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The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: [patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk) if you would like a reference list.

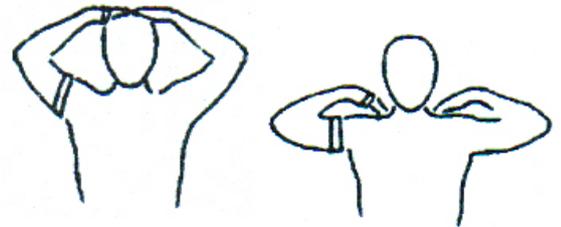
Author: Robin Cooper  
Role: Lymphoedema Nurse Specialist  
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## **Lymphoedema of the arm** (page 1 of 3)

### **Exercise for the lymphoedema of the arm**

Place hands on top of head and bring down to shoulders.

Repeat 10 times.



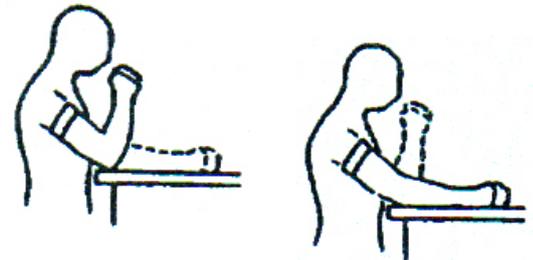
Place hands behind head and then bring down to behind back in wide circular movement.

Repeat 10 times.



Slowly raise and lower arms from the elbow.

Repeat 10 times.



Clench and unclench hand and fingers.

Repeat 10 times on both hands.



Lie down and clasp your hands together in front of you. Then raise to above shoulder height.

Repeat 10 times.



**Repeat all exercises twice a day**

**Diabetes & Vascular Unit**  
**Tel: 01722 429210**

## Simple lymphatic drainage (SLD) for lymphoedema of the arm

Lymphatic drainage is used to encourage fluid to drain from the swollen, congested arm to an area where it can drain normally. This massage concentrates on clearing fluid from the chest and swollen arm and should be done at least twice daily.

1. Ensure that you are in a comfortable position lying or sitting and that the area to be massaged is free from oil or cream.

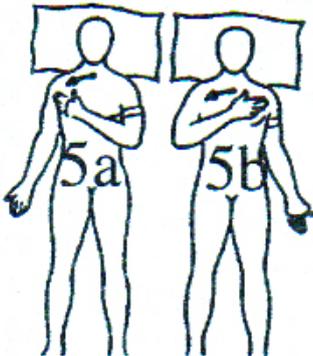


2. Massage the Lymph glands in the side of the neck in a back and downwards, circular motion 5 times. Then move hand down a finger width and massage in the same way. Do this 5 times.

3. Massage collarbone in an outwards direction, repeat 5 times.



4. Now massage the unaffected armpit in the direction of back and up 5 times. Repeat this movement 4 finger widths lower. Repeat exercises 2 to 4.



5. To massage the chest, start close to the unaffected arm (fig. 5a), and gently massage the fluid across the chest wall pushing away, towards the unaffected arm, but moving gradually closer to the affected arm (fig. 5b). If it is more comfortable use the unaffected arm to massage. This should be done for 5-10 minutes covering the whole of the chest area.



6. If someone is able to help you, ask them to massage your back starting at the unaffected arm, moving towards the swollen arm.
7. Finish the session with a short breathing exercise which helps to clear the deep lymphatic system:  
Place both hands on the abdomen and breathe in slowly and deeply. Hold for two seconds and release. Repeat 5 times.

## Skin Care

- Dry your skin well after washing, especially between toes and fingers.
- Treat any cuts or scratches with an antiseptic cream immediately.
- Use an insect repellent to avoid being bitten during summer months or on holiday.
- Use a cream or electric razor on limb to remove unwanted body hair.
- Do not have blood, blood pressure or injections taken on the affected limb.

- Avoid sunburn, wear a high factor sun lotion or don't expose the skin.
- Avoid hot baths, sauna and sunbeds.
- Apply cream or lotion in the evening (it will soak into your skin overnight).

## Hosiery hints

- Put on hosiery first thing in the morning.
- Try wearing rubber gloves when applying hosiery. (It helps you to get it on).
- Do not fold the top over your hosiery.
- Make sure there are no wrinkles in your hosiery.
- Do not cut your hosiery. (It won't work properly and it's expensive).
- Do not tumble dry your hosiery or dry on direct heat.

## General advice

- Do try to take a walk every day.
- Do not carry heavy weights on your arm or put excess pressure on it.
- Do not walk around bare foot if either or both of your legs are affected.
- Do not wear low fronted or high heeled shoes if your legs are affected as they will make the swelling worse.

*With thanks to the Wolverhampton Lymphoedema Service*