



## **Sleep for Longer Life**



## Foot Massage for Better Sleep

Hello, Everyone!

Meredith Averill, here to welcome you with pleasure to **Foot Massage for Better Sleep** – the 3<sup>rd</sup> class of *THE CR WAY TO SLEEP FOR LONGER LIFE* mini-course!

Now, I don't look like the familiar image above of satisfying sleep, but I have a long history of sleeping well and of enjoying massage.

It's a history of pleasure & nurturing, rather professional massage for health effects. That's not **so** bad, though: Pleasure is a very **good** thing. I should ask my sister if she remembers how old we were when we started giving each other back rubs –fairly young. So by extension, foot massage seems to me a completely natural, healthy practice for relaxation.

Today's session uses a very "**your-hands-on**" approach, so I'm hoping that you are sitting in a stable chair.



This **warm foot bath** picture may remind you of Bernardo LaPallo’s enthusiasm for a pre-bedtime warm foot bath to improve his sleep.

Here, you see a woman, settled in for **her** foot bath. Besides the basin of water, she also has



An insulated container of warm water  
A blanket  
The book that she’s currently reading

The other image shows feet getting ready to take the dive. Whether you use a sink, a tub, or a movable basin – you can get the same terrific effects from a warm foot bath.



In fact, a great combo is a foot massage – following a warm foot bath. Either one alone will improve your sleep or that of your loved one. So, you can imagine what a great **pair** of practices they are for enhancing the effects of your down-time.

In **Foot Massage for Relaxation and Sleep**, we pay most attention to

Stretching the toes

and

Massaging the soles

An easy start for sole massage is shown to the right.

Put a tennis or golf ball on the floor and then rub the sole of your foot over it.

Because a tennis ball is firm but not hard, we prefer it to a golf ball.



You can get quite skilled at massaging the various parts of the soles of your feet this way.

If you have read much about foot reflexology, you've seen a foot chart something like the one here.



As you massage the various parts of your foot, your whole body will relax, and the pressure **may** have a special effect on the organ(s) whose reflexology meridians end where you are massaging.

Let's move to **stretching** the toes. I'm sorry about this term: It sounds so heartless, but *uncramp* isn't a recognized word in English. What we know is that, **first**, we want to give our toes lots of room in our shoes. My own story of discovering this is that I went to podiatrist several times to have interdigital corns removed (that's corns between the toes) to learn that I all I needed to do, instead, was to wear shoes of the right size and shape. And, **second**, we want to loosen the joints of our toes – shorthand for that is *stretching the toes*.

Here we go – into self foot massage! Take a look at the picture to the right:

When you are seated, cross your right leg or the ankle of your right foot onto the knee or thigh of your left leg.



- Grasp your big toe with your LEFT hand. You will pull away gently from your foot as you –
- At the same time, place the index finger of your right hand on the toe knuckle at the base of your toe where it joins your foot: Feel for the space between the two bones that form the knuckle. Increasing this space loosens and releases the joint. So: It's pulling gently with your left hand while rubbing your knuckle with your right forefinger that can be expected to relax your toe.

Are you doing it?

Does it feel okay?

Does it feel better than okay?

Move to your 2<sup>nd</sup> toe.

- Grasp it with your LEFT hand and pull gently away from your foot.

- With the forefinger of your right hand, rub that toe knuckle at the base where it joins your foot. Again, feel for the space between the two bones that form the knuckle. Increasing that space loosens and releases the joint. Relaxation of your toe is likely.

Continue with your 3<sup>rd</sup> toe. As before –

- Grasp it with your LEFT hand and pull gently away from your foot.
- Then place the forefinger of your right hand & at the base where the toe joins your foot rub your toe knuckle. Feel for that space between the two bones of the knuckle. Rub into that space to increase it – loosening & releasing the joint, and relaxing your toe.

Can you feel a difference?

Now move to the next-to-the-last toe on your right foot.

- Grasp it, as you have been, with your LEFT hand and pull gently away from your foot.
- Then with your RIGHT hand index-finger, rub your toe knuckle at the base where that toe joins your foot. Feel for the space between the two bones of the knuckle. Rub that knuckle to increase the space, loosening & releasing the joint **and** relaxing your toe.

Move to your little toe.

- Hold it with your LEFT hand and pull gently away from your foot.
- Then with your forefinger, find your toe knuckle at the toe's base, and feel for that space between the two bones of the knuckle. Rub your knuckle to increase the space – loosening, releasing, and relaxing the joint.

A nice way to finish this part of the exercise is to place the index finger of your left hand under the toes of the foot and bend them over it, holding them with your right hand for a few seconds and release. The next thing to do, of course, is your other foot, but you've probably heard *toe knuckle* and *releasing the joint* as many times as you want to right now. So you can practice on your own and listen to the recording for review.

Are your toes feeling happy?!



Now: Let's attend to your soles. And give some attention to your other foot!

This time, when you are seated, put the outer ankle of your **left** foot on the knee or thigh of your right leg.

- Use your left hand to stabilize your foot by grasping the top of it at the ankle with the palm of your hand, wrapping your fingers and thumb around it.
- Point with the index-finger **knuckle** of your right hand and apply some pressure as you run down your foot from your big toe's base to the heel – and back up to the toe.



- Then do the same thing, starting at the base of your 2<sup>nd</sup> toe, press your index-finger **knuckle** down your sole to the heel – and back up to the toe.
- Move to your middle toe – Starting at the base of your 3<sup>rd</sup> toe, run your forefinger **knuckle** down the sole of your foot to the heel – and back up to the toe.
- This time start at the base of your 4<sup>th</sup> toe – and move down the sole to your heel and back up to the toe.
- And then, of course, start at the base of your little toe and run down to your heel, then back up to the toe.
- You can do this 10 times: once for each toe, starting with the big toe & then moving to the next toe and so on across the foot and then back again from the little toe.



Now, please repeat this routine but change it up by using the technique shown in this picture.

This photo does not show self massage, but you can see how to position your hand:

Point the knuckles of all four fingers of your right hand at once, as you see.



- Run your knuckles **from your big toe's base** to the heel and back up.
- Now try it on your 2<sup>nd</sup> toe – all the way to the heel and back.
- Move over to your 3<sup>rd</sup> toe – press down to the heel and back up.
- Start this time at your 4<sup>th</sup> toe: press in, run your knuckles down to your heel & back up to your toe.
- And once more – starting at your little toe: press down to your heel and back.

**Can you feel the stimulation and release?**

- You can do this 10 times, too: Starting with the big toe – massaging down and up, then moving to your next toe to massage down and up, and so on across your foot. Then move back across from the little toe.

Here's another version:

Point the knuckles of all four fingers of your right hand at once and this time turn your hand 90° from where it was, placing your knuckles *across* the sole of your foot at the base of your toes. Run them down to your heel and back up. Repeat this ten times.

If you taking care of the soles of your feet like this is new to you and you like it, wait until you pay special attention to your heels!

I hope you find this photo aesthetically pleasing. It does show a woman, grasping her heel, but it shows the left hand holding the left heel. You can do it this way, but I find it easier to cross the ankle, resting it on my opposite knee and to hold the heel in my opposite hand. Do this and then you “knead” your heel, as you would knead homemade bread – applying pressure with your fingers, thumb, and even palm. I find the sensation exquisite. Paul may not use this word, but he comments positively on the sensation.



To put a finishing touch on this part of the exercise open your right hand, place it against the sole of your foot, with your wrist at your heel and move slowly upward toward your toes and back down, in a good-night caress.

This “**foot massage for better sleep**” is short and sweet. Even so, the more it becomes part of your Relaxation Ritual, the more likely you will be to get drowsy before the end of your massage session.

Happy massaging and happy, healthy sleeping!



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