

Lymphatic Drainage and Sports Injury

by Sarah Sherwood, LMT /ART/Lymphatic Drainage Therapist at **Thrive**Austin

The Lymph system may be one of the more unknown systems in our body. Many of us have heard of it in reference to being sick (swollen lymph nodes in the neck), but what about its many other functions throughout our whole entire body? The Lymph System is a complex system made up, primarily, of lymph vessels and lymph nodes. This system works to maintain healthy immunity, but it also works to drain stagnant fluids, regenerate tissues and detoxify the body by filtering out foreign substances and toxins. Lymphatic Drainage is a hands-on technique designed to help achieve and support proper functioning of the Lymphatic System.

Understanding the importance of this somewhat overlooked system may be of special interest to those of us who are athletes as we regularly sustain injuries, even the minor ones, during our training regimen. When we injure (sprain, strain, tear, overuse, etc.) our soft tissues (tendons, ligaments, muscles, etc.), fluid collects in the small spaces that surround the tissue, referred to as swelling or edema. This is part of the natural healing process as the body works to bring nutrient-rich fluid to the injured tissue for repair. Recovery time can be decreased dramatically the quicker we can move the old, stagnant fluid out and flood the tissue with fresh nourishment for regeneration. Lymphatic Drainage works with the Lymph system to manually get the fluid moving. It is typical to see marked change from the beginning to the end of a session as fluid that was formerly “sluggish” is moving without restriction, allowing joints to move more freely and swelling to decrease.

Additionally, when applied after massage, Lymphatic Drainage helps to clear the tissue of debris and reduce the minor edema that can occur after deep tissue massage. It is understood that Lymphatic Drainage can also help the scarring process by improving circulation and immunity. Enhanced lymph flow around the scar stimulates damaged lymph vessels to heal while drawing away toxins and improving the health of the tissues.

Other benefits of Lymphatic Drainage Therapy include:

- Immune System stimulation and support
- Regeneration of tissues (e.g., from burns and pre- and post-surgical scarring)
- Detoxification of the body
- Relief of chronic pain
- Deep relaxation to aid insomnia, depression, stress, and loss of vitality
- Reduction in the symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia

To schedule your Lymphatic Drainage Therapy session, or find out more about it, contact me at sarah@thrive-austin.com or call 512.425.0540. **Thrive**Austin is happy to be the 26.2 Massage Therapy/ART sponsor. All club members receive 10% off sixty or ninety minute sessions. Go to www.thrive-austin.com for office information.