

Understanding Your Lymphatic System

Odds are, the average person knows they have a lymphatic system, and that's about it. You can't blame them too much, as the lymphatic system is complicated. It runs throughout the body, working side-by-side with the circulatory system, spanning various nodes, organs, and vessels in the body. If your lymphatic system isn't working properly, it is unable to drain excess toxins and fluids from the body causing problems such as swollen limbs, tonsillitis, lymphatic cancer, and other conditions. A working lymphatic system balances the body's fluids, absorbs fat into your system and helps your body's immunological defense. Obviously, it is important to keep it in tip-top shape.

When your blood travels throughout your body, it releases fluid from the capillaries. This fluid, called interstitial fluid, provides nutrients and oxygen for the tissues as it flows throughout the body. In response to this generosity, the cells throw their garbage and waste products out for the interstitial fluid to pick up on its way back to the bloodstream. Luckily the interstitial fluid doesn't mind this treatment and carries this waste back home to the capillaries where 90% of it is reabsorbed. The remaining 10% contains particles too large to pass through the capillary walls, so the lymph system swoops in and sucks it up. With the transfer to a new system in the body, the fluid also gets a name change. Now called lymph, this fluid filters through the lymph nodes and finishes its odyssey back where it started – in the bloodstream.

This process is critical, as the pile-up of waste in the cells can kill them. Without a flowing lymph system, fluid builds up and the body is unable get rid of waste. The waste and fluid itself can cause tissues in the body to swell and can lead to

cancer, painfully enlarged organs, or infections throughout the body.

A properly working lymphatic system is a great ally to have in boosting the immune system. The spleen removes dead cells and foreign invaders from the body. If you were lucky enough to keep your tonsils, these strategically placed lymph nodes provide a line of defense against possible throat infections. Adenoids are lymph nodes in the nasal cavity that minimize the effect of harmful pathogens entering the body. Perhaps the best evidence for the beneficial effects on the immune system due to lymph nodes is their command of lymphocytes, otherwise known as the all-mighty white blood cell. These cells, originating in the bone marrow, control immune reactions, fighting viruses and cancer cells. The lymph fluid relies on these cells to clean out toxins, before the lymphatic fluid is returned to the bloodstream.

Why should you care? If everything seems to be working fine, why fix it if it isn't broke? Sure, you get that tickle in the back of your throat every once in awhile...but hey, my blood pressure's great!

Congrats! But the lymphatic system is at a disadvantage. It lacks a large built-in pump like the cardiovascular system has with the heart. To keep your lymph fluid from achieving the consistency of cottage cheese and causing your fingers to look like not-so-tiny sausages, get moving. A lifestyle of transferring your butt from the car to the office chair, to the sofa in front of the TV decreases the flow of lymph fluid by 94%. Again, get moving. The best way to circulate lymph is exercise.

Some of us haven't jumped rope since that last time we convinced ourselves we would love that boxing class and collapsed halfway through. To get the lymph really moving, maybe give it another try. Bouncing is the best way to make you lymph happy. You don't necessarily have to jump rope, but

a good bounce for 15 to 20 minutes a day can make a big difference in the efficiency of your lymphatic system. Even if you don't feel particularly bouncy, movement can make a big difference. Simple stretches, walking, and bending over to pick something up are all easy to incorporate into the average lifestyle.

Exercise is crucial, but there are others ways that also help your lymphatic system remove toxins and fight pathogens at peak performance. If you can't miss that latest episode of your favorite TV show or your work necessitates lots of sitting, focus on your diet. The more clean (preferably spring) water you drink, the more lymph you'll get flowing. Switching to a diet consisting of 80% fresh, raw, organic produce (see link) can do wonders for your lymph and health overall.

After all of that exercising, you deserve a treat. Guess what? Massage also helps the lymphatic system flow. If you don't want to shell out the money for a lymphatic massage certified therapist, you could use self-massage to promote lymph health. (see link) Doing a cleanse can also help take some of the burden off of the lymph system, so look into detoxing (see link) or Candida cleansing (see link).

It's the season to make sure you take care of your sinuses, and stop that tickle in your throat from becoming something much more serious. A streamlined and fully functioning lymphatic system provides a great defense against common seasonal complaints. Learn more about your lymph system in the first article.

Recommended Supplements:

- Shillington's Blood Detox
- Formula SF722
- Shillington's Intestinal Cleanse
- Shillington's Echinacea +

Further Readings:

- *What We Should Know About Our Lymphatic System*
- *The Glymphatic System – How Insomnia Leads to a Filthy Mind*
- *7 Ways to Help Your Body Detoxify*