

The Benefits of Lymphatic Massage

Fuel Wellness with a Healthy Lymph System

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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

If we could see the miracle of a single flower clearly, our whole life would change.

-Buddha



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.

Happiness is Contagious

Maybe mom was right. Research suggests that surrounding yourself with friends and family who are happy can actually increase your own happiness.

Scientists at Harvard University and the University of California, San Diego, found that emotions, particularly happiness, have a viral effect in how they spread from one person to another. For every happy person in your physical social network, you have a 9 percent chance of increasing your own happiness. The effect is more pronounced the closer someone is to you geographically, and it does not seem to include electronic communications. The study, "Dynamic Spread of Happiness in a Large Social Network," can be found online in the British Medical Journal (www.bmj.com).

This is especially good news considering the potential health benefits of happiness and positivity. A study published in Stroke magazine has indicated a "significant association"

between optimism and a reduced risk of stroke. This is in addition to studies that have linked optimism to a healthier immune system, faster wound healing, and a lower risk of heart disease. While the exact cause of the benefits is not clear, one theory is that optimistic people are more likely to take care of their health. In addition, there is hope that teaching optimism could become part of a preventative program for various conditions.

What's one way to get happy? Try massage! Exposure to stress, a contributing factor to unhappiness, over a long period of time can increase the rate of neural degeneration and increase the risk for Alzheimer's disease. Luckily, a study from Umea University in Sweden has shown that just five minutes of massage has the potential to lower stress, and 80 minutes of massage has a tremendously positive effect on stress levels. Get massage, get happy, and cheer up your friends and family!



Surrounding yourself with happy people is healthy!

The Art of Aromatherapy

Essential Oils Provide Healing and Balance

Aromatic essential oils extracted from herbs, flowers, resin, wood and roots have long been a source of healing, aiding in relaxation, circulation and wound healing. However, the use of these medicinal oils declined as the modern pharmaceutical industry developed. In 1928, French chemist Rene Maurice Gattefosse revived the use of essential oils and developed the art and science of utilizing naturally extracted aromatic essences from botanicals to balance and harmonize the health of body, mind, and spirit. Gattefosse coined the practice aromatherapy.

Because of aromatherapy's affect on emotional health, many practitioners incorporate this noninvasive treatment into their practices. Dispensers or diffusers filled with aromatic essences

may be used to scent the room, and specific essential oils are used on the client's skin during massage. Because each oil has unique characteristics and benefits, the choice of oil or oils can be customized to the client's needs and emotional state. Whether inhaled or applied topically, aromatherapy requires an understanding of how each essential oil interacts with the body, as well as the mind. Many pure essential oils need to be diluted, as they can cause irritation when applied directly to the skin, and training is necessary to guarantee safe and correct usage.

The emotions listed below can be gently eased by one or a combination of the following essential oils:

Anxiety: bergamot, cedarwood, clary sage, frankincense, lavender, patchouli,

Roman chamomile, rose, sandalwood.

Fatigue, Burnout: basil, ginger, grapefruit, jasmine, lemon, peppermint, rosemary, sandalwood.

Stress: bergamot, frankincense, geranium, lavender, mandarin, neroli, patchouli, Roman chamomile, ylang ylang.

Anger: jasmine, neroli, orange, patchouli, petitgrain, Roman chamomile, rose, vetiver, ylang ylang.

*Your vision will
become clear
only when you
look into your
heart. Who
looks
outside, dreams.
Who looks
inside, awakens.*
-Carl Jung

Lymphatic Massage Now Available! There is a first time for everything. I am not saying that you or I will do everything there is to do for a first time or even ever at all. I am sure you get the idea, but this is my first attempt to create a newsletter. Back in April my old business location was hit by a nasty tornado and I have moved in with the ladies at Native Wellness, a Holistic Health business which inspired me to do something new which was to get certified as a Manual Lymphatic Drainage Therapist! Lymphatic Massage for those seeking detox, better general health and edema relief. Try it today!

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