

The Benefits of Lymphatic Massage

Fuel Wellness with a Healthy Lymph System

Cathy Ulrich

Six months after hip replacement surgery, Larry was learning to walk again and life was returning to normal. But one thing still puzzled him. When he stood for any length of time, his left ankle would swell, and when the inflammation was at its worst, his right ankle would also swell.

"I can understand why my left leg is swollen," he says. "But why would my right leg swell? I didn't have surgery there. And why am I getting swelling six months after the surgery? Shouldn't it be better by now?" The answer is that although Larry's surgery had occurred on the opposite side, the right leg would swell when the inflammation became too much for the left side to handle.

from the tissues, but few understand there is another equally vital system of vessels that removes cell wastes, proteins, excess fluid, viruses, and bacteria. The lymph system picks up fluids and waste products from the spaces between the cells and then filters and cleans them.

Like the roots of a tree, the lymph system starts as tiny vessels--only a single-cell wide--that eventually branch into larger and larger tubes that carry these fluids back to the blood stream. This network of delicate vessels and lymph nodes is the primary structure of the immune system. The lymph nodes act as check points along the pathways of the vessels. They filter the fluid (called lymph) and serve as the home for

*Your eyes are
your windows
to the world!*

-Unknown



Athletes, post-op patients, and those feeling over-tired can benefit from lymphatic massage.

Fortunately, lymphatic massage can help address Larry's problems. This special type of bodywork, while very gentle and seemingly superficial, helps to restore function to the lymph system and balance the body.

The Lymph System

Most people are familiar with the body's vessel system that carries blood to and

lymphocytes--little Pac Man-like cells that attack and destroy foreign bacteria and viruses and even abnormal cells, like cancer cells.

When the lymph system works well, we feel healthy and have a strong defense against illness. When it's sluggish or

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blocked--say after surgery or an injury--we can have swelling, feel tired, and be more susceptible to colds and infections.

Lymphatic Massage

A customized form of bodywork, lymphatic massage may help the lymph system do its job better. By understanding the anatomy and function of this delicate system, your massage therapist can assist your body in clearing sluggish tissues of waste and swelling.

Though lymph vessels are found throughout the body, most of them--about 70 percent--are located just below the skin. These fragile vessels work to pick up fluids between the cell spaces when gentle pressure is applied to them from increased fluid build-up, muscle contractions, or the pressure of a therapist's hands. By using very light pressures in a rhythmic, circular motion, a massage therapist can stimulate the lymph system to work more efficiently and help it move the lymph fluids back to the heart.

Furthermore, by freeing vessel pathways, lymphatic massage can help retrain the lymph system to work better for more long-term health benefits.

Massage therapists versed in lymphatic drainage therapy, an advanced form of lymphatic massage, can identify the rhythm, direction, and quality of the lymphatic flow and remap drainage pathways.

Who Should Get It?

Lymph massage can benefit just about everyone. If you're feeling tired and low on energy, or if you've been sick and feeling like your body is fighting to get back on track, lymph massage would likely serve you well.

In addition, athletes, surgical patients, fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue sufferers, as well as those wanting a fresh look may want to consider lymphatic massage. Here's why.

After a sports injury or surgery, lymph vessels can become overwhelmed with the demand placed on them. When tissues are swollen, deep tissue techniques may actually cause damage to

the lymph vessels and surrounding structures. Lymphatic massage is often the treatment of choice, because it helps the body remove proteins and waste products from the affected area and reduce the swelling. This helps reduce pressure on cells and allows them to reproduce faster to heal the body.

Surgical procedures involving lymph node removal--such as breast cancer surgery--can cause limbs to swell. Severe limb swelling needs the attention of a medical team, but in milder cases, lymphatic massage alone may be enough to prevent or even treat the swelling. It's important that your doctor be involved in your care. Let your doctor know you'd like to see a massage therapist and make sure you have medical approval.

Lymph massage can also be part of a care program for fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome. Because it's so gentle,

it is well tolerated by these patients, who are often experiencing sore trigger points throughout the body. And by encouraging lymph flow and removing waste products, this gentle form of bodywork can help restore immune function and improve vitality.

Estheticians are trained in a very specific form of lymphatic massage. When you get a facial, your esthetician will gently massage your face to help improve lymph flow. When lymph is moving freely in the face, you'll have clearer, healthier skin without a buildup of toxins and fluids.

So, if you're feeling a bit sluggish, experiencing mild to moderate swelling, recovering from a sports injury, or interested in optimizing your lymph system for stronger immunity, ask your massage therapist about lymphatic massage. It can have a powerful impact



Lymphatic massage can help increase immunity and get you back on your feet after an illness.

A Walking Workout

Have Fun While Burning More Calories

Imagine the lone hiker, backpack laden with sleeping bag and bedroll, wielding a well-worn walking stick as she climbs the side of a snow-covered mountain. For centuries, trekkers have used walking sticks, partly as a defense against attacking wildlife, partly to aid in balance, and partly as support on long, arduous climbs. But in recent years, many hikers have replaced the single wooden walking stick with hiking poles.

Held in both hands and used to distribute weight more evenly through the four limbs, wilderness hikers have found poles invaluable for safety, efficiency, and comfort on long hikes. What wilderness hikers have known for some time now is that walking poles are a great way to relieve pressure on knees, ankles, and the back. They encourage better posture and provide a total body workout by engaging the upper body.

Now, hiking poles are showing up in urban areas as fitness walkers discover the benefits they provide. Nordic walking--similar in technique to cross-

country skiing--is a great way to get a whole body workout, increase oxygen consumption, and burn more calories than regular walking or even speed walking. This total body workout burns 40 percent more calories and consumes 25 percent more oxygen. Poles can be purchased at most outdoor sporting stores, along with rubber tips for use on paved paths.

TECHNIQUE

Adjust your poles to approximately 70 percent of your height and loosely secure the straps around your wrists. Hold the poles at an angle behind you so they propel you forward with a slight bend at the elbow. Use an opposite hand-and-heel motion as you walk--right heel strikes as left pole tip contacts the ground. And you're on your way! Don't be shy with your poles. Remember: You're burning 40 percent more calories.

For more information, visit www.walking.about.com/od/nordicwalking/index.htm.



Add walking poles, and burn more calories.

Flax Facts

Reap the Health Benefits of This Little Seed

Flaxseed, the humble little brown seed with a nutty flavor, is a powerhouse in the nutrition world. It's able to reduce blood pressure, decrease risk of heart attacks and stroke, improve skin quality, help control blood sugar levels, reduce cholesterol, and even prevent breast and colon cancer--all in a single seed!

But what makes flax so powerful? Flaxseed contains high concentrations of alpha linoleic acid, a form of omega-3 fatty acids, which serve as the basic building blocks of cell walls. Additionally, flax is high in lignans, powerful antioxidants known for alleviating menopausal symptoms and fighting breast cancer. There are three forms of flaxseed, making it easy to incorporate into your diet.

FLAX OIL

While available in capsule form to be taken as a supplement, flax oil is best consumed as a food to get the most benefits from it. Many nutritionists often recommend purchasing the oil in small quantities, storing it in the refrigerator, and consuming a daily intake of two tablespoons. You can add a tablespoon to your morning smoothie or substitute flax oil in the vinaigrette dressing for your salad.

Flax oil breaks down to trans fats when heated, so it should never be used in cooking. While lower in lignans than other forms of flax, the oil is sometimes processed to preserve the lignans. Check the label for details.

FLAXSEEDS

Whole seeds are sure to have all the nutritional benefits of flax. Simply add these to your granola or salads for a nutty flavor. If a little tough on the teeth, grind them in a coffee grinder and sprinkle on foods. One note: raw, whole flaxseeds contain chemicals that can affect thyroid function. To get around this, simply toast the seeds in the oven for twenty minutes at 250 degrees, or limit your consumption of raw seeds to three to four tablespoons a day.

FLAX MEAL

Ground flax meal is another option to get the powerful nutritional value of flax. Add a tablespoon of it to your smoothies for extra fiber, or stir it into your oatmeal in the morning.

*Forget not that
the earth
delights to feel
your bare feet
and the winds
long to play with
your hair.*

- Kahlil Gibran

1. April 2009 Angels Touch Massage is having a MASSAGE-A-THON to raise money for Laurie&3Children with Muscular Dystrophy. Can you imagine having 3 of your four children with this terrible disease? We are dedicating 50% plus Gratuity of massages from April 7th to 11th to Laurie&3children. For the rest of April 25% plus gratuity of massages to Laurie &3Children. So far \$188 is ready for her.

A POEM 4 Laurie:

Laurie is like a light to the whole world.

No matter how tied in knots, she keeps her smile.

She is a sweet inspiration to us all!

It takes one foot in front of the other..

Momentum builds up after a while!.....:)

Request a Kauai Wild Honey Exotic Massage, a Hawaiian Lomi Lomi, a Shiatsu (Japanese form), a Thai, Deep Tissue, or Swedish Massage. Or ask for a body Wrap for detoxification, which is good for Spring time.

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