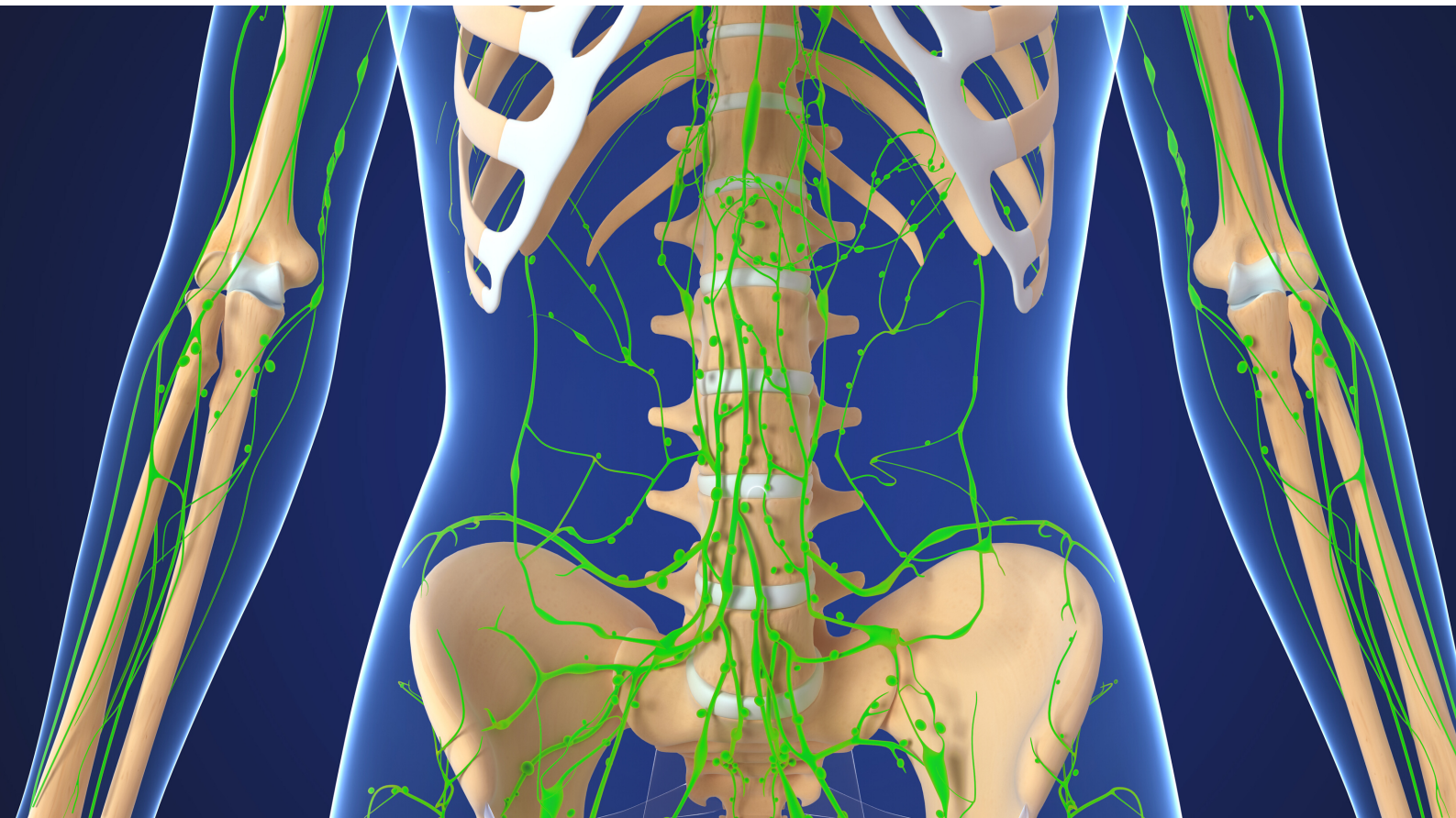


Lymph 101:

How to reclaim your health by
improving the function of your
lymphatic system

Reduce puffiness, beat the bloat and get back in
flow through simple daily practices



BY KAREN HOBBS

How can you tell if your lymphatic system needs help?

Do you suffer from:

- Puffy-looking skin, particularly below your eyes, jawline, arms or legs?
- Have trouble losing weight or constantly feel bloated around the middle?
- Suffer from headaches, fatigue or brain fog?
- Experience digestive complaints?
- Have pain, soreness, stiffness, swelling or redness in any part of the body?
- Catch frequent colds or suffer from allergies?
- Experience skin problems, such as dry, itchy, red or blemished skin?



If you answered yes to any or all of the above, it is likely that your lymphatic system is not working as efficiently as it needs to be.

“In the long term, an overwhelmed lymphatic system can lead to chronic inflammation, an increased risk of disease and a lowered ability of the lymph nodes to trap and destroy cancer cells.”

What is the lymphatic system?

The lymphatic system is the body's drainage system, as well as an integral component of our immune system. The lymphatic system gathers up the fluid (lymph) that leaks out of our blood vessels and into our body's tissues. It then returns the leaked fluid to the blood to be used again or filtered out, thereby reducing swelling and maintaining your overall fluid balance.

Lymph nodes, which are found along the rivers of lymph vessels, clean the lymph as it moves through them, calling on immune cells to attack viruses and bacteria, or break down toxins that can cause illness and dysfunction within the body.

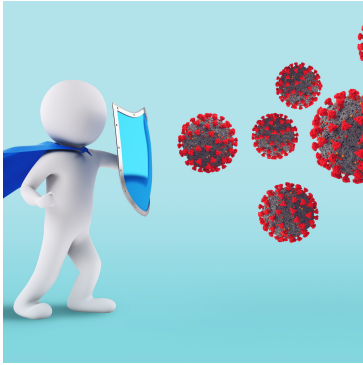
You can think of the lymphatic system as a security check at the airport. Some fluid needs to be pulled aside to go through random checks to make sure it isn't transporting anything dangerous, before being allowed back into the bloodstream to continue its journey.



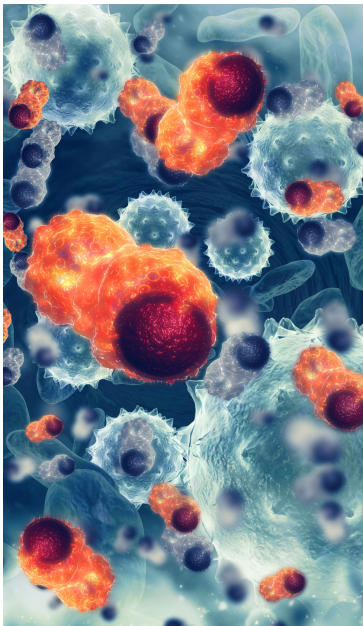
Important tip

The lymphatic system does not have a pump (like the heart for the circulatory system) to move lymph fluid around your body. It relies on physical movement of the skeletal muscles to function effectively.

10 reasons why maintaining a healthy lymphatic system is so important:



1. **Immune system support**
The primary function of the lymphatic system is to support the immune system by transporting white blood cells throughout the body to where they are needed to fight infections before they can take hold.



2. **Detoxification**
Lymph nodes are located around the body to filter lymph fluid, trapping and destroying pathogens, abnormal cells and cellular waste. This filtered fluid is then sent to the circulatory system to be used again or to be processed out of the body. If the system is sluggish, waste and toxins are held in the tissue longer than they should be, causing stress to the body.



3. **Reduced fluid retention**
The lymphatic system regulates the volume of fluid and pressure in the tissues of the body. When the lymphatic system is overwhelmed, it can lead to a build up of lymph fluid in the tissues, causing swelling and puffy looking skin.
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4.

Weight loss

Specialised lymphatic vessels in the small intestines help transport dietary fat from the digestive system to the bloodstream. The fat is used by the body for energy, and the excess is sent to the liver (via the heart) to be filtered out. If the lymphatic system is sluggish, fat absorption is impaired, and the fat will instead accumulate in the tissues of the body.



5.

Improved digestion

As the lymphatic system absorbs fat and vitamins from the digestive system, it also eliminates harmful bacteria and toxins, reducing the risk of inflammation and infections in the gut. If the lymphatic system is sluggish and overloaded it can result in digestive complaints such as reduced motility, bloating and can lead to inflammatory bowel disease or other digestive disorders.





6. **Reduced sinus congestion**
- A healthy lymphatic system can help to reduce congestion and pressure in the sinuses by promoting the drainage of excess fluid and mucous. Roughly 40% of your lymph nodes are actually found in your neck.



7. **Faster healing**
- It is a normal healing response for your body to induce swelling at a site of an injury or surgical incision. However if the swelling is excessive it can lead to pain, decreased mobility, scarring or circulation issues. A faster flowing lymphatic drainage system can reduce healing time by taking excess toxins, waste and fluid out of the tissue, as well as reducing excess swelling.



8. **Increased energy**
- If the lymphatic system is too bogged down with metabolic waste, that toxic load is sitting in your system longer than it needs to be. A healthy lymphatic system will remove this waste faster, and therefore increase your energy levels by literally 'taking a load off'.
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9.

Reduced pain

A slow moving lymphatic system can cause surrounding tissue to become toxic and inflamed, making the superficial nerves hypersensitive to pain. Excess swelling will also put pressure on the surrounding tissue, causing pain, decreased mobility and compensation patterns. A good flowing lymphatic system will reduce swelling as well as break down and remove pain-inducing inflammatory substances from the body's tissues.

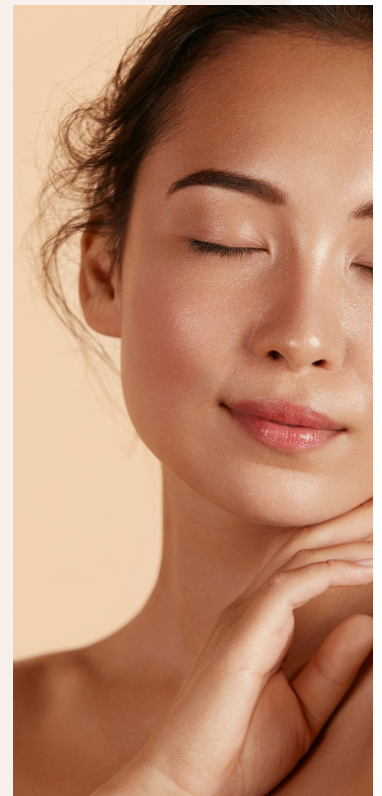


10.

Improved skin quality

If the lymphatic system is not performing properly, waste accumulates beneath the skin, leading to dull, uneven or puffy skin, as well as contributing to rashes, acne, eczema, psoriasis and cellulite.

Improving your lymphatic flow can improve the appearance of skin by clearing out bacteria and toxins, and creating a clear pathway for hydration, nutrients and oxygen to be delivered to the skin cells.



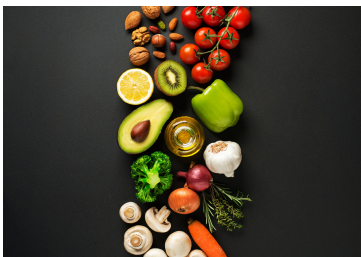
So what can you do to improve your flow?



Move your body – Your lymphatic system depends on muscle movement to move your lymph. Some of the best exercises to improve lymph flow are rebounding on a trampoline, cycling, swimming, walking, dancing and yoga (especially inversions and twists).



Hydrate – Being dehydrated can prompt your body to hold on to excess water, rather than filtering it out. Additionally, your lymphatic system relies on a continual supply of water to move waste out of your tissues.



Eat a balanced diet – Avoid processed foods, sugar, alcohol, dairy, and grains as much as possible as these substances increase the toxic load that our body has to clear out on a daily basis.

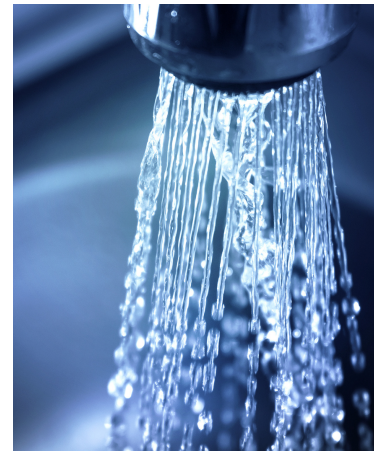


Reduce your skin's exposure to toxins – Your skin absorbs approximately 60% of what you put on it, and many skincare and cleaning products are laden with chemicals that can overload your lymphatic system.



Deep breathing – Deep belly breathing stimulates the largest lymphatic vessel in your body – the thoracic duct – which absorbs, transports and drains lymph fluid from the entire left and lower half of your body (that is about 75% of your total lymph).

Hot/cold therapy – The use of infrared saunas allows your skin to sweat out toxins, rather than burdening the lymphatic system. Additionally, cold water causes lymph vessels to contract, stimulating a pumping action of the lymph system. This method can be as simple as turning the tap to cold for 30–60 seconds at the end of your shower.



Dry-brushing – As the majority of the lymph is found directly under the skin, brushing the skin in the direction of the heart, can stimulate lymph flow to make it's way back for filtering out of the body.



Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD) – schedule regular MLD treatments. This is a very specific massage technique that applies very light pressure above the fascia, directing lymph to flow in the direction of the closest lymph nodes, and ultimately towards the heart.



Important tip

A single Manual Lymphatic Drainage treatment can increase the flow of lymph around your body from 1.5–2L per day to 15–30L per day (that's 10–15 times more!).

Still feeling stuck?

If you have tried incorporating the above tools into your self-care routine but you are not seeing an increase in your overall health it may signify a deeper underlying issue that needs to be addressed. These causes can be rooted in the emotional, mental and spiritual body, not just the physical.

These underlying causes will vary from individual to individual, so you may need 1:1 support to track what is keeping your body's lymphatic system slow and sluggish.



“My mission is to help clients to uncover the root cause of inflammation in their body and bring their body back into balance.”

Hello, I'm Karen!

I am a Remedial Massage Therapist and Kinesiologist with over twelve years experience of bodywork and energy medicine. In that time I have helped many clients to understand the importance of the lymphatic system in the improvement of all areas of their health.

I am passionate about assisting clients to take charge of their own health, by giving them tools that they can use between visits to maximise their results. More importantly I help my clients to uncover the root cause of their sluggish lymphatic system, through a holistic blend of Kinesiology and wellness coaching, so your body can return to it's natural state of health and balance.



I'd love to support you through the next steps of your journey. Let's get started in-person or online. [Click here](#) to book your session.

Thank you!



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