



Upper limb simple lymphatic drainage (SLD)

(Adapted from the Lymphoedema Network Wales guidelines and based on the Casley-Smith method of Manual Lymphatic Drainage)

This very gentle massage is part of the daily treatment for your swelling. It helps move the fluid from a swollen area to one that drains more freely. Your therapist will teach you how to do SLD and this leaflet will remind you how to do it.

If you are unable to perform the massage by yourself, a partner or carer could help you.

Step 1 – Breathing

Sit or lie down with your shoulders relaxed and hands resting below your ribs

Breathe in and feel your stomach rising (imagine a balloon inflating under your hands)

Slowly breathe out and press gently inwards with your hands

Repeat five times

Step 2 – Specific exercises (10 of each)

1. Look up then down, look left then right (repeat five times)

2. Place your hand in your armpit

Cross the other arm across your body towards your opposite hip

Repeat 10 times on both sides

Step 3 – Specific exercises (10 of each)

1. Bend and straighten your elbow

2. Move wrist up and down

3. Open and close fist

Step 4 – Alternative to Step 2, point 2 (Armpit)

Place your hand in your armpit

Massage upwards into your armpit and release (10 times)

Ensure the direction is always upwards

Repeat both sides

Step 5 – Neck

Place your hands on both sides of your neck below your ears

Gently stroke the skin down towards your collarbones and release

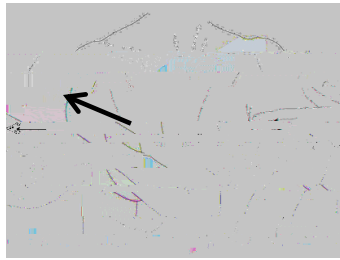
Repeat this movement 10 times

Step 6 – Collarbones

Place your index finger above, and

Step 7 – Chest (unaffected side)

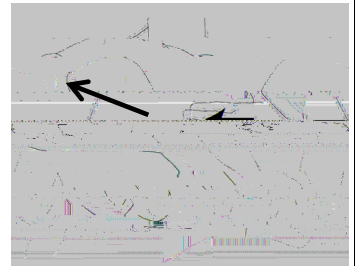
Place your hand on the unaffected side of your chest
Stroke across the skin towards your unaffected armpit



Repeat 10 times, always stroking into the armpit

Step 8 – Chest (central)

Place your hand on the middle of your chest
Stroke the skin towards the unaffected armpit
Repeat 10 times, always stroking into the armpit



Remember to clear the armpit every now and then

Step 9 – Chest (affected side)

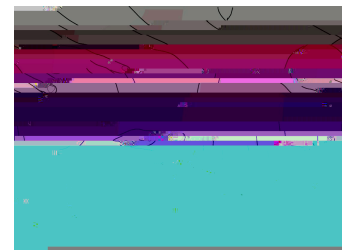
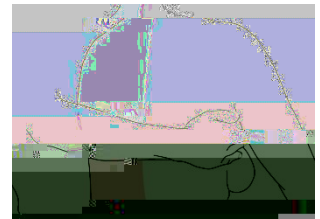
Place your hand on the affected side of your chest

Stroke across the skin towards your unaffected armpit

Repeat 10 times, always stroking into the armpit

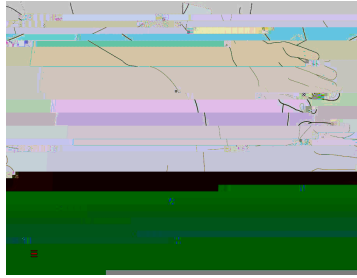
Remember to clear the armpit every now and then

Step 10 –



Step 13 – Back 3 (with help)

Helper places hand/s on the affected side of the back



Stroke across the skin into the unaffected armpit and release

Repeat 10 times

Remember to clear the armpit every now and then

Steps 14 and 15 – Finishing your SLD

Repeat Step 2 and 3 – **Specific exercises** (10 each)

Neck – look up and down, left and right (5 times only)

Armpit – arm up and out, then down and across

Elbow – bend and straighten elbow

Wrist – move hand up and down

Finger – open and close fist

Repeat Step 1 – **Breathing exercise** (5 times)

Sit or lie down with your shoulders relaxed and hands resting below your ribs

Breathe in and feel your stomach rising

Slowly breathe out and press gently inwards with your hands