



## Lymphatic Massage Handout

Lymphatic drainage massage is a form of gentle massage that encourages the movement of lymph fluids around the body. The fluid in the lymphatic system helps remove waste and toxins from the bodily tissues. Some health conditions can cause lymph fluid to build up. Lymphatic drainage massages can benefit people with lymphedema, fibromyalgia, and other conditions.

People should not have a lymphatic massage if they have congestive heart failure, blood clots, kidney problems, infections, or circulation problems.

People can perform most of these exercises either standing, sitting, or lying down, as long as they are comfortable.

### Keep the following tips in mind during a lymphatic massage:

- These massage movements should affect only the skin, so use gentle pressure and do not press hard enough to feel the muscles.
- Keep the hands relaxed.
- Do not massage swollen or infected areas.
- Do not massage areas of the body that have undergone treatment for cancer.
- Drink extra fluids, ideally 2 to 4 glasses of water, after each massage to help flush the body.

### How to prepare

The following methods will stimulate the lymphatic system and prepare the lymph nodes to bring in more fluid before a lymphatic massage.

#### 1. Lymphatic breathing

Deep breathing acts like a pump that helps move fluid through the vessels and lymph nodes. Follow the steps below: Place both hands on the stomach. Inhale through the nose, expanding the stomach and keeping the shoulders still. Slowly exhale through the mouth. Rest between breaths.

#### 2. Prepare the front of the neck

Place the index and middle fingers of each hand on either side of the neck, slightly above the collarbone. Stretch the skin by gently sliding the fingers inward toward the middle of the collarbone.

#### 3. Prepare the side of the neck

Place the palm of each hand on either side of the neck below the ears. Slowly move both hands down and back.

#### 4. Prepare the back of the neck

---

**Dr. Suzanne McMurry, Naturopathic Oncology Specialist**

em: [info@naturopathiccancertreatment.com](mailto:info@naturopathiccancertreatment.com)

web: [www.naturopathiccancertreatment.com](http://www.naturopathiccancertreatment.com)

P:(206)785-3538

F:(855) 728-4808

Place the palms of the hands on the back of the neck near the hairline. Gently slide the hands together down the neck toward the spine.

#### **5. Prepare under the arms**

Prepare the lymph nodes under the arms to help them accept lymph fluid from other areas of the body. Do not perform this movement in areas that doctors have treated for cancer. Follow these steps:

Cup the palm under the armpit. Gently pump the palm upward and toward the body. Repeat on the other arm.

#### **6. Prepare behind the knees:**

Place both hands behind the knee, so the fingers point toward each other. Pump the back of the knee by gently pressing the hands into the back of the knee and rolling them upward. Repeat on the other knee.

---

### **Upper body massage techniques**

Use the following techniques to help drain lymph fluid from the chest, shoulder, and upper arm.

#### **To massage the chest:**

Place the palm flat on the opposite side of the chest, slightly above the breast. Move the hand up the chest and over the collarbone. Continue up the neck until the skin covering the chest feels tight, then release.

#### **To massage the shoulder:**

Rest the arm on a table or armrest. Place the other hand on the shoulder of the resting arm. Move the hand over the back of the shoulder and toward the neck.

#### **To massage the upper arm:**

Rest the arm on a table or armrest. Place the middle two fingers of the other hand on the inside of the upper arm below the shoulder. Gently slide the fingers toward the outside of the upper arm. Wrap the hand around the outside of the upper arm. Gently move the hand back toward the inside of the arm.

#### **To massage the full arm:**

Begin at the shoulder. Use the palm to stretch the skin upward. Move the hand down to the upper arm and stretch the skin up toward the shoulder. Continue down the arm always moving the skin upward. Stop at the wrist.

#### **To massage the fingers:**

---

**Dr. Suzanne McMurry, Naturopathic Oncology Specialist**

em: [info@naturopathiccancertreatment.com](mailto:info@naturopathiccancertreatment.com)

web: [www.naturopathiccancertreatment.com](http://www.naturopathiccancertreatment.com)

P:(206)785-3538

F:(855) 728-4808

Start at the base of the swollen finger close to the palm. Use the index finger and thumb to stretch the skin on the finger toward the hand. Continue this motion over the entire finger. Remember to direct fluid toward the hand.

---

### **Lower body massage techniques**

Start the massage at the top of the leg and work down toward the foot. Use a pillow or a stool for support.

#### **To massage the upper leg:**

Start at the top of the leg. Put one hand on the inside of the opposite thigh near the groin and place the other hand on the buttock. Gently stretch the skin by moving the hand on the inside of the thigh toward the outside of the thigh and up. Move the hands further down the leg and repeat the stretching movement above. Stop above the knee.

#### **To massage the lower leg:**

Start right below the knee. Place one hand on the shin and the other hand on the back of the calf. Gently stretch the skin upward. Continue this motion, working down toward the ankle and the top of the foot. Always use upward strokes.

#### **To massage the toes:**

Use the thumb and index finger to guide fluid from the toes toward the foot. It is vital to always end the massage by drinking extra fluids.

**Resource:** How to Perform a Lymphatic Drainage Massage. Medical News Today. February 2019.