

MANUAL LYMPHATIC DRAINAGE (MLD) PETER BENSLEY, SENIOR MASSAGE THERAPIST

A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING AND OPTIMISING THE BENEFITS OF YOUR MLD THERAPY SESSION

What Does the Lymphatic System do?

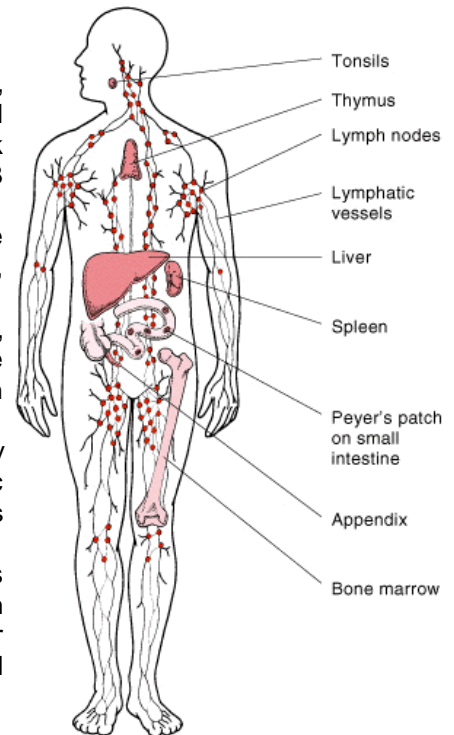
The body's tissues are bathed in an almost clear fluid called interstitial fluid, which filters out from blood vessels. It is collected, (along with tissue and cellular wastes), drained away and cleaned in lymph nodes and recycled back into the blood by vessels of the lymphatic system at a rate of approximately 3 litres a day.

Lymphocytes are one of the major white blood cells in the body and are responsible for our immunity. They produce antibodies to help fight bacteria, difficult infections and cancers.

When the body becomes toxic or polluted with poisons, from exposure to drugs, poor diet, heavy alcohol consumption, smoking (active or passive) or exposure to chemicals in the air or water, the lymphatic system and the lymphocytes can become overloaded and sluggish.

The blockage of lymph vessels can cause a build-up of lymph fluid, which may result in swelling of body parts, (ankles, legs, hands etc.) because the lymphatic system cannot cope with the increased capacity. This also results in the body's immune system becoming less efficient in dealing with bacteria and infections.

Correct and proper lymphatic drainage techniques, causes collateral lymphatics in the superficial lymphatic networks to become larger and carry more lymph making the system more efficient. Manual Lymphatic Drainage can also lower blood pressure, assist in draining excess fluid, correct a dormant injury and reduce fever. The ultimate 'De-Tox' massage.



Manual Lymphatic Drainage massage, what happens?

MLD massage is a painless massage technique that requires specialised training. The pressure used by the therapist in the treatment is a very light touch, as the silk-like lymphatic vessels we are affecting are very close to the surface of the skin. It is a very relaxing massage and you will feel no discomfort or pain.

The massage procedure itself follows a full and set regime that must be followed in the correct order to be effective. Your therapist will explain in detail prior to and during the treatment, details of the procedure.

The therapist will also take details of your past medical history as well as details of your diet, exercise, occupation, medications etc., to ensure you have no conditions that are contraindicated for the MLD treatment. All clients' records will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. If necessary, your therapist may seek permission from your GP before proceeding with a treatment.

No massage oils are used in the treatment. Feel free to ask any questions at any time throughout the massage.

What do I do before a MLD treatment?

- Eventually the toxins and poisons that have built up in the body are flushed out through the urinary system. It is important therefore to do everything possible to help the body rid itself of these toxins and poisons. At least one hour before your MLD massage, we suggest you drink a large glass of water to prepare the body to flush them out.
- We would suggest that you do not consume any alcohol at least 12 hours prior to a MLD massage.

What do I do during a MLD treatment?

- The lymphatic vessels are located close to the surface of the skin on the body and are silk-thin in nature. It is important that these vessels are not restricted during the massage or the treatment will be ineffective. We recommend that you be fully unclothed for a MLD massage to ensure the free flow of lymph through the body. We appreciate that modesty levels vary between each person and if you feel uncomfortable being unclothed, we suggest at the most, very loose undergarments be worn. Your therapist is a highly trained professional and will use towel and draping techniques to ensure your privacy.
- Because of the nature of what a MLD massage is trying to achieve, you may find it necessary to empty your bladder several times during a treatment. This is quite normal.
- It is important that you relax during your massage as tension in muscles can reduce lymph flow.

What do I do after a MLD treatment?

The lymphatic system is a pump-less system that relies on actions of skeletal muscles and breathing contractions to move lymph around the body. It is very important that the following procedure be followed after your MLD massage.

- You should rest for between 20-30 minutes immediately after the treatment and drink water.
- After this rest, take a walk for about 30 minutes to keep the lymphatic system pumping to help flush the system
- Drink plenty of water for the next 12 hours. Avoid alcohol.

What are the after effects of a MLD treatment?

Every body is different and after effects vary according to how efficient or inefficient your lymphatic system is, the level of exposure to toxins, chemicals and poisons, muscle tone, weight etc. MLD causes toxins, chemicals, poisons and excess fluids that have built up in the system to be mobilised into the bloodstream. In some people this can cause headaches, nausea, skin sensitivity and cause glands, (which are collections of lymph nodes) to become tender.

It is important to follow the procedure for 'after MLD treatment' and drink plenty of water.

Contraindications

You should NOT have a Manual Lymphatic Drainage massage if you have:

- Post cancer surgery
- A history of Vascular Disease
- Congestive heart failure
- A communicable disease
- Severe high blood pressure
- Acute migraines
- Any disease of the lymphatic system
- Any kind of clinical lymphoedema
- A chronic kidney condition

Ongoing Care

MLD is not a 'one off' quick fix treatment. Your therapist will work with you to devise a treatment plan for your particular case and it may be necessary for you to undergo a number of treatments to achieve the desired result. It is important that the timing between treatments be maintained to prevent undoing the good achieved to date. Your therapist will advise you of the suggested plan of treatment.

