

# Using your feet in Thai massage

## Ralf Marzen

Except for the head and face, all other parts of the body and all the Thai sen lines can be worked very comfortably and effectively with the feet. Incorporating the use of your feet as a therapist has the tremendous advantage of stronger grounding. If you have ever felt light-headed or drained after your treatments, integrating more foot techniques into your practice could be very helpful for you.

When you use your feet in Thai yoga massage, the release of subtle energetic tensions, - both your own and those of your clients - becomes easier, and you generally feel more centered during and after the session. For your client, receiving work with the feet also has a very solid and grounding quality, which allows for deep relaxation. The following exercises feature a variety of techniques using the feet in supine position.

### Foot Walk

Use the ball and the arch of your foot to apply pressure on the instep of the client's foot. *Sen sumana* can be worked particularly well from this angle.



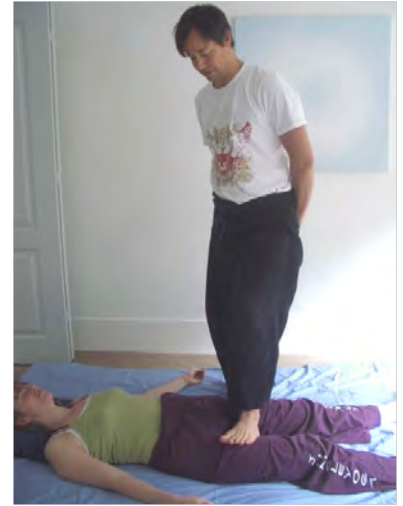
### Lower Leg Walk

Press with the ball of your foot on the inside of the calf (lines 1 and 2). Keep the heel of your foot grounded if possible. Your standing foot is at a 90 degree angle to the working foot.

### Upper Leg Walk and Bloodstop

With the entire arch of the foot, work the inside thigh (lines 1, 2 and 3). Be mindful of your pressure as the area close to the knee can be very sensitive.

Then place your foot just below the groin and hold the pressure for 20 seconds for a bloodstop.



### Outer Leg Line Work

Sit down facing the outside of the client's leg. Place the client's achilles tendon on top of your front ankle and fix it there. Now work *sen kalathari* (2<sup>nd</sup> outside line) on the calf with your heel.

Then, let the back of their calf rest on top of your foot. Use the arch of your other foot to work the 2<sup>nd</sup> outside line on the thigh. On the outside thigh, you can also feel for tight spots and do more intense work. Straighten your leg to apply pressure and slowly turn your foot out so that you're pressing in with the outer edge of your foot. Hold for a while and release.



### Hip Adductor Work

With the client's foot still fixed on top of yours, move up and bring the client's leg with you until the inner leg is in a stretched position. Work the side of the hip with your heel and arch while pulling the client's leg a little higher towards you with your other leg.

### **Lateral Abdominal Work**

With the outer edge of your foot, sink into the space between the ribcage and the hip bone on the side of the client's body. Hold for some time.

Then start lifting up the hips with the toes of your other foot. Release your upper foot and bring the client's hips higher with the toes of both of your feet. Hold for some more time.



### **Psoas Work**

Place the outer edge of your lower foot diagonally over the client's belly. Place the outer edge of your other foot on top for more weight and hold for some time.



### **Side Stretch**

Fold the client's leg into tree pose with the sole of her foot against her opposite knee. Place her hand on her head just above the ear. Then work the thigh with your lower foot and the arm with your upper foot to create a stretch along the side of her body.

## Shoulder Work

Sit above the client's head. First use your heels to press on the sub-clavicle line. Your pressure goes down and slightly away from yourself.

Then work the area of the upper trapezius muscle with the arches of your feet and heels.

Lastly, lift the client's head up and let your feet slide under their upper back. You will have the top of your feet between the client's spine and shoulder blades. Still holding the client's head in your hands, lift your feet (your heels stay on the ground) for a chest opening.

