

# Aqua Lymphatic Therapy Sessions

**Summer 2011 - Burlington, ON**

Aqua Lymphatic Therapy is a new technique of active lymphatic drainage. This method utilizes a series of specialized exercises in a particular order and the hydrostatic pressure of water to act as a sleeve for lymphedema sufferers. The average temperature is approximately 88 degrees and the session lasts approximately an hour and fifteen minutes from start to finish.

The aqua lymphatic therapy sessions initially started as a pilot study with the assistance of Jodi Steele; a Physiotherapist with a specialization in oncology and lymphedema, Jen Beck; a Physiotherapist with a specialization in oncology and lymphedema, Margaret Forbes; an Advanced Practice Nurse from the Juravinski Cancer Centre and two Kinesiologists, Kate Buchanan and Becky Smith who also have specializations in oncology. The majority of our clientele for the initial session were breast cancer survivors and these therapeutic sessions were directed to those who have upper limb lymphedema. The participants were asked to complete a quality of life measures prior to and after the 10 sessions of the pilot as well as were measured prior to entering the pool (prior to exercise) and after the pool exercises to track the overall volume of the affected limbs. It was found that almost every participant had positive objective results as well as qualitatively positive results. The participants noted both decreased volume of the limb as well as an improvement in symptoms of pain, heaviness and discomfort in the limb.

Aside from the exercise and therapeutic aspect of this class the participants also found that the sessions were a great support group to discuss similar issues or even discuss other outlets that some of the participants utilized, other exercise programs, locations to get assistive devices (i.e. sleeves, etc.), and other practitioners that can assist in lymph drainage (i.e. MLD specialists).

The developer of the sequence of exercises is Dorit Tidhar, she believes that this method of exercise a potential alternative to wrapping and bandaging at night and also a more social and entertaining exercise protocol for lymph drainage allowing for better compliance, improving quality of life. Not to mention, it is one of the most cost effective methods of lymphedema treatment; where the cost of this program per person for 10 sessions is approximately the average cost of ONE Manual Lymphatic Drainage Massage.

As mentioned previously these exercises are introduced in a specific order (proximal to distal) and use the properties of hydrostatic pressure and turbulence of the water through the movements to move the fluid in the arm. Furthermore, many of the techniques we use in the therapy sessions teach the participants how to stretch and exercise properly as well

as teach them the basic aspects of lymph drainage (i.e. priming the lymphatic system and self massage), which can be used predominantly to self maintain in between treatment sessions and when they progress to maintaining their lymphedema independently.

The participants in the pilot project coined themselves the Aquadivas but we would be happy to include some AquaDudes to our groups!

The current session is underway we have commenced our next round of sessions that will run for the summer starting July 8th, 2011. Classes run at Aldershot Pool on Fridays from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. (See link below). Jodi Steele is on her maternity leave at this time and the class is currently being run by Kate Buchanan, a Kinesiologist that works closely with Jodi and Jen in other oncology related exercise centres.

We are also hoping to launch a lower body Aqua Lymphatic Therapy class as well as some evening classes of both the upper and lower limb Aqua Lymphatic Therapy to increase availability to those that cannot make it to the Friday afternoon class.

For more information please contact:

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Directions to Aldershot Pool

<http://www.canpages.ca/page/ON/burlington/burlington-city-of-aldershot-swimming-pool/2741182.html#mapdirections>