



The Art of Healing Touch

INTEGRATIVE THERAPIES
FOR THE BODY AND SOUL

Top 10 Tips for Healthy Lymphatic System

Your lymphatic system is a silent, yet key player in your level of health and vitality. The lymphatic system is made up of a network of vessels that carry clear fluid called lymph throughout the body. Lymph serves the important task of transporting nutrients to every cell in the body, and carrying metabolic waste products to the bloodstream for elimination through the kidneys, colon and lungs. The lymphatic system is commonly called our “silent sewer system.” It also plays an important role in healthy immunity.

The lymphatic system is the sister system to the blood system. It contains three times more fluid than our blood system, and it has no pump. Lymph movement relies mainly on physical activities and the natural flow of gravity.

Here are 10 tips specially designed to keep your lymphatic system flowing well!

1. **Shoulder Rolls:** Perform 10-15 shoulder rolls. You may perform several times throughout the day as desired. Shoulder rolls are an important exercise to begin any sequence of lymphatic activities.

Opening the lymph system at the base of the neck creates the vacuum effect for the entire system. Yes, this is an important element!

2. **Deep Belly Breathing:** Perform as often as you feel inclined throughout the day.

The art of deep diaphragmatic breathing stimulates the deeper lymphatic ducts, known as the thoracic and lymphatic ducts. They are the largest lymphatic vessels, and they travel through the abdominal cavity, transporting lymph to the neck. There is also a complex network of lymph vessels and nodes in the belly. The deeper breathing stimulates the entire system in the belly, and creates the vacuum effect for the legs, and entire lymph vessel network.

Our culture has become a place of high demand and stress, and oftentimes we forget to breathe deeply and fully. Instead, we tend to “chest breathe” which is shallow, or we stop breathing for periods of time under stress. This stimulates increased production of cortisol, which also affects the lymphatic system and immunity.

Deep belly breathing not only has a physical component of stimulating the lymph, it also accesses the parasympathetic nervous system, which is healing and restorative. Deep belly breathing is grounding, centering and helps to reduce stress. It tells the body to slow down.

3. Deep Belly Laughter: Laugh often!

From a mechanical standpoint, deep belly laughter falls into the same realm as deep belly breathing. However, it deserves praise for the emotional support it provides. Did you know that laughter triggers release of happy hormones, or endorphins? More information on how laughter can become your own personal cellular pharmacy: <http://www.laughteronlineuniversity.com/laughter-immune-system/>

4. Exercise: Find something you LOVE doing, and do it regularly! If you don't like the form of exercise, it won't happen!

You can also perform the “lymphatic pump” which is flexion and extension of the foot repeatedly, or pointing and flexing the foot. This is an excellent exercise to perform when sitting on a plane or in a meeting for long hours.

Exercise is a key element to supporting the lymphatic system. The lymphatic system relies on mechanical pumping, and moving the muscles is an excellent way to “pump” the lymph! Some of my favorites are walking, strength training, yoga and rebounding.

For more information on the benefits of rebounding, see:

<https://www.wellbeingjournal.com/rebounding-good-for-the-lymph-system/>

5. Swimming: Swimming is also a great form exercise. It is easy on the joints, and the compression from the water has its own set of benefits.

For more information, see: <http://www.lymphedemablog.com/2011/01/20/the-benefit-of-aquatic-exercise-for-lymphedema/>

6. Elevate legs up on the wall: Excellent to do at the end of the day for 10-20 minutes.

Gravity plays a role in movement of the lymph. If you are on your feet a lot during the day or stuck behind a computer, it's easy for the feet and lower legs to swell or feel

heavy, because the lymphatic system has become a bit sluggish. Here is a “how to” article.

While the focus is not on the lymphatic system, the information is beneficial and instructional to comfortably position your body:

<http://www.yogajournal.com/pose/legs-up-the-wall-pose/>

- 7. Hydration:** Drink plenty of water. Without adequate water, the lymphatic system cannot properly flow or remove toxins. It is helpful to add lemon essential oil to your water. **The limonene in lemon essential oil supports healthy liver and lymphatic function.**

Ask me for more information on how to safely use high quality essential oils.

- 8. Nutrient Dense Diet:** Healthy food creates healthy, vibrant cells. Eating from the colors of the rainbow when selecting fruits and vegetables adds a variety of nutrients vital for healthy cells.

A reasonable guideline to follow is to eat organic whole foods, and avoid or limit prepackaged foods with preservatives.

For more information on foods to support healthy lymph, check out:

<http://www.onegreenplanet.org/natural-health/foods-that-improve-lymphatic-flow-and-keep-the-body-balanced/>

- 9. Dry Skin Brushing:** Dry skin brushing is a gentle way to stimulate the lymphatic system. Dry skin brushing is easy to do before stepping in the shower. It’s also an excellent way to exfoliate dead skin cells, increase circulation and unclog pores.

Use a natural bristle brush. Gently brush your dry skin in strokes moving upward from the feet to the torso and from the fingers to the chest. You want to work in the same direction as your lymph flows—toward the heart.

For more information, check out my blog post: [Top 3 Virtues of Skin Brushing](#)

- 10. Lymphatic Massage:** This is my area of expertise, and naturally, it deserves special mention. Receiving a lymphatic massage or “Manual Lymphatic Drainage” (MLD) from a Certified Lymphatic Therapist is extremely gentle, and the effects are profound. Properly performed, MLD can increase lymph flow up to 10 times its normal rate.

Check out my website for more information and to schedule your next session:

www.RochelleClark.com