

The benefits of Lymphatic Massage



Cultivating
the Beauty
from Within
by
Janet M. D'Angelo

*Remember what your mother told you - beauty comes from within. Well, there's probably more truth in those words than your mother realized. Obtaining that healthy glow we've come to identify with beauty has a lot more to do with how well your body is functioning internally than most of us think. One treatment for cultivating beauty and health from the inside out that is gaining recognition is *lymphatic drainage*, a technique that works with the body's lymphatic system. Esthetically speaking, this technique helps to re-shape and firm the skin by activating the body's circulation and improving metabolism. At the same time it performs a purifying action that enhances the complexion, calms and rejuvenates. Lymphatic drainage is also beneficial in treating a host of other health-related conditions including pre- and post-surgical swelling, varicose veins, allergies, scars and burns, fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue.*

Confused about what your lymphatic system actually does? In order to look and feel good, your body relies on three main circulation networks: arterial, venous and lymphatic. These three systems combine to nourish the body and remove waste materials and bacteria. Together they play an important role in maintaining the body's defense system and keeping body functions, tissues, and organs, working properly. Nutrients are carried throughout the body via arteries and capillaries to tissue cells. These tissue cells are surrounded by interstitial fluid that is comprised of lymph. The lymph system then transports substances such as proteins, toxins, hormones, fatty acids, and immune cells to lymph nodes where they are processed. Think of it as a large filter system draining away excess protein, water and wastes from the tissues to allow cell rejuvenation, nourishment and wound healing.

The lymphatic system is crucial to a healthy immune system, however, unlike the other circulatory systems in our body, the lymphatic system lacks a large pumping organ, such as the heart, to keep it moving. Instead it depends on the contraction of hundreds of tiny muscular units, breathing and movement. Proper nutrition and exercise are critical to its functioning and the prevention of a buildup of lymph fluid. Several factors can contribute to slowing the lymph system and creating such symptoms as edema, acne, puffy eyes and dark circles, sinusitis or a more serious condition, lymphedema. Fatigue, stress, lack of physical activity, infections, chemicals, trauma and toxins all impact the lymphatic system and can lead to physical problems or premature aging.

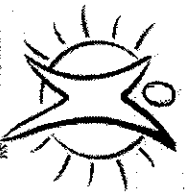
Lymphatic drainage is a hands-on technique designed to counter-balance these effects, cleanse and stimulate the lymphatic system. Based on years of research on the lymphatic system for which he received the prestigious "Medal of the Medical Faculty of Saint Antoine," Dr. Bruno Chikley, a French physician trained in traditional medicine, osteopathy and Oriental medicine, has developed what he calls *Lymph Drainage Therapy* (LDT). A member of the International Society of Lymphology and International Alliance of Healthcare Educators, as well as an associate member of the American Academy of Osteopathy, he teaches his lymphatic drainage technique throughout the world.

Dr. Chikley credits the origin of lymphatic drainage therapies to the work of Frederic Millard, a Canadian osteopathic physician who began research in the 1920s and Danish massage practitioner and doctor of philosophy, Emil Vodder who followed in the 1930s. His own method incorporates a distinct manual process whereby the practitioner learns to "surf on the wave

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of the lymph." This involves detecting the rhythm, direction, depth and quality of the lymphatic flow under the skin, a practice that allows the clinician to perform accurate "lymphatic mappings" and re-route congested areas.

Although lymphatic drainage is often termed loosely as a therapeutic massage, Dr. Chikley stresses that it should not be equated with massage in the generic sense of the word, as the client is then likely to expect a heavy-handed manipulation. His technique utilizes a light touch with subtle manual maneuvers that are easy to use, not tiring or straining. His methodology is applicable to a wide range of practitioners including medical doctors, nurses, physical and occupational therapists, massage therapists, estheticians, chiropractors and other healthcare professionals. LDT can be used to achieve positive results in the treatment of primary and secondary lymphedema, pre- and post-surgical care, preventive health maintenance and deep relaxation. Dr. Chikley also offers a special three-day training course that targets the benefits of LDT as an esthetic application to ease inflammations associated with acne, sinus or allergic conditions, improve hydration, diminish swollen or puffy eyelids, edemas and varicose veins, detoxify and rejuvenate tissues in age management, reduce cellulite, and alleviate stress.

Carol Marquis, a licensed, certified massage therapist and manual lymphatic drainage and combined decompressive therapist in Newburyport, MA is trained in the Vodder method of Manual Lymph Drainage. Using delicate and precise movements, she says this hands-on approach allows the technician to determine the location of the block and redirect the lymph flow. Marquis works primarily with lymphedema patients. Her clients include those born with malfunctioning or missing lymphatic vessels (primary lymphedema) as well as those who have acquired lymphatic insufficiency as a result of injury, disease, infection, surgery, radiation or self-mutilation (secondary lymphedema). A good deal of her practice is devoted to

breast cancer survivors who have undergone damage to their lymph nodes. She also works with patients suffering from fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue to break the cycle of pain. While her work is largely medically based, she notes that manual lymph drainage is an excellent way to conduct an internal cleansing and release stress for everyone and suggests monthly treatments for those in good health as well. It is the "American way of life to run on empty," says Marquis, however she stresses the need to keep the body healthy — and a healthy lymph system is the key to a healthy immune system.

A manual lymphatic drainage treatment is automatically incorporated in all bodywork conducted at the *Spa Within* at Eliot Hospital in Manchester, NH where esthetician Ann Dalton has set up practice to accommodate patients and staff. As the majority of the spa's clients are oncology patients, she notes the added benefit of manual lymphatic drainage in detoxifying is tremendous. She combines a manual lymphatic drainage with herbal wraps, salt glo, mud and seaweed treatments. Doreen Kleinschmidt, a licensed massage therapist, yoga instructor and esthetician trained in spa therapy, practicing in Jamaica Plain, utilizes lymphatic drainage in much the same way. She states combining thalassotherapy (the use of seawater or seaweed-based products) such as seaweed wraps and body polishes, maximizes the benefits of manual lymphatic drainage on a metabolic level as it detoxifies and remineralizes—"it's the frosting on the cake." She also incorporates lymphatic drainage as part of a regular facial to reduce edema and generate a healthy glow to the complexion. An ideal treatment for increasing health and longevity, Kleinschmidt recommends a complete manual lymph drainage four times a year as part of a regular program to improve overall general health and well-being. She also notes that the deep rhythmic breathing of yoga, known as pranayama, is ideal for stimulating the lymphatic movement overall.

The practitioner may also choose to utilize equipment as an adjunct to manual lymph drainage. The Biodrain™, a lymphatic drainage massage system manufactured by Silhouette-Tone, an international distributor of esthetic equipment, uses suction cups in conjunction with algae-based products and essential oils to mimic the movements of manual massage. According to Danielle Tsoklis, Director of Education and Development for Silhouette-Tone, the Biodrain™ is able to regulate the pressure, making it easier and more efficient for the clinician to stimulate the lymphatic system. Regular treatments with the Biodrain™ are designed to improve both the condition and appearance of the face and body, resulting in a refreshed and youthful look. Specific benefits include the reduction of dark circles and puffiness around the eyes, a healthy glow to the complexion, reduction of "orange peel skin," and enhanced body tone and shape.

If you are interested in learning more about keeping your lymph system healthy you might also take a course called the *Art of Lymphaticizing*, taught by Certified Lymphologist (IAL) and NCTMB Certified Massage Therapist Little Tree, who is also certified in Fibromyalgia Treatment and Manual Lymph Drainage. Utilizing Dr. Samuel West's (founder of the International Academy of Lymphology) methodology, he works with four basic components to stimulate the lymphatic system: bouncing on a lymphasizer (mini trampoline), nutrition, deep breathing, stroking and massage. Little Tree states that an important part of the training is developing some kind of discipline that enables you to find a calm balance and loving existence. His course also takes into account herbal remedies as he teaches students the 12 steps that allow "old toxins out, new blood in." Little Tree operates out of his Massage and Movement center in White River Junction, Vermont.

In general, a good lymphatic drainage, conducted by a qualified professional will improve the overall appearance of the skin, prolong more aggressive treatments and generate a healthy glow. However, it is important to note that this technique is not for everyone

and should be determined after completing a thorough client history. In particular, lymphatic drainage is not advised for anyone with serious circulatory problems, acute infectious or inflammatory disease, major cardiac problems or malignant ailments. Other conditions, such as edema and lymphedema, also warrant careful consideration. A good rule of thumb is when in doubt consult with a physician.

In addition it is important to make the distinction between practitioners. Estheticians are trained to use lymphatic drainage as an adjunctive treatment for healthy individuals, while those working with disorders such as lymphedema, require more in-depth and specific training. The Muscular Therapy Institute located in Cambridge, MA sponsors continuing education in the Vodder method of Manual Lymph Drainage. This is available to physical therapists, nurses, and massage therapists with at least 500 hours of training.

For more information call 617-576-1300.

Estheticians and beauty therapists can call 1-800-233-5880 to learn more about Dr. Chikley's Esthetic Lymphatic Drainage Therapy program.

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