



HEALTH BENEFITS OF MASSAGE:

- Helps fight infection
- Modulates immune function
- Benefits Auto-immune disease
- Reduces pain in arthritis
- Reduces depression
- Improved circulation
- Stimulation of the lymphatic system
- Improves natural killer cell function
- Decreases level of T-cells
- Increased endorphin production
- Reduces pro-inflammatory cytokines
- Increased serotonin levels

Massage News

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Lymph Massage Can Revitalize the Immune System

As the cold and flu season approaches, it's time to bolster the immune system and give it a coat of armor against the certain onslaught that awaits.

Maybe you already take a defensive stand this time of year with a more diligent use of vitamins and herbal supplements, heightened precautions with hand-washing, or an extra glass of orange juice or serving of broccoli. But have you ever considered a lymph massage to help your body stave off the blues of winter illness?

Lymph massage, also known in variations as Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD) or Lymph Drainage Therapy (LDT), is a gentle, relaxing form of massage that helps the body's lymphatic system get moving again while

reinforcing immune function. To fully understand the benefits of lymph massage, let's first take a quick look at how this lesser-known system works.

As a vital component of the body's immune function, the lymphatic system is comprised of several organs (thymus, tonsils, spleen, adenoids), hundreds of lymph nodes, and a multitude of vessels that run throughout the body similar to our circulatory system of veins and arteries. These lymphatic vessels carry a clear fluid, known as lymph, that circulates around the body's tissues, absorbing fluid, waste products, dead cells, bacteria, viruses, fats, and proteins from the tissue as it goes, while also giving passage to immune cells as they're needed.

Lymph nodes are found throughout the body and have the job of filtering the lymph fluid and removing damaging elements they've picked up along the way, such as bacteria and cancer cells. When the lymph nodes detect these foreign elements in the fluid, they begin producing additional infection-fighting white blood cells, and become enlarged in the process, hence a swollen gland.

If the system gets overtaxed because of ill health, surgery, stress, or poor diet, it can get sluggish and not do its job as efficiently. As a major player in the body's immune process, it makes sense that by waking up the lymphatic system, you dramatically improve your chances for staying healthy.

A Massage That's Barely There

With lymph massage, the system gets a wake-up call through delicate means. Lymph massage is extremely gentle and slow, not just as an aspect of its healing nature, but by necessity. The light, slow pressure mimics the pulse and rhythm of the lymphatic system itself and gets the vessels to respond as they should. Each stroke slightly

moves the skin in the direction of the lymphatic flow to encourage the drainage of fluid waste.

The delicate nature of each stroke as it carefully glides across the skin can sometimes make it feel as if nothing is happening, especially for those who are used to deep bodywork. But it's exactly that noninvasive quality of lymph massage that makes it

work. The massage always has fluid moving toward a healthy lymph node.

After your lymph massage, it's important to drink plenty of water as things get moving again. Also watch your salt intake and get up and move. Movement creates a greater lymphatic response and will hurry the process along.

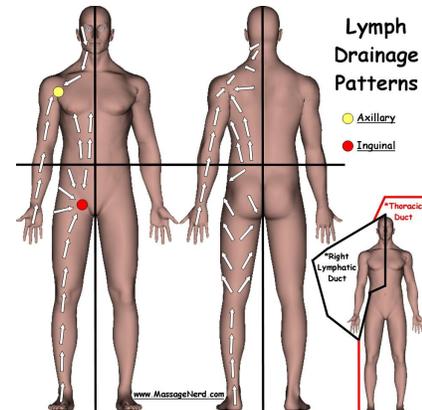
Lymphedema and Lymph Massages

When the lymphatic system is especially compromised, as in the presence of cancer or after it's been disrupted by surgery, it can slow to a near negligible pace. This is when a swelling of the lymph passages occurs, known as lymphedema, creating a painful, potentially debilitating condition. One of the most common causes for lymphedema is undergoing a mastectomy, where breast tissue and/or lymph nodes under the arm are removed. Of the women having this operation, up to 15% are likely to get lymphedema. But it's not just mastectomies where lymphedema is showing up.

According to the National Lymphedema Network, if lymph nodes are removed, there is always a risk of developing lymphedema, anywhere from hours after the surgery to 20 years later. Even when there's been no surgery, lymphedema can come into play if there have been radiation treatments. Like surgery, radiation therapy creates scar tissue that stalls the normal flow of lymphatic fluids through the body.

Lymph massage has shown to be effective for lymphedema, especially when caught early. When significant scar tissue has started to form as a result of chronic swelling, the work can take a much longer time, but is still effective.

If you are a postsurgery patient, be mindful of the signs of lymphedema—tightness in the skin, a feeling of fullness in the affected area, and persistent swelling. It's important to report these symptoms to your healthcare provider and even seek out a second opinion. Unlike the protocol in Europe, where it's the third most prescribed health treatment, lymph massage, and lymphedema itself, are not always discussed between U.S. physicians and their patients. If you are at risk and your doctor doesn't bring it up, it's important you start the conversation.



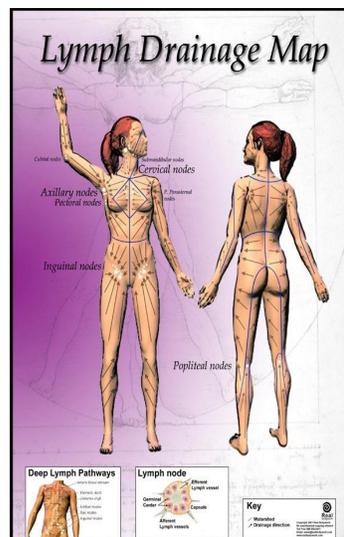
Other Benefits of Lymph Massage

During the often-stressful holidays and the viral barrage of the cold and flu season, it is especially important to pay attention to your body. If you're feeling tired or run-down, a lymph massage will help "charge your batteries" and prep the immune system for the road ahead.

It is also important to consider a good lymphatic workover when the seasons change. Two to three sessions, preferably all in one week, but at least over a few weeks' time, is what the body needs to recharge itself.

On a year-round basis, lymph massage is a good treatment for edema (or swelling), any kind of inflammation (such as tendonitis), or a recent injury (like an ankle sprain), and is really helpful with sinus conditions and a

general sense of congestion. It also helps to reduce scar tissue and stimulate the circulation and production of white blood cells.



But this work might even have greater opportunities for those who want to explore them. Lymph massage can get you moving on a deeper level. It's not only relaxing but very hypnotic. Mimicking the natural pulsation of the lymph system, lymph massage can create a sensation not unlike listening to the ebb and flow of the ocean's waters.

Whether it be to alleviate the more serious effects of postsurgery lymphedema, or simply to give the lymphatic system a good kick start as flu season approaches, consider a lymph massage. Feel what it is to be "lighter," to be "opened," to be awash in the waves of healthy lymph, and have things moving again.

Information in this newsletter is taken from www.massagetherapy.com