



LYMPHATIC DRAINAGE TECHNIQUES

Pg. 35-37 Rattray

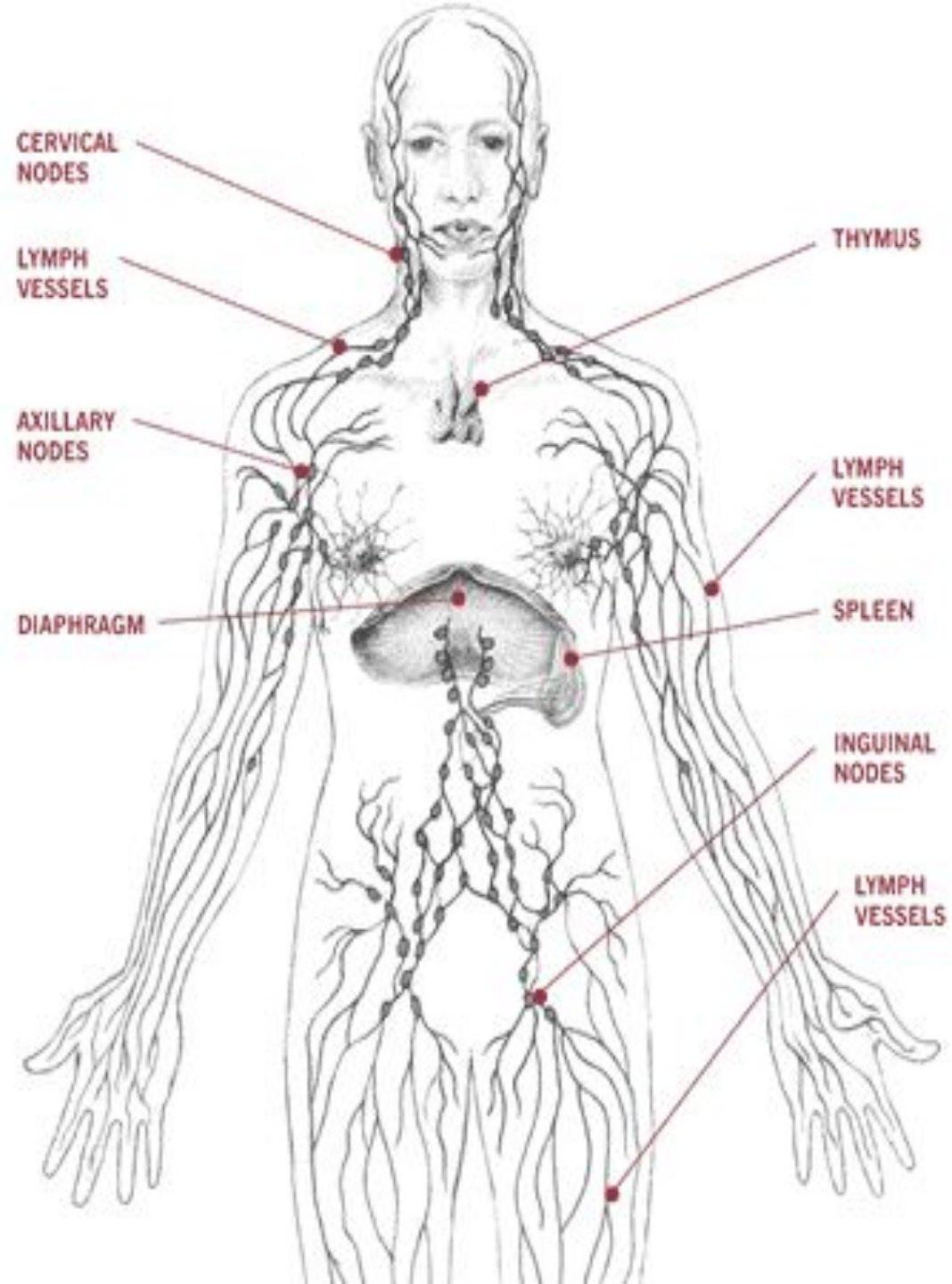


Edema

- Local or general accumulation of fluid in the interstitial tissue spaces.
- Localized edema is often due to lymphatic obstruction or increased capillary permeability (the quality of a material or membrane that causes it to allow liquids or gases to pass through it).
- Generalized edema is frequently due to a systemic pathology or condition such as heart failure, liver or kidney disease.
- Resultant of an acute, or subacute trauma

What is lymph?

- Lymph is a clear, colourless, watery interstitial fluid. It contains plasma proteins, white blood cells, fats and debris such as cell fragments, bacteria and viruses. This fluid is only called lymph once in the lymphatic system.
- Lymphatic system vessels are responsible for the absorption, collection and transport of lymph fluid
- 70% of lymphatic vessels are located in the skin



Massage and the Lymphatic System

- Specialized massage techniques are proven to increase lymphatic flow in the superficial lymphatic capillaries.
- Light Swedish techniques (stroking and kneading) as well as elevation of the affected limb are shown to increase the flow of lymph.
- Massage techniques move lymph by mechanically pumping the lymphatic fluid through the lymphatic capillaries. Thus reducing the edema and pain in the area being treated.
- Compression empties the capillaries, while decompression allows them to refill.
- Pressure within the capillaries is reduced allowing the lymph to flow.
- In those with lymphedema, lymphatic drainage results in an increase of urine output

Lymphatic Drainage Massage

- Refers to systems of soft tissue manipulation designed to assist the function of the lymphatic system
- Techniques include gentle slow repetitive strokes performed in a specific direction and sequence to improve lymph circulation
- It is precise rhythmical massage used for general wellness, to enhance healing and treat lymphedema

Indications

- Used to treat a number of common conditions that involve lymphatic blockages
- Allergy symptoms, arthritis, colds, colitis, edema, sinus congestion, and psoriasis
- Treating of musculoskeletal injuries may also be enhanced with lymphatic treatment
- Also used to treat chronic disorders such as lymphedema which is most often due to a mechanical insufficiency of the lymphatic system

Contraindications

- If infections or parasites are present avoid lymphatic drainage all together since the increase in circulation may cause a flare up of the infection.
- Untreated or metastasizing tumors are contraindicated for treatment due to the increase in circulation
- Edema present as a result of medical treatment from either radiation or lymph node removal though is okay to treat.
- Local or distal work with edema present if present due to thrombophlebitis or DVT (deep vein thrombosis).
- Kidney pathologies
- Asthma and other respiratory conditions ie: TB, bronchitis...
- Thyroid conditions
- Congestive heart failure: avoid full body drainage techniques and no elevation of limbs above the level of the heart.
- Menstruating women
- NOTE: Any condition that may worsen by increased fluid circulation warrants caution with applying lymph techniques.



WHEN IN **DOUBT**,
REFER OUT!!

Find an RMT certified in Manual Lymphatic Drainage, or Lymphatic
Drainage Therapy

Treatment

Basic Principles to follow for Lymph Drainage

- Lymph is pushed toward the nodes.
- The area proximal to a node is treated before the distal area so that the proximal area is emptied to make room for the fluid flowing from the distal end.
- Pressure is limited to just enough to move the skin.
- With each movement the skin is stretched with enough intensity that it ‘snaps back’ when released.
- There is a rest phase with no pressure applied between each stroke.
- The techniques are applied in a rhythmical manner, 6-8 times.
- The pressures phase of a circle lasts longer than the rest phase.
- There should not be hyperemia created.
- There should be NO pain.

4 things an RMT should remember when applying techs

1. Pressure

1. *LIGHT! Only superficial layer of the skin is engaged*
2. *1-4 ounces of pressure*

2. Direction

1. *Towards target lymph nodes*
2. *Rest phase between strokes*

3. Rhythm

1. *SLOW*
2. *Repeated 5-7 times*

4. Sequence

Techniques

1. Nodal pump ** consent and communication**
2. Stationary circles
3. Local techniques
 1. *Web*
 2. *Thumbs*

NO MEDIUM NECESSARY