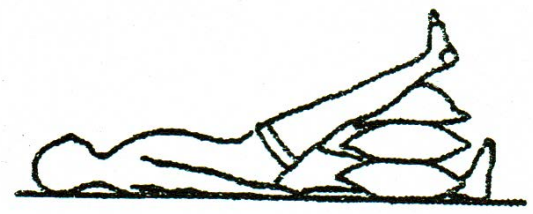


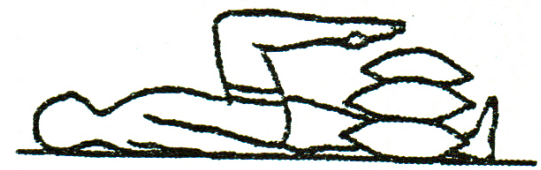
# Lymphoedema of the leg (page 1 of 3)

## Exercise for lymphoedema of the leg

These exercises are best done lying on the floor with legs raised on pillows.

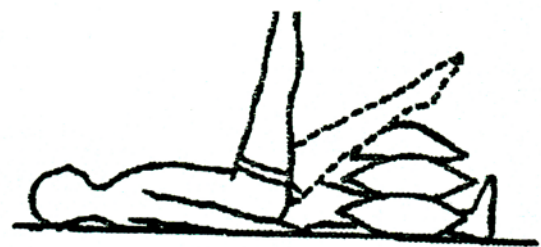


Bring knees to chest.



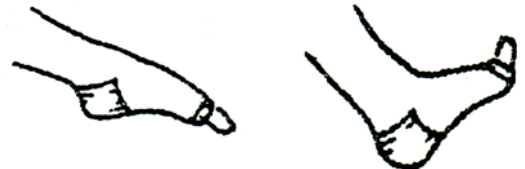
Slowly straighten and lower each leg in turn.

Repeat 10 times.



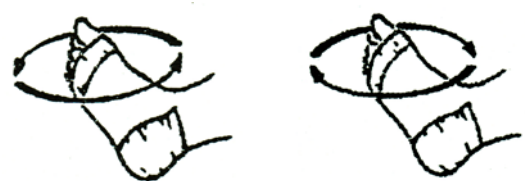
Slowly point toes and then flex.

Repeat 10 times.



Move each foot in a circular movement to the left and then right.

Repeat 10 times.



Bring knees to chest wall and do cycling movement.

Repeat 10 times.



**Repeat all exercises three times a day**



If you need this information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact Customer Care on 0800 374 208 or send an email to: [customer care@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:customer care@salisbury.nhs.uk).

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

If you are unhappy with the advice you have been given by your GP, consultant, or another healthcare professional, you may ask for a second (or further) opinion.

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  
Date written: March 2013  
Last revised: April 2016  
Review date: April 2019  
Version: 1.1  
Code: PI1066

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

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

Lymphatic drainage is used to encourage fluid to drain from the swollen leg(s) to an area where it can drain normally. This massage concentrates on clearing fluid from the abdomen and the swollen leg(s) and should be performed 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. Repeat 5 times.



3. Massage collarbone in an outwards direction, repeat 5 times.
4. Now massage the lymph glands under both armpits in the direction of back and up 5 times. Repeat this movement 4 finger widths lower. Repeat exercises number 2 - 4.



5. Starting above the unaffected leg at the chest, massage in an upwards direction, gradually moving down to the unaffected leg. Gradually move across the body to the affected leg. Continue for 10 minutes.



6. If someone is able to help you, ask them to massage your back in an upwards motion moving down towards the affected leg.
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

- Apply 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.
- Ensure 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 walk around bare foot if either or both of your legs are affected.
- Do not wear low fronted or high heeled shoes as they will make the swelling worse.

*With thanks to the Wolverhampton Lymphoedema Service*