

Clinical Tips for Massage

November 2016 Member, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

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

How you live today is how you live your life.

-Tara Brach



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

Continued on page 2

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In this Issue

**The Benefits of Lymphatic Massage
On the Rocks**
Good News About Ginger

Continued from page 1

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.

On the Rocks

Stone Massage Provides Tension Relief and Grounding

It's a practice as old as time, but one that has been recently rediscovered. LaStone Massage Therapy, generically known as hot stone massage, is the updated version of a technique employed by Native Americans, using gently warmed rocks to massage the body. The technique provides a deeply relaxing, healing, detoxifying, and, some say, spiritual experience.

Typically, the stones are smooth, black rounds of basalt in varying sizes heated in water to temperatures between 125 and 140 degrees. Warm stones encourage the exchange of blood and lymph and provide soothing heat for deep-tissue work. Cold stones are also used to aide with inflammation, moving blood out of the area, and balancing male/female energies. The alternating heat and cold of thermotherapy brings the entire body into the healing process, with a rapid exchange of blood and oxygen and alternating rise and fall of respiration rate as the body seeks homeostasis.

During treatment hot stones are placed on energy pathways. Some are covered with a towel and positioned to apply steady warmth and pressure along the spine and neck. Others are placed between fingers and toes and on the stomach and forehead -- key spots where energy flow can get blocked. Still others are used almost as an extension of the practitioner's hands to help go deeper into resistant muscle tissue. This requires less effort from the practitioner's own body and delivers healing warmth to the hands, benefitting the therapist, as well as the client.

In addition to the physical effects, hot stone massage is also considered a kind of energy work, calming and energizing the body but with an extra element thrown into the mix to make it more than just a sensory delight. The theory is that incorporating something from nature -- the stones -- adds a symbolic dimension to this therapy, creating a primal connection to the elements for a grounding experience.



Stone massage is both calming and energizing.

Good News About Ginger

Shelley Burns

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) is known to aid digestion and strengthen the immune system. It is used as a home remedy (flat ginger ale) when feeling under the weather or nauseous, and is blended with honey and lemon in a drink to ward off a cold or flu. Now ginger has come back into the spotlight, this time to promote healthy skin.

One of ginger's active enzymes--zingibain--reduces inflammation, therefore reducing the risk of acne, psoriasis, and other inflammatory skin conditions. Ginger's antimicrobial and antiseptic properties can also kill the bacteria that causes acne. It promotes skin elasticity and firmness due to its antioxidants gingerol and shogaol, which have both been shown to fight skin-damaging free radicals.

To achieve these skin benefits, I advocate using actual ginger root. Why take capsules when you can use the root? It is cost-effective and has a great return on investment.

It's easy to use the root to make a cup of ginger tea. Peel the ginger root and cut it into thin strips. Steep the strips in a cup of boiled water for 10-15 minutes. If need be, sweeten the tea with other warming spices such as cinnamon and clove, along with agave nectar.

When you are unable to brew a cup of ginger tea, add a drop of ginger essential oil to your daily moisturizer. If you are looking at using it for other health benefits, such as reducing the pain of arthritis, you can massage the painful area with the essential oil. Please note essential oil is not for internal use.

Several new studies have also shown that ginger may help reduce anxiety. Not convinced yet about the benefits of ginger? Some say it could also work as an aphrodisiac, due to its promotion of blood circulation.

*If the world
seems cold to
you, kindle fires
to warm it.*

- Lucy Larcom

Our clients are always our best form of advertisement and you are all the best! We have recently had clients coming back from up North and they have brought friends to our practice with them. Remember, we have a referral plan for those of you who refer to us.

We have a community speaking engagement on the subject of PROPER GAIT (walking) on November 30th at 2:00pm at Solivita, we hope to see many of you there.

After Thanksgiving Adele is putting herself on the schedule on Wednesdays and Fridays in the morning. She specializes in facial treatments and smooth relaxation sessions.

Substantial savings are still available on LIFE EXTENSION products for those of you who use them.

Clinical Touch Massage

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