

Post-Surgical Instructions Lymphedema Exercises

1. These exercises can be performed even if lymphedema is not currently present. They help improve the function of the lymphatic system as well as your blood circulation system.
2. If you have lymphedema, these exercises should be performed while wearing compression bandages or garments.
3. These exercises must be performed in order and very slowly. Do them 1-2 times per day.
4. If you find the exercises too tiring or too time consuming for your lifestyle, continue the exercises in order, reducing the number of repetitions.
5. Perform each exercise 10 times. After each set of movements take a deep breath. Your therapist will teach you correct deep breathing.
 - I. Neck Stretches—sitting or standing
 - a. Bend chin toward chest all the way, then return to starting position.
 - b. Turn head slowly to the right, return to start, then turn to left, return to start.
 - c. Take right ear to right shoulder while looking forward, return to start.
 - d. Take left ear to left shoulder while looking forward, return to start.
 - II. Trunk Stretches—sitting or standing (have therapist work with you on back protection)
 - a. Bend sideways to the right, lifting left arm out to the side and over your head as you bend over.
 - b. Repeat with other side.
 - III. Leg Exercises—standing or lying on your side
 - a. Stretch left leg back behind you.
 - b. Bring left knee toward your chest then straighten leg.
 - c. Repeat with other side.
 - IV. Arm Exercises—sitting or standing
 - a. Lift left arm sideways and up over your head.
 - b. Pinch shoulder blades together.
 - c. Bend elbow, bring hand all the way to your shoulder, then straighten your elbow all the way.
 - d. With your elbow bent at a right angle, turn your palm to face up, then turn the palm to face down.
 - e. Bend wrist all the way forward, then all the way back.
 - f. Close your fist tight, then open your fingers and stretch them all the way.
 - g. Repeat with other side.

NOTE: These exercises should not cause pain or aching. If you are having difficulty with any of these exercises, please have your therapist change the exercise for you. Your therapist will also assist you in developing other exercise for better fitness and wellness.