Guidelines for Simple Lymph Drainage for the Leg

The aim of your massage

The aim of massage is to move fluid from swollen areas of the body to areas where it can drain away normally.

The technique described here uses massage to the chest and abdomen rather than to the swollen leg itself. By removing the fluid from the part of the body next to the swollen leg and so clearing the way ahead, the fluid in the leg has a better chance of draining away.

This type of massage is very slow and gentle, using just enough pressure to cause the skin under your hand to move slightly. If your hand glides over the skin you are not pressing firmly enough and if your skin becomes red you are pressing too hard.

You need to perform the massage sequence once a day.
It will take about twenty minutes and should be performed on bare skin.
Do not use any creams, oils or talc.
Do not attempt to do this massage until you have received full instructions from your Lymphoedema therapist.

First of all, settle yourself into a comfortable position, sitting upright in a chair or lying down.

Chronic Oedema Service
Tel: 01803 210830
Named therapist:..........................

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It is very important that you follow the sequence exactly as described.
Do not skip any of the steps or change the order of the movements.
Take four deep breaths before you begin.

**Step 1**
Place your hands either side of your neck just below your ears.
Make a slow semi-circular movement using the flat part of your fingers. Keep your fingers in contact with the skin as you move the skin backwards then downwards with pressure.
Release the pressure as you come back up to your original position. Your elbows should be up and together if possible.
Repeat this five times.

**Step 2**
Move your hands a little lower down your neck.
Repeat the semi-circular movement exactly as described in Step 1.
Do this five times.

**Step 3**
Place your finger tips in the hollows above your collar bones.
Repeat the circular movement in towards your neck then down towards the body with pressure.
Then release the pressure as you return to your original position.
Repeat five times.
Repeat steps 1, 2 and 3 twice more.
This will make a total of 15 movements/times on each spot.

Step 4
Place one arm out to your side. Use the flat part of the other hand to massage the lymph glands under your armpit with a semi-circular movement. Pull the skin towards the front of your body and then upwards with pressure. Release the pressure as you return to your original position. Repeat this twenty times and then lower your arm. This should take about one minute. Do the same thing on the other armpit.

Step 5
Place the flat of your hand on the skin near your shoulders, starting on the opposite side to your swollen leg. Grip the skin gently and stretch it as far as it will stretch in an upward direction (away from the swollen leg) then release.

For more information please
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Step 6

When you have finished the massage, perform this breathing exercise which will improve the drainage of the deep lymphatic system:

Lay comfortably on your back. Place your hands on your abdomen with your fingers overlapped. Breathe in slowly and deeply. You should feel your abdomen rise upwards as you breathe in. Hold your breath for a slow count of two, then breathe out slowly. At the same time press your hands down firmly onto your abdomen. Hold your breath for a slow count of two and relax. Repeat this four times.

Rest for a couple of minutes before getting up.

Steps 4, 5 and 6 are best done when you are lying down, or reclining in a comfortable chair.

The information in this leaflet has been adapted from Massage Instructions produced by The Royal Marsden Hospital, London & Surrey.

If you require this information in an alternative format please call 01803 210844

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