

UKLC – Massage World – Study Room 10

What is Lymphatic Integrated Massage?

As therapists we all so enjoy the effect that massage has on our clients. It's what we love about our world it gives us drive and job satisfaction. Whichever massage you administer - whether to help the client relax and unwind, specifically releasing myofascial tension, or as a general regular pick me up, we all want the best for our clients. We want to help them keep healthier and we know the beneficial effects of massage. But our massage world is changing, and the question is - are you changing with it?

With many different and innovative massage techniques around today, there is one massage that has not actually changed since 1936 when it was first presented to the world 84 years ago by Doctors - manual lymphatic drainage or MLD as we know it today.

But how many of us understand lymphatic massage or the lymph system itself formed alongside blood in the developing embryo? Even if we do manual lymphatic drainage massage, do we explain the amazing health benefits to our clients and why they really should have lymph massage as part of their health routine? My guess is probably not!

Whether your clients are gym bunnies or couch potatoes or something in between, their lymphatic system always needs far more attention than we ever give it. If you are trained in MLD then once a month all your clients should be encouraged to have it to improve their health. So why is it then that MLD does not appeal to everyone? Some comments are: "It's so slow, I cannot feel the same benefit as much as massage" or "I don't have cancer; why do I need it?"

Our lymphatic system hasn't changed since we were created but our diet, lifestyles, stressful lives and the way we live has had a huge detrimental and dramatic effect on the lymphatic system. You just need to look around at increased obesity or when you are massaging your clients notice how many are quite puffy underneath the skin. It doesn't feel like fat; it feels different. This is because the lymphatic system is not working properly and an indication, they would benefit from lymphatic massage.

The reason behind Lymphatic Integrated Massage

After learning Földi/Vodder MLD massage and applying it on my clients, I felt that I needed more from this traditional lymph massage. I felt I needed to `work` the system more effectively so over five years I created a new lymph massage technique. Based on MLD but one that could be used more for a health benefit and one that I knew gave quite dramatic effects even after one session.

Knowing the lymphatic system is a pressure system and like a tyre pressure you can feel when there is too much in it, so by working the system you improve the flow by releasing pressure from within. The problem was, my clients wanted both body and lymph massage, but it was too expensive for both. Understanding how essential a healthy lymphatic system is and with 39 years of experience, I created a new lymphatic integrated massage and the effects speak for themselves.

LIM in comparison to traditional MLD?

There are only a few methods of traditional MLD i.e. Vodder, Casley-Smith, Földi and Chickly but interestingly, they all originated from Vodder. There is no difference when it comes to the application of the start of LIM as all MLD massage must start in the cervical

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nodes and axilla regions. This is because the system must be cleared at the entry point to the heart before it can move from the furthest away which are the toes, feet and ankles. The lymphatic system is designed to work at a slow pace and is very ubiquitous, but it easily becomes sluggish therefore it is essential to keep it flowing and as therapists we need to do this for our clients.

LIM in comparison to MLD is the difference between having a long lazy bath for your lymphatic system to taking a shower. MLD will move your lymphatic system along and have great health benefits but LIM gives therapists the opportunity to combine massage and lymph working both systems together for a new health boost for clients.

Why LIM?

Sedentary lifestyle causes sluggish, stagnant lymph inside the body which needs a good clear out and a helping hand to be moved. The very necessary gentle opening capillary movements are essential to start but after you have carried out a lovely relaxing massage which has increased blood flow but these gentle movements don't necessarily reach the deeper lymphatics or the lymph nodes to prompt emptying.

If you go for a run, you improve optimal lymph flow with the combination of increased heart rate, deeper breathing, joint movement, muscular contraction, all so beneficial to clear the waste system. But you wouldn't expect your clients to go for a run after a body massage just to empty their waste that you have kindly and effectively dumped into their lymphatic system. No of course not! However, giving them a LIM massage is just like cleaning out their waste for them and equivalent of them going for a short jog. We also encourage drinking more water for the rest of that day to assist waste removal.

What is LIM?

Designed for therapists with three weeks pre-study plus one day's training, LIM is a short fifteen-minute massage of effective powerful lymphatic drainage, working the system from light opening capillaries to firm and intense movements for maximum lymphangioactivity. This can easily be promoted as 'the go to lunchtime health boost', especially appealing for clients who sit in an office or don't want to go to the gym but they do want to help their body remove waste and toxins.

Cancer is defended by the lymphatic system every day, but it can only do this if it gets moved regularly through from lymph node to node to be filtered and cleaned and is why we have up to 1,000 in the whole body with 60 - 70% in the abdomen.

Time for change!

If trained in MLD really do promote regular appointments as a 'must have' health service for immunity, waste fluid and fat transportation or learn LIM which is the new shortened updated version of this traditional and reputable massage technique. With doctors initialising the creation of lymphatic drainage and after 84 years, do you think as massage therapists it's time we moved forward for the health of our clients!