



RIEN

NEWSLETTER

AGM IN ITALIA

ARTICLE

*by Karine de Laat in Dutch Journal
for Natural and Integrative
Healthcare*

ENJOY SPRING

**NEWS FROM
FRANCE**

by GER

RECIPE

SAVE THE DATE
UPCOMING RIEN EVENTS



BOARD INTRO



Spring is in the air! Birds build their nests, nature blossoms. And we? We leave the winter behind, renew ourselves and boost our energy.

If you are searching for a nice cup of soup to give your energy a little boost, you will find a recipe on page 16. But before you rush into the kitchen, please take a moment to read the news we have to share first.

Elise will tell you about the Reflexology Evaluation Group (GER) in France. This group works to improve the quality of research by developing methodological recommendations, encouraging clearer reporting of interventions and identifying relevant ways of evaluation.

We also translated an article published in the Dutch magazine for complementary and integrative medicine. After our conference in Eindhoven, Karine de Laat spoke with Orlando Volpe. They talked about his work in mental health, the natural path to well-being, what relaxation does to the brain, and the role of our wonderful profession in it.

Finally, a small shout-out to all representatives of our schools and associations: have you already signed up for the AGM at Lake Garda?

We hope to meet you at the West Garda Hotel in Padenghe sul Garda. But most of all; Enjoy reading and the inspiration it will give you.

Ingrid Wareman
Co-chair

Enjoy reading





AGM

APRIL 30TH AND MAY 1ST, 2026

A KEY MOMENT FOR OUR EUROPEAN REFLEXOLOGY COMMUNITY

Every year, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Reflexology in Europe Nexus (RIEN) brings together representatives of reflexology associations and schools from across Europe. It is an important moment to connect, share experiences and strengthen collaboration within our profession. (reflexology-europe.org)

During the AGM, members exchange updates about the development of reflexology in their respective countries, discuss education and research, and review the progress of the different working groups. It is also the time when important strategic directions for the coming year are discussed and voted on, helping to guide the future of our European network. (reflexology-europe.org)

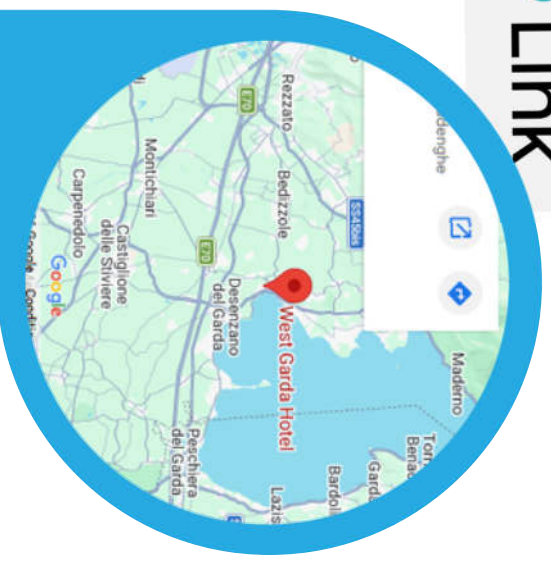
Beyond the formal meetings, the AGM is also a valuable opportunity to meet colleagues, build relationships and continue developing reflexology at an international level. Bringing together professionals with diverse experiences strengthens our collective voice and supports the recognition of reflexology across Europe.

We warmly encourage member organisations to take part in this important gathering and contribute to the shared vision of a strong, connected and forward-looking reflexology community.

📌 Registration and practical information:



 Link



ARTICLE

The Secret Lies in the Feet Balancing Neurotransmitters Through Reflexology



from the Dutch Magazine for Complementary and
Integrative Medicine nr6 2025

On the eve of the annual congress of Reflexology in Europe Nexus (RIEN), held this year in Eindhoven, Karine de Laet spoke with Orlando Volpe, Vice-President of RIEN. Over the past decade, Orlando has dedicated his work to the recovery of mental health. According to him, restoring well-being requires a balance of brain neurotransmitters and sufficient oxygenation. He explains how foot reflexology can play an important role in this process.

A Turning Point

Orlando first encountered reflexology when he was a young and ambitious marketing professional suffering from nervousness and stomach pain. By chance, he consulted a reflexologist. The experience became a turning point in his life.

Through this encounter, he realized how essential it is to introduce moments of calm and recovery into our daily lives. Fascinated by the results, he trained as a reflexologist and opened his own practice near Turin, Italy.

Over the past ten years, he has focused particularly on mental health recovery. Today he travels throughout Europe as an independent lecturer, sharing his knowledge about the relationship between neurotransmitter balance and deep relaxation.

Balancing Neurotransmitters

“In a state of deep relaxation,” Orlando explains, “neurotransmitters rebalance and the body enters a regenerative state. Through reflexology we can guide clients relatively quickly into this deep relaxation, which can influence the body’s biochemistry. In many cases, six sessions over two to three weeks can help restore a new balance.”

Neurotransmitters interact in complex ways and strongly influence our emotions and behavior. When we perform tasks requiring attention and focus, dopamine and noradrenaline dominate.

When we relax, the production of these neurotransmitters decreases. In the brainstem, noradrenaline is regulated by the locus coeruleus, while dopamine is associated with the substantia nigra.

As noradrenaline levels fall, the raphe nuclei signal the production of serotonin, a neurotransmitter linked to feelings of well-being. Serotonin also plays an important role in pain modulation and sleep regulation, as it is a precursor of melatonin.

Both serotonin and GABA are associated with calm states of consciousness in which the brain produces alpha waves, characteristic of relaxed awareness.

The Role of Lactate

According to Orlando, relaxed and deep breathing should be the reflexologist's first focus.

Under normal conditions, cells use oxygen to convert glucose into energy. When energy demand becomes very high, such as during intense effort, oxygen may become insufficient. Cells then switch to anaerobic energy production, which produces far less energy and generates lactate as a by-product.

Lactate can accumulate in muscles or the brain, contributing to fatigue and muscle pain.

The body has an ingenious system, known as the Cori cycle, which converts lactate back into glucose through the liver. This process helps maintain a constant supply of glucose.

However, in conditions such as chronic fatigue syndrome, this system may function less efficiently, making recovery slower and contributing to persistent fatigue.

Breathing, Stress and Panic

Breathing plays a central role in both relaxation and panic responses.

During stress, the diaphragm tightens and breathing becomes faster and more shallow, activating the sympathetic nervous system. In panic states, the brain produces a surge of noradrenaline.

Increased breathing combined with stress leads to elevated lactate levels in the blood. Lactate can cross the blood-brain barrier and accumulate in the brain, creating a vicious cycle that can escalate into hyperventilation, rapid heartbeat and sweating.

When breathing normalizes, the balance between noradrenaline and serotonin can be restored. Heart rate slows, the diaphragm relaxes, and oxygen becomes more available to brain and body cells, supporting recovery.



What Relaxation Does to the Brain

When people enter deep relaxation, adrenaline and noradrenaline decrease while serotonin increases.

More oxygen becomes available to muscle cells, promoting recovery and helping clear lactate. As a result, energy availability improves and overall well-being increases.

For example, individuals with ADHD often experience dopamine imbalance, leading to impulsivity and restlessness. Deep relaxation can reduce noradrenaline levels and increase GABA, a calming neurotransmitter involved in attention, behavior regulation and memory.

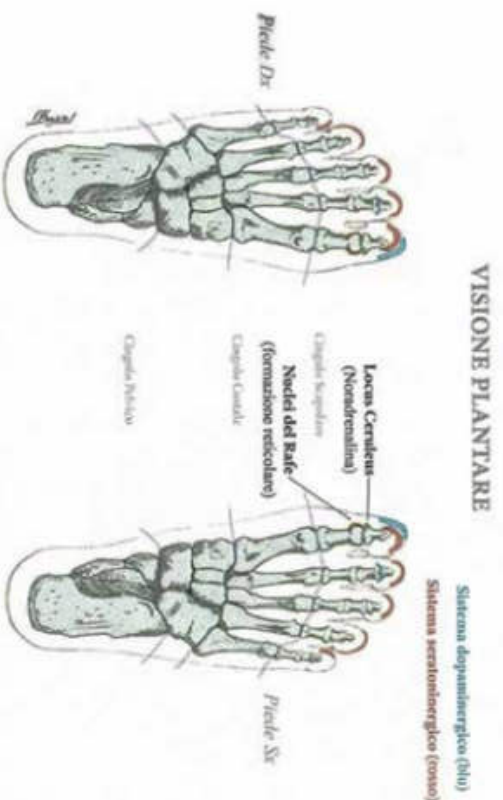
The Role of Reflexology

Research shows that reflexology can have positive effects on:

- stress
- anxiety
- depression
- sleep quality.

Studies have also demonstrated reductions in blood pressure and improvements in blood oxygen levels following foot reflexology.

Neuroscience research further indicates that reflexology may stimulate alpha brain waves and activate the default mode network, a brain network active during restful states and internal reflection. This network is involved in memory processing, emotional integration and self-awareness.



Energy and Presence

According to Volpe, the ability to help clients regain balance is not only a matter of technique and knowledge. It also depends on the energy and presence of the therapist.

By “vibration,” he refers to the energetic state a therapist carries, influenced by thoughts, emotions, nutrition and the ability to remain present and attentive. This subtle dimension can significantly affect the client’s experience, although it is rarely studied scientifically.

A Natural Path to Well-Being

Deep relaxation is not a luxury but a fundamental requirement for both mental and physical health.

Reflexology can help induce this state and support the rebalancing of neurotransmitters. Understanding these processes also helps practitioners explain to clients what happens in the body during relaxation.

As Volpe concludes:

“The secret lies in the feet. Reflexology is a natural way to create well-being. One hour of reflexology can have the same effect as a week of vacation.”



Karine De Laat

Thanks to Karine for writing this lovely article.



ENJOY SPRING

Spring Renewal: Supporting the Body Through Seasonal Change

Spring is a season of renewal. As days grow longer and nature awakens, our bodies also begin to shift from the slower rhythm of winter toward greater movement, vitality and circulation.

This seasonal transition can sometimes bring fatigue, allergies or digestive changes as the body adapts to new environmental rhythms. Reflexology offers gentle and supportive approaches to help the body navigate this period of change.

In the following articles, we explore four complementary aspects of reflexology during the spring season:

- Spring Detox — supporting the body's natural elimination processes and restoring lightness after winter.
- Spring Energy — stimulating circulation and helping the body regain vitality and motivation.
- Spring Allergy Support — encouraging respiratory comfort and supporting the immune system during pollen season.
- Spring Renewal — promoting overall balance and helping the body adapt harmoniously to seasonal change.

Together, these approaches highlight how reflexology can accompany the body through the natural rhythms of the year, supporting balance, resilience and well-being during the vibrant transition into spring.



REFLEXOLOGY FOR SPRING WELLNESS



Renewal, Detox and Energy

Spring is the season of renewal. As nature awakens, the body also begins to shift from winter's slower rhythm toward greater vitality and movement.

Reflexology can gently support this transition by helping the body eliminate accumulated tension, stimulate circulation and restore balance. During this period, reflex work often focuses on organs involved in detoxification and energy regulation.

This seasonal approach encourages the body to release what is no longer needed and to regain lightness and vitality.

Benefits During Spring

- Supports the body's natural detoxification processes.
- Stimulates liver and digestive function.
- Encourages circulation and lymphatic flow.
- Reduces seasonal fatigue.
- Promotes emotional renewal and clarity.

Self-Care Tip

Spring is an ideal time to combine reflexology with gentle lifestyle adjustments: increasing hydration, eating fresh seasonal vegetables and spending time outdoors.

Simple daily foot massage can also support circulation and vitality during this seasonal shift.



A Note from Hippocrates

Hippocrates reminded us that the body constantly seeks balance with the rhythms of nature.

Spring invites movement, renewal and cleansing. By stimulating reflex zones and encouraging circulation, reflexology supports the body's natural capacity to restore harmony and vitality.

Reflexology Protocol

Inspired by traditional reflexology approaches and seasonal wellness principles.

Key Reflex Zones:

- Liver reflex
- Gallbladder reflex
- Kidneys & bladder reflexes
- Lymphatic reflex zones
- Solar plexus reflex

Suggested Protocol:

1. Begin with relaxation techniques across the whole foot.
2. Stimulate kidney reflex zones to support elimination.
3. Work the liver and gallbladder reflexes with slow, sustained pressure.
4. Stimulate lymphatic reflexes along the dorsal foot.
5. Finish with solar plexus reflex to restore balance.

Duration: 20–25 minutes per session, weekly during seasonal transition.



SPRING DETOX



Supporting the Body's Natural Cleansing

Spring is traditionally associated with renewal and purification. After the slower rhythm of winter, the body naturally begins to activate elimination pathways and restore vitality. Reflexology can support this seasonal transition by stimulating organs involved in detoxification, particularly the liver, kidneys and lymphatic system. By encouraging circulation and elimination, reflexology helps the body release accumulated tension and regain lightness.

Benefits During Winter

- Stimulates liver and gallbladder function.
- Supports kidney activity and elimination.
- Encourages lymphatic circulation.
- Helps reduce feelings of heaviness and fatigue.
- Promotes overall vitality and clarity.

Reflexology Protocol

Key Reflex Zones :

- Liver reflex
- Gallbladder reflex
- Kidney reflexes
- Bladder reflex
- Lymphatic reflex zones

Suggested Protocol :

1. Begin with relaxation techniques across the entire foot.
 2. Stimulate kidney reflexes to activate elimination.
 3. Work liver and gallbladder reflexes with slow, sustained pressure.
 4. Stimulate lymphatic reflex zones along the top of the foot.
 5. Finish with solar plexus reflex to support balance.
- Duration: 25-30 minutes per session during seasonal transition.

Self-Care Tip

Increase hydration and incorporate fresh seasonal vegetables and herbs into meals. Gentle movement such as walking can also help stimulate circulation and detoxification.

Quote

"The earth laughs in flowers."
— Ralph Waldo Emerson



SPRING ENERGY



Awakening Vitality After Winter

As daylight increases and temperatures rise, the body naturally shifts toward greater activity and energy. Reflexology can support this transition by stimulating circulation and helping the nervous system adapt to seasonal change.

This gentle stimulation encourages the body to regain vitality and restore balance between rest and activity.

Benefits During Spring

- Boosts circulation and oxygenation.
- Helps reduce seasonal fatigue.
- Supports adrenal and endocrine balance.
- Encourages mental clarity and motivation.
- Promotes overall vitality.

Reflexology Protocol

Key Reflex Zones:

- Adrenal gland reflex
- Pituitary reflex
- Solar plexus reflex
- Spine reflex

Suggested Protocol :

1. Begin with gentle warming techniques across the whole foot.
2. Stimulate adrenal reflex zones to support energy regulation.
3. Apply pressure to the spine reflex to release tension.
4. Stimulate pituitary reflex to support hormonal balance.
5. Finish with solar plexus reflex for relaxation.

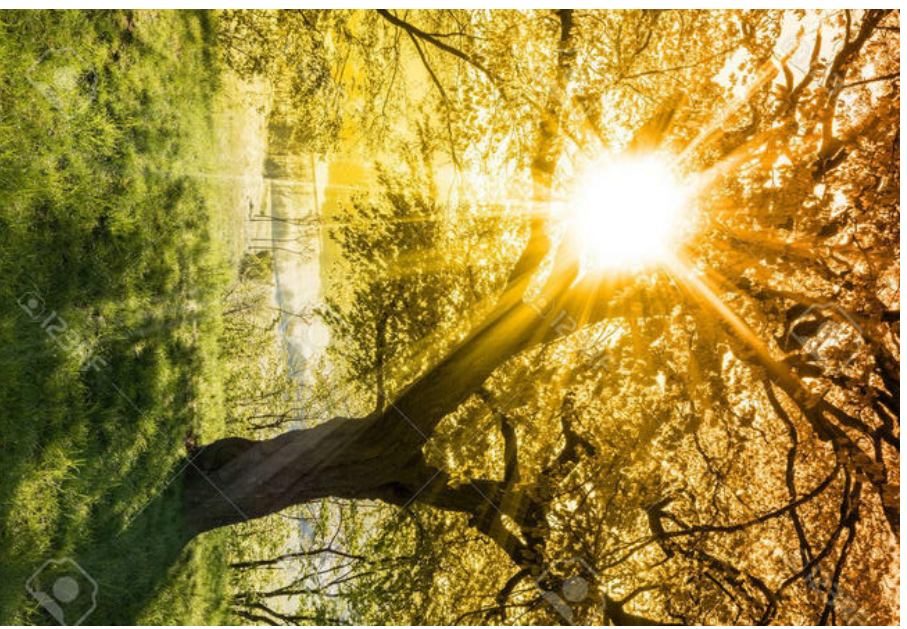
Duration: 20 minutes per session, weekly or biweekly.

Self-Care Tip

Morning stretches, time in natural daylight and light physical activity can enhance energy levels during the spring transition.

Quote

"In the spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours."
— Mark Twain



SPRING ALLERGY SUPPORT



Supporting Respiratory Comfort

For many people, spring also brings seasonal allergies. Reflexology may help by supporting respiratory function, improving circulation and encouraging relaxation. While reflexology does not treat allergies directly, it can support the body's natural capacity to adapt and restore balance.

Reflexology Protocol

Benefits During Spring

- Supports sinus drainage and respiratory comfort.
- Helps reduce tension associated with congestion.
- Encourages immune balance.
- Promotes relaxation and stress reduction.

Self-Care Tip

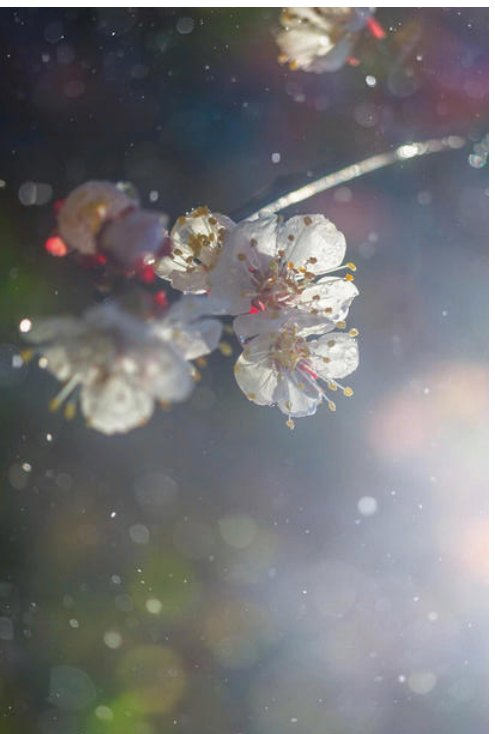
Nasal rinsing, hydration and spending time outdoors when pollen levels are lower (after rain or early morning) may help reduce symptoms.

- Key Reflex Zones :**
- Sinus reflex zones
 - Lung reflex zones
 - Immune system reflexes
 - Adrenal reflex

Suggested Protocol :

1. Begin with gentle massage across the entire foot.
2. Stimulate sinus reflex zones at the tips of the toes.
3. Work lung reflex zones using circular pressure.
4. Stimulate lymphatic reflex areas to support immune function.
5. Finish with adrenal reflex to support stress adaptation.

Duration: 25–30 minutes per session during allergy season..



Quote

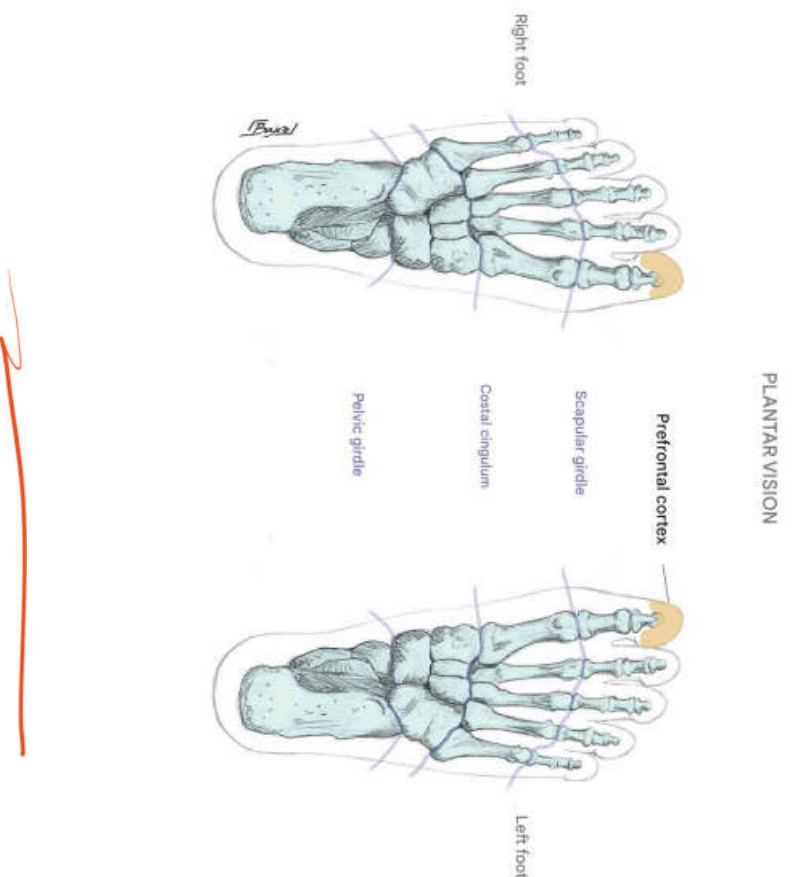
"Spring is nature's way of saying: Let's begin again."
— Robin Williams



DO YOU KNOW

Curiosity about Prefrontal Cortex by Orlando Volpe

Treatment of the big toe is very common in reflexology, and we all agree that it represents reflex areas of the central nervous system. However, there are several areas in the CNS, so where is the prefrontal cortex located? In my book on the nervous system in reflexology I represent it as in the drawing below and of course each of you can experiment with it for yourself.



DO YOU KNOW

What is the prefrontal cortex and what are its functions?

Prefrontal cortex represents the part of the brain that most differentiates us from animals and thanks to which humans have evolved and continue to evolve. 28% of our brain is made up of the prefrontal cortex. In monkeys, considered the living beings closest to us, this area occupies only 12%, in dogs and cats it does not exceed 7%, and in crocodiles it is almost nonexistent! Its main functions are:

- planning of cognitive behaviors;
- decision-making ability;
- expression of personality;
- ability to pursue a goal;
- abstract abilities;
- problem solving;
- ability to concentrate;
- behavior control;
- ability to discern right from wrong and adopt appropriate behaviors;
- conscious odors (smell) discrimination

If we therefore consider its functions, we can well understand in which situations we can treat this reflex area and that therefore it does not represent a simple and general reflex of a part of the nervous system but of a very specific and important area. The only way we have to verify how the reflex points respond to our stimulations is to treat them and observe them, collect data and information, observations that come to us from our clients and then you can experience for yourself not so much the reflex area that you already know as part of the brain, but whether changes are actually observed in some of the functions listed above.

Good observation to everyone!

Orlando Volpe



NEWS FROM THE REFLEXOLOGY

ABOUT RESEARCH IN FRANCE

Research Spotlight

The GER: A Think-and-Do Tank Advancing Reflexology Research

This text presents a summary of the article published in the journal Hegel describing the work of the Groupe d'Évaluation de la Réflexologie (GER), a collaborative initiative dedicated to improving the scientific evaluation of reflexology.

Reflexology, rooted in ethnomedicine traditions, is a manual practice increasingly used alongside conventional healthcare approaches. Considered a non-pharmacological intervention (NPI), its potential benefits for well-being, symptom management and quality of life are progressively documented in scientific literature. Within the field of integrative health, reflexology may help support relaxation, reduce discomfort and contribute to overall health without causing adverse effects.

To strengthen the scientific understanding of this practice, the Reflexology Evaluation Group (GER) was created in France in 2020. The initiative functions as a participatory "think-and-do tank", bringing together reflexologists, researchers and professionals committed to advancing reflexology research.

The group is coordinated by Emeline Descamps and includes contributors such as Christelle Canals (SPR), Elise Manzoni (FFR), Evelyne Truong, Guy Boitout, Marion Valette, Jezabel Gougeon, Sonia Fischmann, Pierre-André Fautrier,.... alongside other participants from the fields of research, professional practice and education. The diversity of perspectives within the group allows for constructive dialogue between academic expertise and field experience.

One of the main challenges in reflexology research is methodological consistency. Many published studies provide insufficient descriptions of reflexology interventions, which makes replication difficult and limits their inclusion in systematic reviews or meta-analyses. The GER therefore works to improve research quality by developing methodological recommendations, encouraging clearer reporting of interventions and identifying relevant evaluation criteria.

Among its priorities is the development of a shared framework for reflexology research, including the creation of a consensual mapping of major reflex zones and the establishment of a common language to better describe reflexology practices. By combining qualitative insights from clinical practice with quantitative scientific approaches, the GER promotes a multidisciplinary and pragmatic approach to research.

Through collaboration, knowledge sharing and methodological innovation, the GER contributes to strengthening the scientific foundations of reflexology and clarifying its place within the evolving field of integrative and sustainable healthcare.

Descamps E., Valette M., et al.

Le GER : un laboratoire d'idées et d'actions pour l'évaluation de la réflexologie.

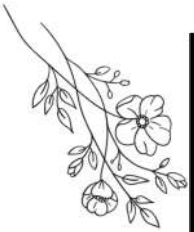
Journal Hegel, Vol. 15, 2025.



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RECIPE

SPRING GREEN DETOX SOUP

Light, fresh and revitalising

Fresh, vibrant and full of seasonal greens, this soup is a perfect way to welcome spring. Packed with vitamins and minerals, it gently supports the body after winter and helps restore energy and balance.

With peas, spinach, herbs and lemon, this nourishing bowl is both comforting and refreshing – ideal for a light lunch or a cleansing evening meal.

Preparation

1. Heat olive oil in a large pot.
2. Sauté the onion and garlic for 3-4 minutes until soft.
3. Add chopped potato and vegetable broth.
4. Simmer for 10 minutes.
5. Add peas and cook for another 5 minutes.
6. Stir in spinach and fresh herbs.
7. Cook for 2 minutes until just wilted.
8. Blend until smooth.
9. Add lemon juice, salt and pepper to taste.

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 medium potato, diced
- 1 cup green peas (fresh or frozen)
- 2 handfuls fresh spinach
- 750 ml vegetable broth
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley or mint, chopped
- Salt & pepper to taste

Garnish: pumpkin seeds, fresh herbs, drizzle of olive oil



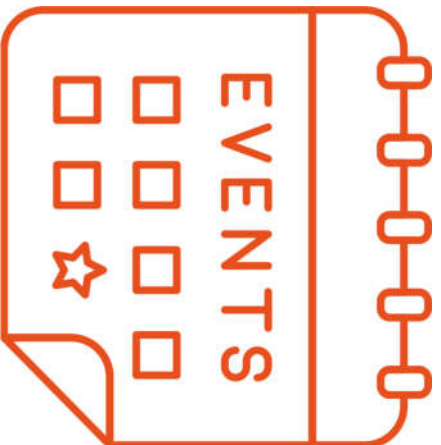
Serving Tip

Serve warm with whole-grain toast or a slice of sourdough bread.

A spoon of yogurt or a few crumbled feta pieces can add a delicious creamy touch.



SAVE THE DATE



WEBINAR FROM 8:00 PM TO 10:00 PM.

“What to do if our client unexpectedly relives old painful emotions during a reflexology treatment?”

by Helga Dittman

Date: June,29 2026

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

AGM

by F.I.R.P. in Italy

Date: April 30th and 1st May , 2026

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND BI-ANNUAL RIEN CONFERENCE

AGM and Conference

by suomen refleksologit in Finland

Date: May 21th - 23th , 2027

CALL FOR...



As we prepare for our upcoming newsletters, we invite you to contribute your articles and recipes that align with our themes. Your insights and creativity can help enrich our community's knowledge and wellness practices.

Your articles can inspire and empower our community as we navigate these seasonal changes together. Please mail your contributions to secretary.rien@gmail.com to ensure they are included in the respective newsletters.

June: "Nurturing Wellness" (sent in before may 1th)

Articles: Reflexology for Chronic Pain Management: Highlight how reflexology can be used as a tool for managing chronic pain conditions, such as arthritis or fibromyalgia, and the specific reflex points to focus on.

Wholesome Recipes: Share recipes that promote overall wellness, focusing on nutrient-dense ingredients that support digestion and vitality, like smoothies, salads and light summer meals.






RIEN
Reflexology in Europe Nexus

Wishing all reflexologists a

Beautiful Spring Season 

Together nurturing
health, balance and connection

 reflexology-europe.org