

Mya Breman, L.C.S.W., L.M.T., CST-D.

## Lymph Drainage Therapy Achieves Mini Face-Lifting Effects

The application of lymphatic drainage to the face and neck is proven to achieve a number of positive esthetic effects. Incorporated in a massage therapy session, it can provide clients added benefits that include softening of wrinkles and scars, along with enhanced skin quality.

One of the chief ways that lymphatic drainage works to accomplish these results is by improving veno-lymphatic circulation, which aides in the removal of tissue toxins. Lymphatic flow can stagnate for many reasons, such as swelling, lack of physical activity, stress, fatigue, emotional shock, age or food additives. If lymphatic circulation slows down, the regeneration of cells becomes less effective. This condition allows toxins and proteins to accumulate around the cells, causing a decrease in cellular oxygenation and tissue regeneration. Any blockage to the free flow of lymphatic fluid accelerates the aging process and opens the pathway for numerous physical diseases to develop.

By working to remove blockages and promote fluid circulation, lymphatic drainage is an invaluable tool in bolstering the health of the body's tissues, the strength of the immune system, and the general state of a person's well-being. Because the body's peripheral lymphatic vessels can be easily drained, the practice is a standout esthetically for its ability to regenerate skin tissue, improve skin hydration and tone, and relax facial muscles.

Lymph Drainage Therapy (LDT), in particular, is an original method developed by Bruno Chikly, M.D., D.O. (hon.). LDT enables therapists to achieve the above results efficiently and in a short period of time. LDT's unique characteristic is its breakthrough method for detecting and connecting to the specific rhythm, direction, depth and quality of the lymphatic flow. Recent scientific discoveries on the physiology of the lymphatic system verify that these enhancements to the drainage process provide the precise rhythm and pressure needed to optimally activate lymph flow.

The pressure used with Lymph Drainage Therapy is unusually light—one ounce maximum pressure per square centimeter. The application differs from other drainage practices in that the therapist works with both hands positioned flat on the client. He or she then uses all the fingers to simulate wave-like

movements. This action prompts small muscular units located along the walls of the lymphatic channels (referred to as "lymphangions") to activate the flow of lymph. Since the rhythm used emulates alpha-brain waves, clients are brought into a deep state of relaxation in the process.

The response to LDT is often obvious after the first application. The client attains a special glow, indicating global rejuvenation of the skin's appearance and the alleviation—or at times disappearance—of small wrinkles. Improvement in swelling, particularly of the lower eyelids, may also be noticed.

The application of LDT on swollen lower eyelids—or under-eye bags as they're usually called—can be addressed like any other swelling. This is not merely a wrinkle, but may involve the sagging of tissue (ptosis). When it is too advanced it is almost irreversible, but LDT still can improve it in several ways. By applying LDT to detoxify the tissues, the technique helps them to regenerate. The quality of the skin changes as does the appearance, alleviating the swelling. It should be noted, however, that advanced cases of lower eyelid swelling also could be signs of some general health problems, such as stress, sleeping disorder or poor diet that should be addressed.

The LDT sequence for the face takes between 15 and 35 minutes to perform. It is important to follow the order as it is taught and to be watchful during the first two or three sessions for a possible detoxification reaction in the client. This protocol can be applied once or twice a day, or one to three times a week for optimum results.

Incorporating Lymph Drainage Therapy in the massage therapy session can add a dynamic new dimension to the therapeutic process—one that offers the client the welcome benefit of mini face-lift effects, and the therapist the advantage of a technique that is both highly effective and less tiring to apply.

