



NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Issue 3
March, 2007

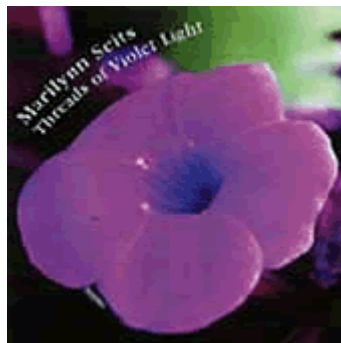
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What's happening in the Store!

This month I'm highlighting the wonderful **Threads of Violet Light** CD by Marilyn Seits.

I use this CD for my clients and I'm also using it for the workshop I teach (Foot Massage based on the Principles of Reflexology!). Workshops are a great way to educate people about reflexology, and at the same time makes massaging someone's feet more interesting to them when they can picture the various body parts on the foot. I make it clear that they will not be a reflexologist after this workshop, but they will be a darn good 'foot rubber' for their spouse, family and friends. When we get to the "hands on" portion, people say "between the music and having someone work on my feet, I could just fall asleep".

I also bring this CD along when I'm doing demos at Health Fairs, etc. Sometimes I think that just letting people sit in my LaFuma chair, listening to the music is enough!! They ooooooh and aaaaah! I could go get a cup of coffee ☺



THREADS OF VIOLET LIGHT

Soft piano passages are accompanied by strings, flute and ambient pan sounds to create a beautiful, serene and relaxing listening experience. This music was written in musical keys of A & B which represent the third eye and crown chakras. Opening the crown chakra at the top of the head can help us to access our natural intuitive sense which sometimes gets drowned out in the noisy stress of daily life. 64+ minutes of continuous music with no breaks between tracks and no sudden changes of pace or mood. These ambient instrumental sounds will put your client in a state of relaxing bliss!

You can listen to a sample of this CD on the Store site www.myreflexologystore.com . Price \$14.98



Metatarsalgia and Morton's Neuroma

I had a person ask me if Reflexology could help neuroma. The answer is "Yes". Reflexology does no harm when done by a professional. I also have a client with neuroma who asked me for some recommendations on additional care. I decided to do some research on the web and include here various excerpts from different resources that I thought were helpful. I hope you'll find them helpful too.

Reflexology can help as an integrative care therapy. By relaxing the foot you can help with pressure and inflammation, and probably in other ways you'll never know. (aaah, the miracles of Reflexology! You can **gently** work around the metatarsal heads, moving them up and down. Never cause pain of any significance. In addition, you should suggest that their foot be checked out medically so they know what they're dealing with. You can give them a copy of this article which includes some useful information and some additional options to try.

Metatarsalgia is an inflammatory condition of the metatarsal heads of the foot while **Morton's Neuroma** is a fibrosis around the neurovascular bundle of the nerves that supply the toes. Both cause pain in the forefoot region, but they have different clinical presentations.

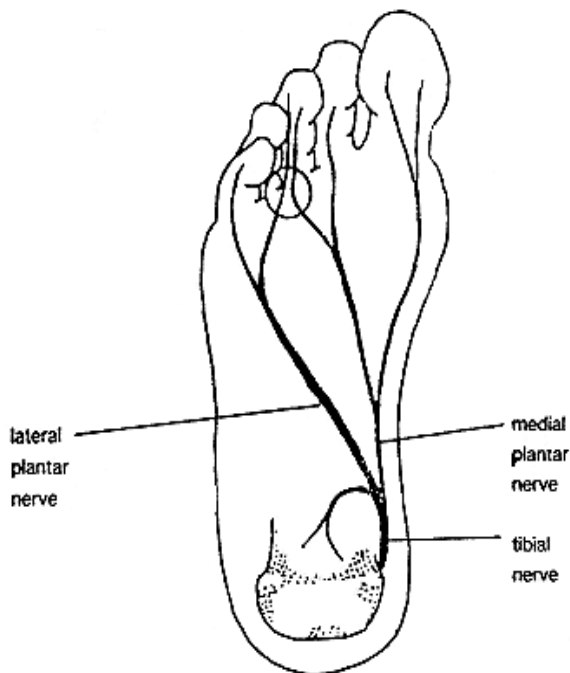


Figure 1. Branches of the tibial nerve. Note the third interspace receives branches from both the medial and lateral plantar nerves (circle).

With **Metatarsalgia**, you get a bruised feeling in the ball of the foot. The pain is usually located right about where a 'knuckle' of the foot would be located, on the underside of the foot but it may also radiate over the foot and sometimes up the calf.

Morton's Neuroma, on the other hand, typically presents as pain or numbness on the bottom of the middle -to- outside of the forefoot which often radiates into the 3rd and 4th toe. This area is outlined in the diagram at the right. The pain can be burning, sharp and agonizing, intermittent or constant. A Neuroma is a swelling in a nerve caused by the laying down of fibrous tissue in response to long-standing irritation. Neuroma formation is attributable to compression of the interdigital (between the toe) nerve against the intermetatarsophalangeal bursa.

Metatarsalgia is most often a result of faulty distribution of weight on the forefoot. Normally when walking, weight is transferred from the heel to the outside of the foot and then we finish with the weight on the inside as we 'toe-off' at the end of each step. During toe-off, most of the weight is carried by the big toe. When standing, the first metatarsal (at the big toe) carries 2/6 of the body weight and each of the others carries 1/6. If increased weight is habitually carried on the lateral metatarsals, this can cause micro trauma in the joint capsule and around the head of that particular metatarsal and thereby lead to injury.

Normally, the little muscles that run between the bones of the feet contract during the final phase of each step to prevent the forefoot from splaying and the toes from curling. If these little intrinsic muscles don't do their job, the forefoot spreads and the toes curl which causes the metatarsal heads to be forced down and they contact the ground harder and this can lead to injury.

As you can probably guess, onset is usually gradual. However, it may arise suddenly if there is trauma to the area or if new shoes are involved. Sudden trauma might include landing hard on the ball of the foot while barefoot or while wearing non-cushioned shoes or stepping on a stone while running.

Symptoms include:

- Pain in the area of the ball of the forefoot, often a dull ache, much like a bruise
- If one bends the toes upwards and applies pressure over the 'knuckles' of the foot, the pain can often be localized to one metatarsal head.
- Pain is worse with walking barefoot, especially on hard surfaces like concrete or ceramic tile
- Pain often forces a person to walk on the outside of the foot in an effort to avoid stepping on the ball of the foot.

Most cases should respond to conservative care. In fact, many times all that is needed is some home treatment. Start with **ice** on the ball of the foot. This will help to decrease the inflammation in the joint. (Water can be frozen in a paper cup and then peel the cup back as you use the ice) If you pronate excessively, get a good motion control shoe. If you are replacing your shoes, consider a pair that offer some form of forefoot cushioning. If you wear high heels, quit! All that extra force on the ball of your foot may be at the root of the problem.

Try creating a little forefoot pad that will help protect the metatarsals. It doesn't take much padding to notice a difference. Buy some 'moleskin' which is a thick adhesive type bandage that people use to prevent blisters. Cut a circle about the size of a quarter or a bit larger (an inch across, roughly) and stick that to the forefoot in the middle of the ball of the foot. It doesn't have to be where the sore 'knuckle' sits - we're just trying to build that arch up a bit. Then take a slightly larger piece of moleskin, cut into a circle, and stick it over top so there is a double layer. Try for a couple days and see if there's improvement. If so, continue for a week or two before trying to go without.

It may be necessary to look into orthotics to correct a biomechanical problem of the foot.

A **neuroma** is a thickening of the nerve that arises from irritation of the nerve resulting in inflammation of the nerve sheath, or covering of the nerve and the formation of scar tissue around the nerve. This is a benign condition that involves the small nerves that run between the metatarsal bones in the ball the foot. The most common nerve to develop this condition is the nerve supplying the third and fourth toes. This is called a **Morton's neuroma**. It can also involve the nerves that supply the other digits as well. It usually develops when tight, poorly fitting shoes, often those with high-heels, cause the third and fourth metatarsal bones to pinch together compressing an underlying nerve. Injury, arthritis, or abnormal bone structures may also cause this condition.

Symptoms Include:

- tingling, burning, or numbness around the third and fourth toe
- a feeling that there is a lump in the ball of the foot
- symptoms begin periodically and progress in intensity and frequency.
- exacerbated by walking on hard surfaces or wearing high heels or tight shoes

Pain from Morton's neuroma can be reduced by taking off the shoe and **massaging** the area. Roomier shoes, pads of various sorts, and cortisone injections (try other things first) in the painful area are also helpful in relieving pain. Daily footbaths, cold whirlpool and ultrasound can help decrease inflammation and pain. It is important to have the mechanics of the feet addressed and any lack of movement in the joints of the foot should be addressed and corrected. A metatarsal pad, placed on the heel-side of metatarsal heads, can

often alleviate the pain. Orthotics can also be helpful. Surgical treatment is carried out when conservative measures fail and involves resection of the enlarged section of the nerve. Surgery is usually successful and the patient can walk immediately afterward, however, sometimes the nerve tissue may regrow and form another neuroma.

***footbath:** Epsom Salt softens the skin, soothes aches, reduces swelling, inflammations, exfoliates the skin, removes odors, draws toxins from the body, sedates the nervous system, relaxes the muscles, provides relief from joint soreness and arthritic pain, and is a natural emollient. Unlike other salts, it does not leave the skin feeling dry. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of Epsom Salt to a large basin or footbath of warm (not hot) water. Essential oils, such as Lavender or Rosemary, may be added to enhance relaxation and medicinal effects.

Nancy Bartlett, NBCR

My net worth is measured by the number of lives I've touched.

By Constance A. DeFlich

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