are hoping that lots of members and other readers might be able to help!

An **Extreme Challenge Weekend** is being organised at Knockhill Racing Circuit. It will be the ultimate festival for bike enthusiasts in Scotland – motorcycle heaven, with lots of kit being brought across from Germany. On-road, off-road, test rides, tricks – you name it, it seems to be there!

The organiser is hoping to be able to donate a significant amount to MSTC Lothian after the event, which is incredibly kind, but we also have the chance to do as much as possible ourselves. **This will mostly involve manning an information stand and holding collection cans/buckets at key points in the ground that the large crowd can empty their pockets into. It is for these that we would love to hear from you. The more of us there are, the more often we can switch around and have time off to enjoy the events as well.**

The gates open at **8.30am** (!) and probably close very late in the day. We'll need to figure out travel, transport, accessibility and facilities – please don't let these put you off if you have the date free and might be interested to help out, even for a couple of hours—do get in touch because we can sort all this out more easily when we know who is available.

We're also being helped by Indigo PR, who do lots of our publicity work. Keep an eye out in the papers nearer the time for their press releases. Now, for the non-motorcycle enthusiasts among you... well, we've not figured out what other entertainments there might be, though we see that the Pirelli Calendar girls are on the agenda, along with Gary Mullen and The Works performing Queen. We'll check it out (the event, not the girls.. thanks to those who have offered to help with that) and be able to supply more info in due course.

## Physiotherapy

Members who receive physiotherapy will have noticed that there are gradual changes being made to the booking system. With over 90 clients and 1 physio it has become harder to offer a weekly session to everyone, and the group sessions, which began last year, are quite full.

The Centre is to hire a second physio, but until then those who would enjoy and benefit from tailored group sessions are currently being invited to identify which times would suit them best, so that additional sessions can be arranged. These will be running from early August. The ultimate aim is that:

- 1) All members have regular access to tailored exercise and private appointments
- 2) Appointments are available for new members and emergencies

Please contact the Centre Manager if there are any questions.

## Dates for your Diary

### Events:

Coffee Morning and raffle draw: Saturday 20th August  
Knockhill weekend: Sat/Sun 27th & 28th August

### Can Collections:

Sat 24th Sept: Sainsburys at Craighleith  
Sun 25th Sept: Sainsburys at Craighleith  
Sat 15th October: Gyle shopping centre  
Sat 26th November: Ocean Terminal

### Committee meetings:

Wed 20th July  
Wed 21st Sept

## Good luck!

Congratulations to Carla on gaining her degree after four years of hard work!  
"Wishing you all the best—come back and see us after your travels!"

## 200 Club winners:

30th May	Fiona Perston
6th June	Heather McKernan
13th June	Euan Latimer
20th June	Paul Bartlett
27th June	Ian Wallace

**Congratulations to everyone!**