

Lymphedema Home Care Instructions

1. Skin Care

- Wash the affected limb daily with lukewarm water and a mild, pH-balanced cleanser.
- Pat skin dry gently - do not rub.
- Moisturize immediately after cleansing with a fragrance-free, low pH lotion to maintain skin barrier.
- Avoid petroleum-based products that can clog pores or damage compression materials.
- Inspect skin daily for redness, cracks, or signs of infection (warmth, swelling, increased pain).
- Protect from cuts, insect bites, burns, and extreme temperatures.

2. Exercises

Perform gentle exercises to encourage lymphatic flow. Always wear compression bandages or garments during exercise unless otherwise instructed.

Upper Extremity (Arm):

- Shoulder rolls - forward and backward, 10 repetitions each.
- Elbow bends - bend and straighten slowly, 10 repetitions.
- Wrist circles - clockwise and counterclockwise, 10 repetitions each.
- Open and close hands slowly, 10 repetitions.

Lower Extremity (Leg):

- Ankle pumps - point and flex toes, 10 repetitions.
- Knee bends - seated or lying, slowly bend and straighten, 10 repetitions.
- Leg lifts - lying on back, lift leg a few inches and hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Gentle walking or water exercise for 10-15 minutes daily.

3. Self-Bandaging

- Wash hands before beginning.
- Apply stockinette over clean, dry skin.
- Pad bony areas and any skin folds to prevent pressure points.
- Wrap toes/fingers first using soft, non-elastic gauze.
- Apply short-stretch bandages from distal (farthest from body) to proximal (closer to body).
- Use light tension at the start and gradually increase toward the top.
- Overlap bandage layers by about 50% to ensure even compression.
- Secure ends with tape or Velcro - never pins.
- Check for signs of restricted circulation: numbness, tingling, coldness, or pain. Remove immediately if these occur.
- Bandages should be worn as instructed by your therapist (typically 23 hours/day in intensive phase).

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4. Safety and When to Call Your Therapist

Contact your therapist or healthcare provider if you notice:

- Increased swelling, redness, or warmth in the limb.
- Fever or flu-like symptoms.
- New pain, numbness, or tingling.
- Any wounds, skin breakdown, or signs of infection.

Your therapist: Criselda White, CCST, CMLDT, CLT/CDT, MTI

Phone: (512) 817-3008

Location: Lymph in Motion by Criselda White, Cedar Park, TX