A close-up photograph of two hands, palms facing each other, with fingers slightly spread. The skin is a warm, light brown tone. Each finger is wrapped in a piece of white, translucent adhesive tape, starting from the base of the finger and extending towards the tip. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue. The title 'hand reflexology' is printed in a large, black, serif font in the upper right quadrant, with the subtitle 'simple routines for health and relaxation' in a smaller, black, sans-serif font directly below it.

# hand reflexology

simple routines for health and relaxation







# hand reflexology

simple routines for health and relaxation

BARBARA & KEVIN KUNZ

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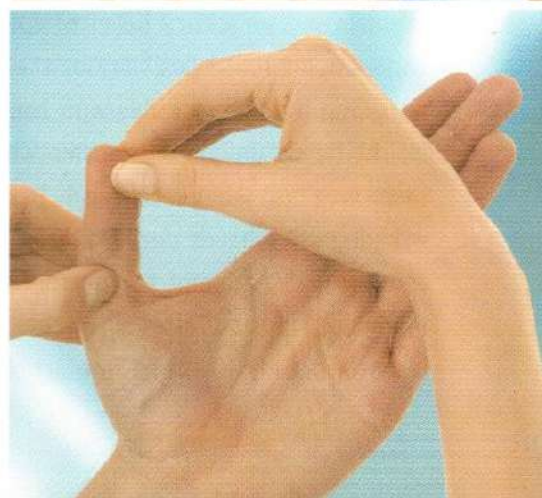
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# INTRODUCTION

Hands occupy a very special place in our lives: every day, time and time again, we call upon them to perform tasks that range from the mundane to the intricate, from a gentle caress to exerting extreme force. Because of their special relationship with the body, the hands provide a unique opportunity for addressing health concerns. Hand reflexology seizes the chance of enhancing not only your own life but also that of others. Its techniques can provide busy hands with a respite from the demands of the day; but, more importantly, reflexology can change lives. From the worker whose livelihood is threatened by disability to the senior citizen seeking to live independently, hand reflexology offers possibilities of improvement and offers a path to pursue in times of need.

This point was driven home to us a number of years ago during a demonstration at a rehabilitation center. Following some hand-reflexology work, a stroke sufferer stood up and turned his arm around, windmill-fashion. "What did you do to John?" asked an employee. In response to our puzzlement, the therapist explained, "He couldn't do that with his paralyzed arm before."

From a gentle press to a focused effort, every move you make as you apply reflexology techniques is a step toward a happier, healthier, and more productive life. Whether your interest is in helping yourself or another, hand reflexology is a life-long skill that can help to maintain self-sufficiency. Relief of common health concerns, improved flexibility of the hands, and overall relaxation... all are possible with hand-reflexology work.

The hands' unique relationship with our bodies links them into our stress mechanism. It is little wonder that wringing one's hands during times of stress is a natural and instinctive attempt to interrupt the tension of the moment. Hands are, after all, integral to our survival responses, ready to spring into action when needed.

Hand-reflexology work provides a simple formula: just as the bank takes our deposits and holds them ready for our use, hand-reflexology techniques contribute to our bank of "wellness standing" ready for the demands of a stressful day. Effective "savers" deposit regularly, building up their balance for a rainy day.

While initial technique application of reflexology addresses current stressors, continued work triggers the healing response for which reflexology is known. One client, for example, found that he could "turn off" his seasonal hay-fever sniffles after two weeks of using a hand-reflexology technique. After this initial period, his snuffle management took less and less time each day.

Hand reflexology offers a bite-sized approach to well-being: the hand is always conveniently available, within our reach when sitting at a red light or during a quiet moment at the end of the day. It is there when we seek to give someone the warmth of touch or a pat of reassurance. Who among us hasn't held a toddler's hand or reached out to comfort an ailing family member? With a little more focus, such touch can turn into the opportunity to trigger the body's own healing powers through hand reflexology's techniques.

The magic of reflexology lies in its empowerment, in the knowledge that by acquiring these skills, one can create change, with one hand helping another. As you read through this book, experience at first hand the power of what you can do for yourself and others.

*Barbara K. Kung*  
*Kevin M. Kung*













# PRINCIPLES OF REFLEXOLOGY

In this ancient therapeutic practice, a variety of pressure techniques are applied to reflex areas of the hands and feet to stimulate responses in corresponding parts of the body. The resulting relaxation has a profoundly beneficial effect on health, preventing disease, reducing pain, and generally improving quality of life. In this chapter, we trace the history of reflexology and examine how and why it works.



# THE HISTORY OF REFLEXOLOGY

From ancient times to the present day, reflexology has helped humans maintain health and well-being; its use as a medical practice throughout history is well documented. Although details of the early work are lost in time, archeological clues indicate that reflexology has been rediscovered and reinstated as a health practice time and time again by peoples around the globe seeking to deal with health concerns.

From Egypt to Japan, in China and throughout Asia, artefacts tracing the ancient history of reflexology have been discovered by archaeologists. Although details of the exact principles and techniques are lost to us, the discoveries that have been made testify to the role that this ancient therapy has long played in the health and well-being of people around the world.

## REFLEXOLOGY IN ANCIENT EGYPT

Among the oldest relics are pictographs of hand and foot reflexology dating from 2330 BCE, which were discovered at the Tomb of the Physician in Saqqara, Egypt. Carved into stone, these pictographs are included with others showing medical practices of the time.

The Egyptian pictographs are among the oldest known depictions of medical care.

When translated, the hieroglyphs' message resonates with today's reflexologists: "Don't hurt me," to which the physician replies, "I shall act so you praise me." Further references to reflexology span later years in ancient Egyptian history. The victory of Ramses II at Qadesh in 1276 BCE is commemorated with a carving in an obelisk at the temple of Amon at Karnak. A worker is depicted tending to the feet of footsore soldiers

marching to battle. Later, in ancient Egypt, around 50 BCE, Roman emperor Octavian noted Mark Anthony's "pathetic" enslavement to Cleopatra, commenting that he even massaged her feet at dinner parties — giving her an early reflexology treatment.

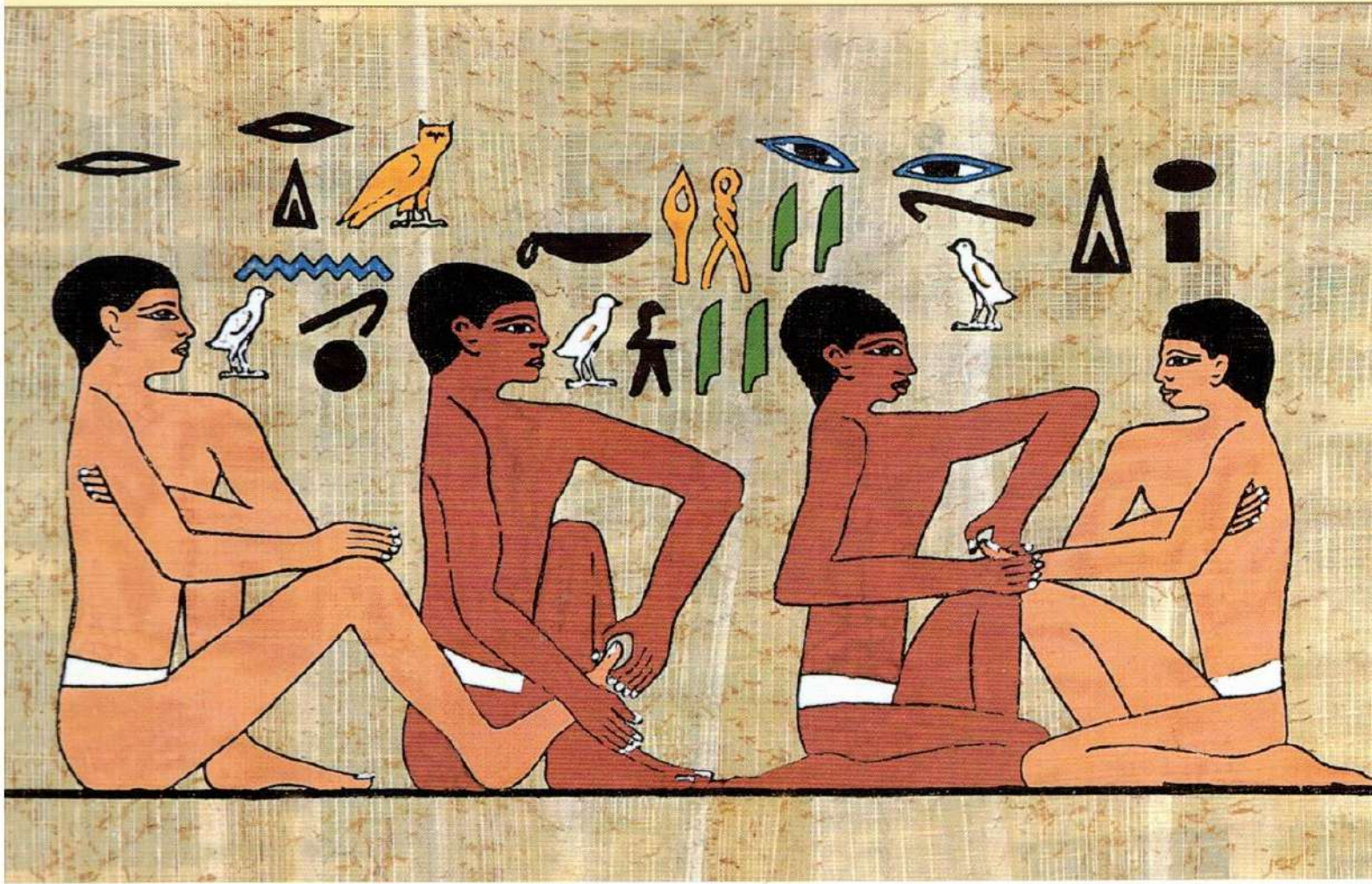
## BUDDHISM AND ASIAN CULTURES

References to the association of feet and hands with health and medicine is found throughout Asia. Some 5,000 years ago in China, the medical text *Hwang Tee Internal Text* included *The Method of Toe Observations*. In Nara, Japan, the *Yakushiji* (Medicine Teacher) Temple includes a bronze statue of the "Healing Buddha" with depictions carved onto the feet and hands. Also on Temple grounds is the *Bussokudo*, a building housing the famous stone bearing the footprint of Buddha (*Bus-soku-seki*). "Medicine Buddha" figures have been found across Asia as well as "Buddha's footprints" dating from 400 BCE. These include similar depictions carved onto the feet and hands. While much of the meaning of these artefacts has been lost in history, their presence testifies to the importance of feet and hands in Buddhism and in cultures across Asia.

## UNDERSTANDING THE REFLEX

Why all this interest in reflexology? The answer lies perhaps in reflexology's more recent history. Discoveries made by researchers exploring the nervous system in





One of the earliest depictions of foot and hand therapy as part of medical care is illustrated in this wall painting from an Egyptian tomb, dating from 2330 BCE.

the mid to late 1800s showed the potential of the reflex as a health tool. As medical doctors in the United Kingdom, Russia, and Germany sought to understand how the nervous system works, alternative schools of thought, research efforts, and published articles were directed toward the reflex, which was seen to offer an opportunity for the provision of health treatment.

Physicians of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century began to utilize reflex treatment and, in 1917, Russian physician V. M. Bekhterev (1857–1957) coined the term reflexology. British physician Sir Henry Head (1861–1940) developed ideas for the therapeutic uses of reflex actions, mapping the connection between

different organs and specific areas of the skin in a model known as “Head’s Zones.” Reflex zone massage was launched in Germany and, in the United States, Dr. William Fitzgerald (1872–1942) developed his system

The reflex was seen as a window of opportunity for the provision of health treatment.

of “zone therapy,” which he used in his eye, ear, nose, and throat practice. His ideas were picked up and developed, most notably by physiotherapist Eunice Ingham (1879–1974), who extended the original simple ten-zone concept, mapping the reflex areas of the hands and feet and their corresponding body parts. Her work of 1938 marks the beginnings of today’s reflexology.



The hand is a sensory organ, capable of receiving and communicating sensations such as pressure, stretch, and movement. Hand reflexology uses this ability to send a message of relaxation to the body, resulting in an improved response to daily stresses.





# HOW REFLEXOLOGY WORKS

Hands reach out to touch the world, befriending and defending as well as picking up the pieces when necessary, and helping us to survive. Pressure sensors in the hands give us the ability to communicate with others and to manipulate our surroundings, carrying out the daily tasks that make up our lives, and using the tools and equipment that we routinely employ in the performance of those tasks.

At the most fundamental level, the hands are essential to our survival, creating shelter, providing food, and nurturing our young. In times of danger, the hands participate in the overall body reaction that ensures survival. This reaction is commonly known as the “fight or flight response” because it enables the body to gear its internal organs and muscles to respond to either eventuality. The sudden adrenaline surge that enables a person to lift a car following an accident is an example of this extraordinary response to stress.

## INTERRUPTING STRESS PATTERNS

The same stress mechanism is also at work as we respond to the demands of the day. When sustained, however, such stress creates wear and tear on the body. According to researcher Hans Selye (1907–1982), 75 percent of all illnesses are stress-related. He argued that interrupting the pattern of stress provides a break in the routine, thereby resolving the wear-and-tear effect of continuous stress. Hand-reflexology work taps into this relationship, interrupting stress and helping to reset the body’s overall tension level. As the hand responds to the new sensory experiences of reflexology’s pressure

techniques, the work interrupts patterns of stress and prompts a general, whole-body relaxation response. If practiced sufficiently often, reflexology work not only interrupts stress but also conditions an improved response to it.

Reflexology works as a stress reducer in the nervous system, promoting beneficial effects on the whole body.

Reflexology techniques provide stimulus to pressure sensors of the hands, prompting a reflexive response throughout the body, including on its internal organs. A reflex effect occurs as the body automatically and unconsciously resets its stress mechanism. When reflexology techniques are applied to a specific part of the hand, a specific relaxation response occurs in a corresponding body part: reflexology maps of the hands show this relationship (*see pages 16–19*).

Reflexology work affects the body in three ways: a general relaxation response, a specific reflex effect, and a rejuvenation of the hand itself. It also improves the flexibility of the hand and helps to develop hand awareness, thus lessening the potential for injury. In sum, reflexology works as a stress reducer in the nervous system prompting an effect on the whole body.

Continuing use of reflexology results in improved response to the stresses of the day.



# REFLEXOLOGY AND ZONES

Reflexology theory is based on zone theory. Just as the meridians of acupuncture link one part of the body to another, so too reflexology links the hand to the body and its organs through a combination of zone charts and hand maps.

Zone theory divides the body into ten zones — one for each finger and toe. Applying pressure to one part of a zone creates an effect along the zone. For example, pressure applied to the index finger creates a reaction, a relaxation response, along zone 2 anywhere in the body. Lateral markers provide a further link between body and hand (*see right*). For example, to influence a body part at the diaphragm in zone 1, pressure is applied to the hand at the diaphragm lateral marker and zone 1 (*see opposite*). This system is further refined as reflexology maps (*see pages 16–19*).

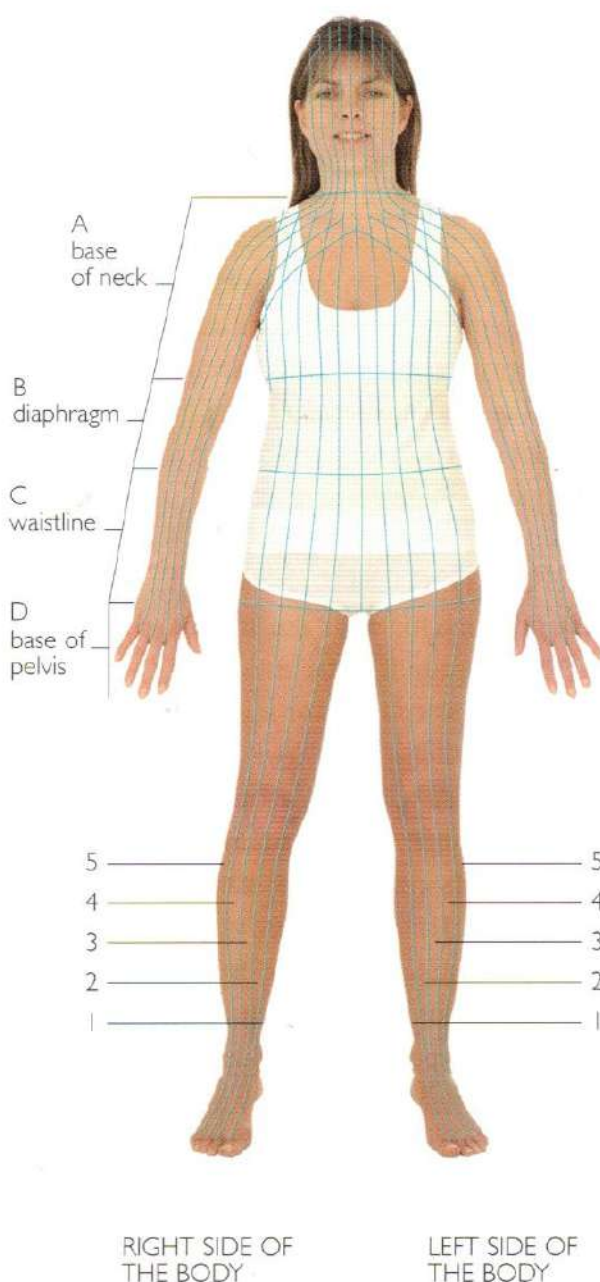
## ZONES AND MAPS IN PRACTICE

Reflexologists use the system of zones and hand maps to locate an area on the hand that corresponds to a specific part of the body, in order to address localized stress. For example, our client Twyllah attended the emergency room with her teenage daughter, who was in great pain. Twyllah used her reflexology and zone knowledge to find the part of her daughter's hand that reflected the pain, which she successfully relieved during diagnosis and preparation for an appendectomy.

Reflexologists utilize reflexology maps and zone charts in order to plan their strategy: where to apply technique, how much to apply, and for how long are key questions for a focused approach to prompting the relaxation response. The reflexology map is used as a tool to focus work on specific organs, systems, or functions of the body that may be under stress.

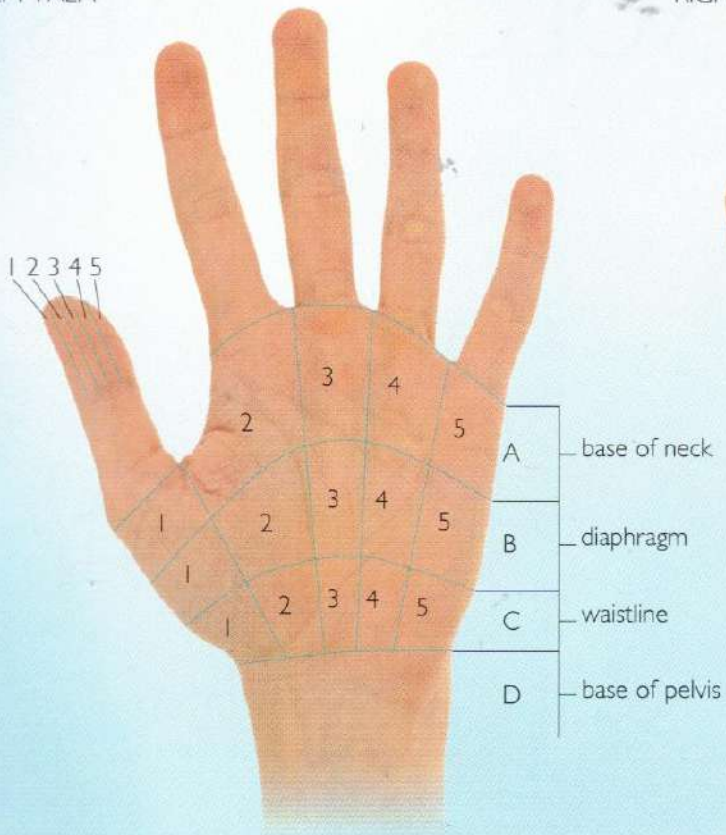
## Zone charts

Reflexologists use zone charts similar to the one below to help them locate areas on the hand that correspond to different parts of the body. The body is divided into ten zones and four lateral zones. The lateral markers are: base of the neck, diaphragm (base of the ribcage), the waistline, and base of the pelvis.

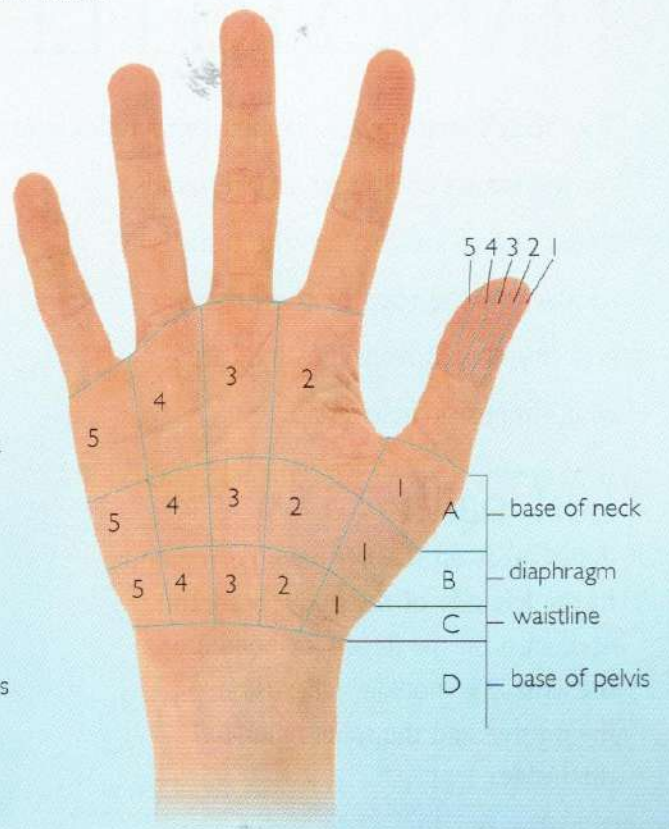




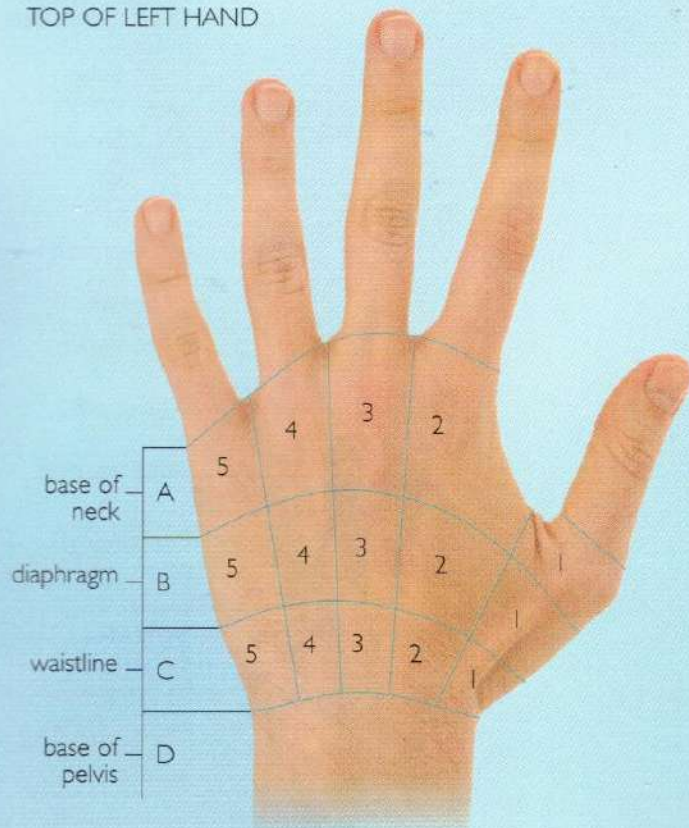
LEFT PALM



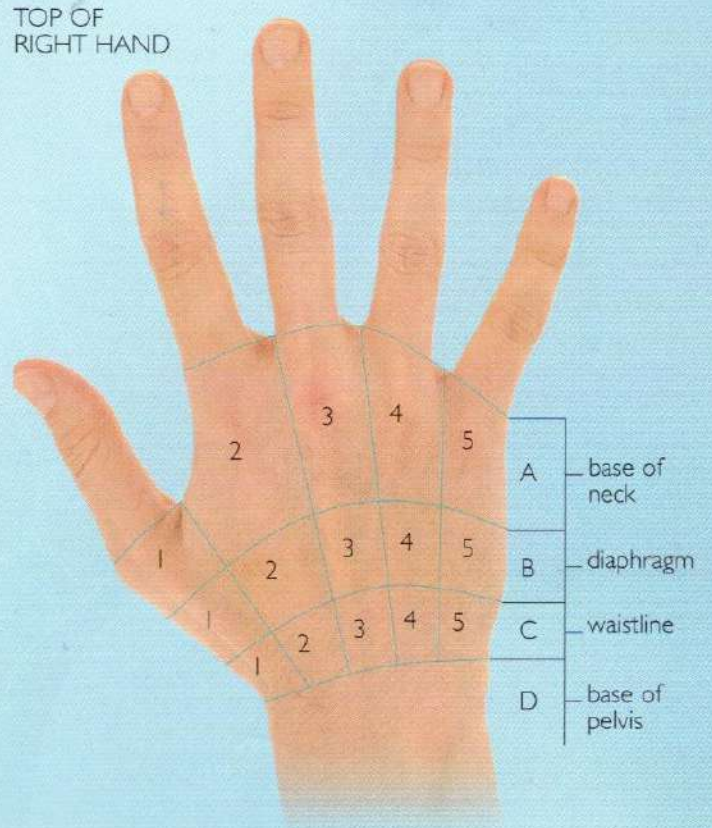
RIGHT PALM



TOP OF LEFT HAND



TOP OF RIGHT HAND



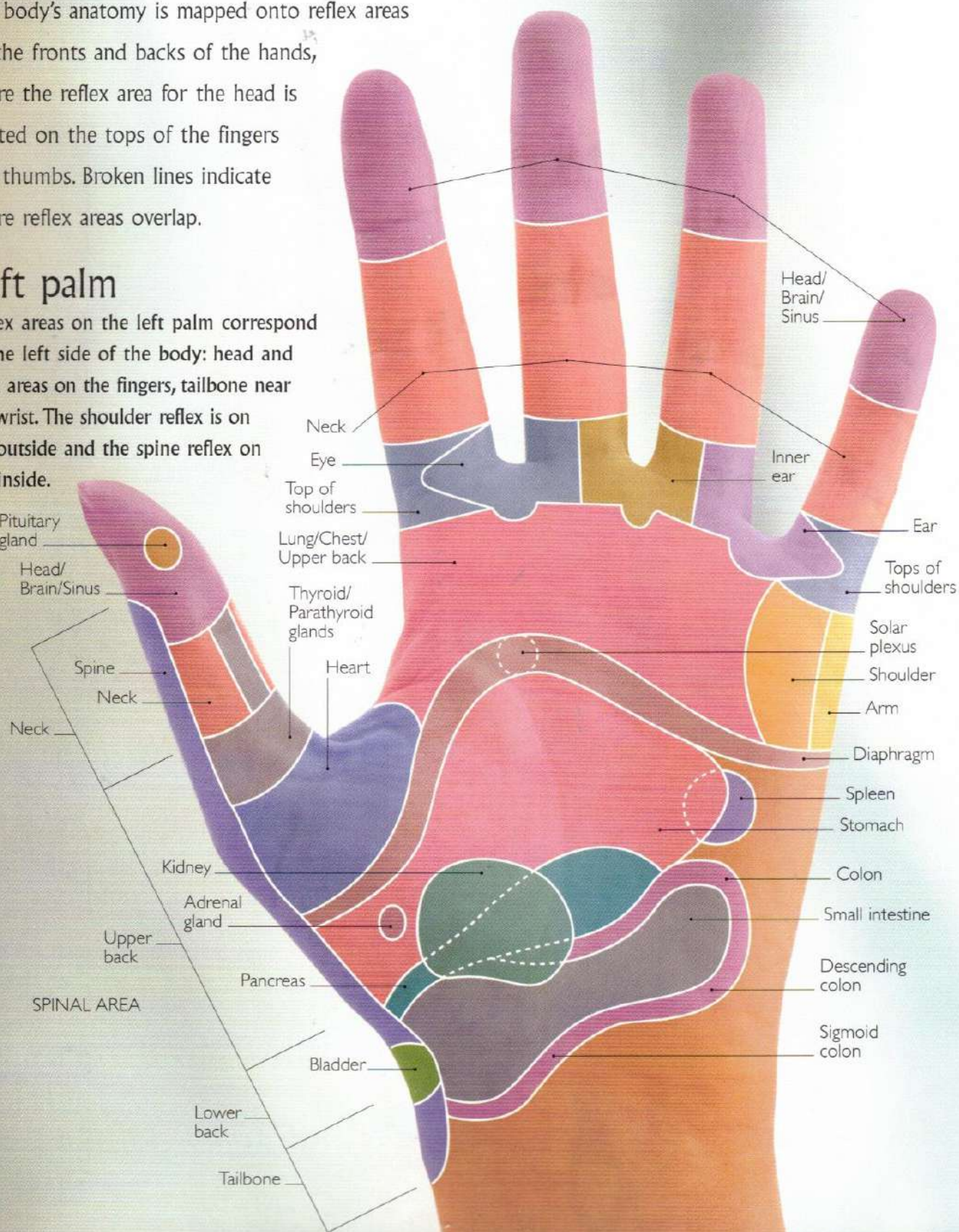


# HAND REFLEXOLOGY MAPS

The body's anatomy is mapped onto reflex areas on the fronts and backs of the hands, where the reflex area for the head is located on the tops of the fingers and thumbs. Broken lines indicate where reflex areas overlap.

## Left palm

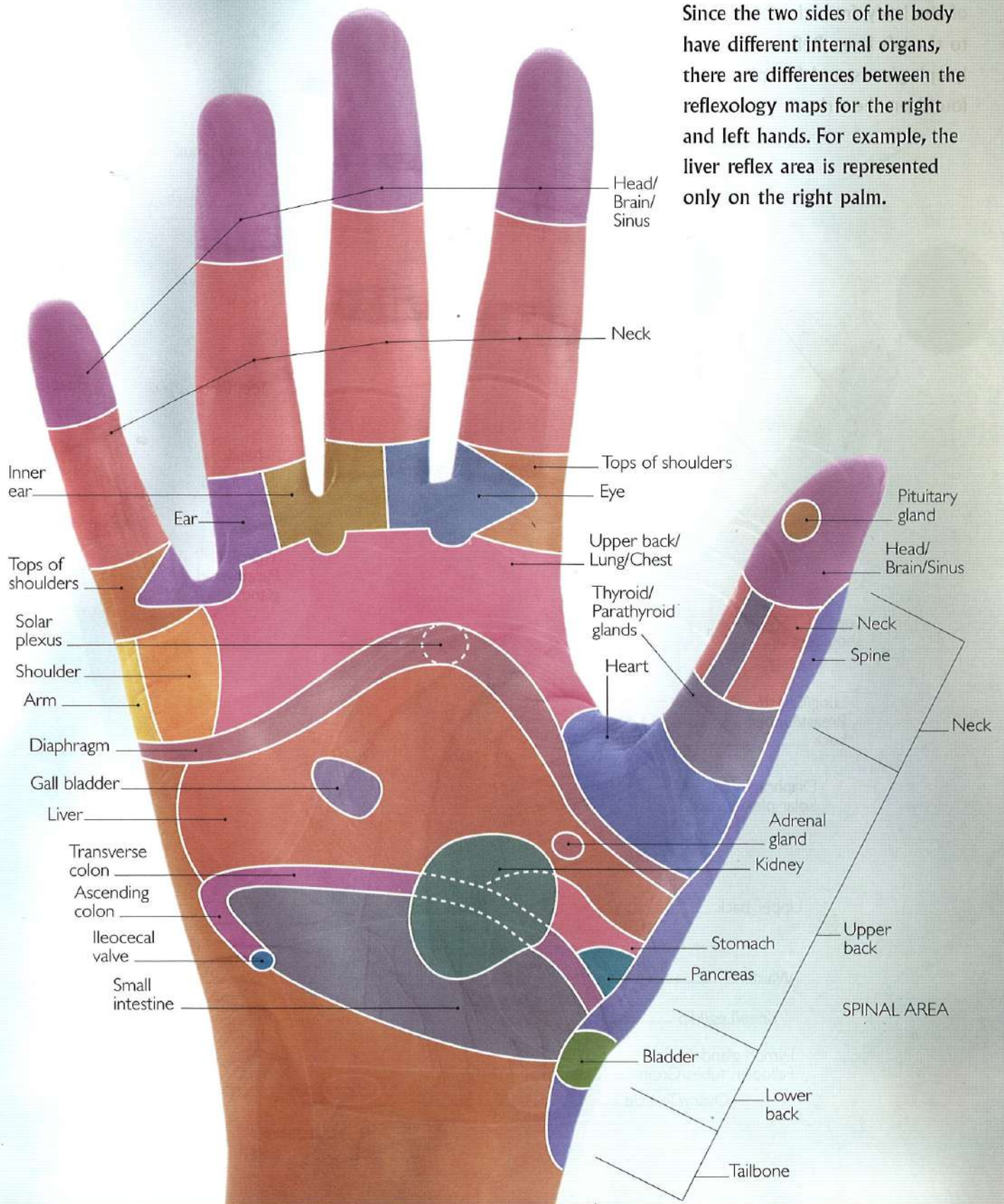
Reflex areas on the left palm correspond to the left side of the body: head and neck areas on the fingers, tailbone near the wrist. The shoulder reflex is on the outside and the spine reflex on the inside.





## Right palm

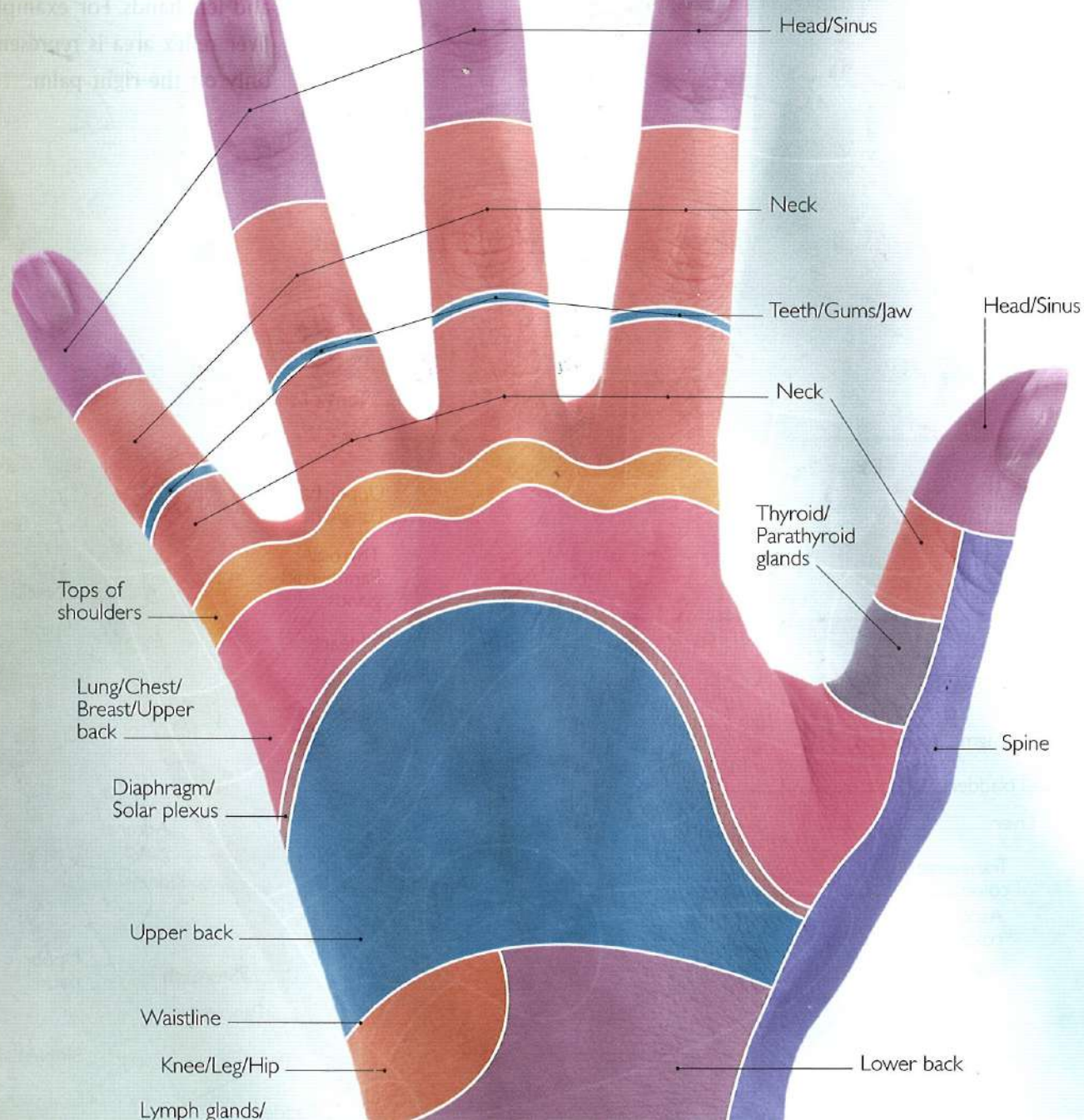
Reflex areas on the right palm mirror the right side of the body. Since the two sides of the body have different internal organs, there are differences between the reflexology maps for the right and left hands. For example, the liver reflex area is represented only on the right palm.





## Top of left hand

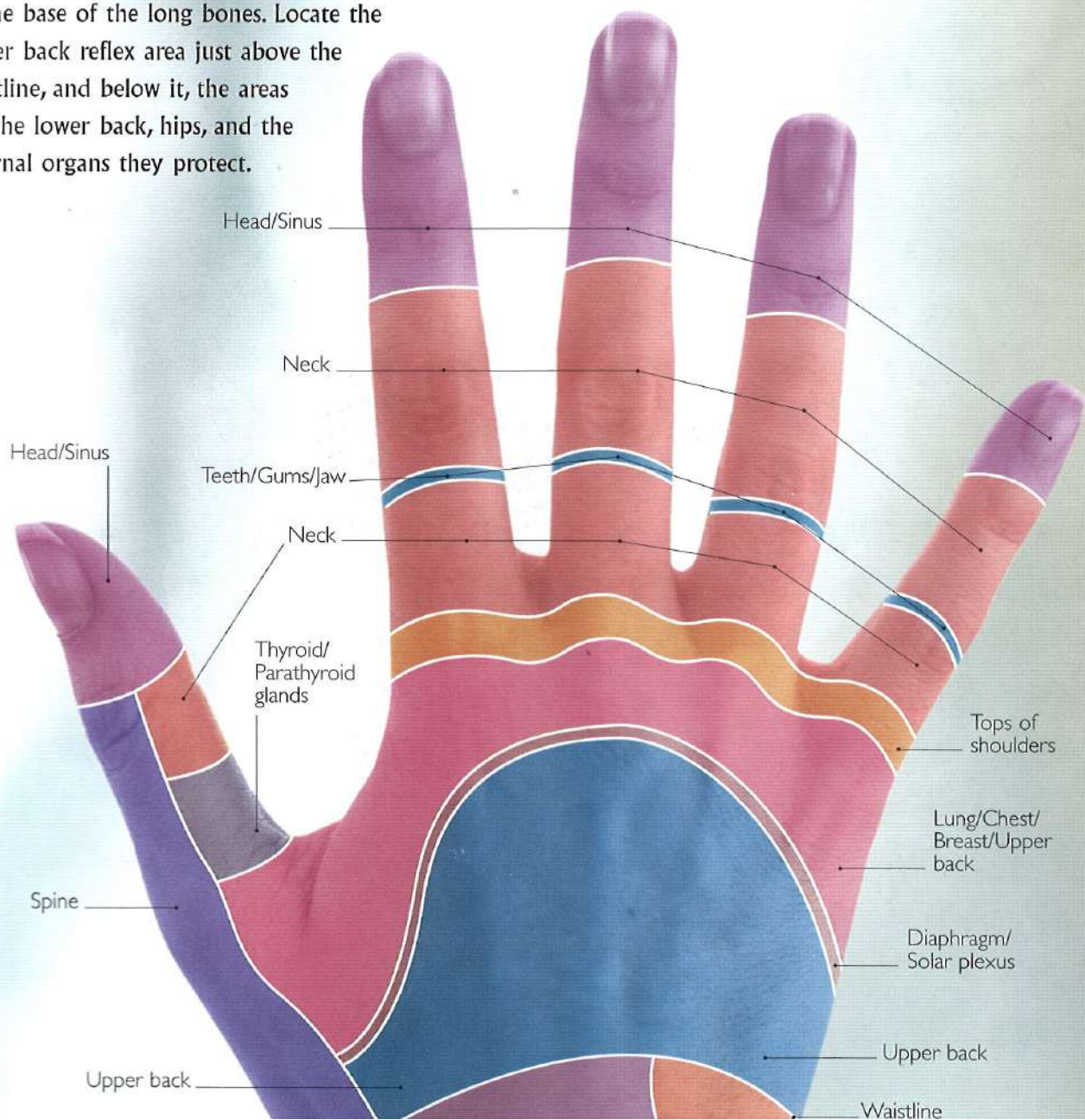
The top of the left hand includes a series of banded reflex areas that relate to the left side of the body, from the left side of the head to the left knee. Reflex areas for the groin, lymph glands, and fallopian tubes can be found on the wrist.





## Top of right hand

The reflex areas on the right hand correspond to the body's right side. The "waistline" can be found at the base of the long bones. Locate the upper back reflex area just above the waistline, and below it, the areas for the lower back, hips, and the internal organs they protect.





## Top of right hand

The reflex areas on the right hand correspond to the body's right side. The "waistline" can be found at the base of the long bones. Locate the upper back reflex area just above the waistline and below the area for the lower back, hips, and the internal organs they protect.

