

# Movement and activity for arm and breast lymphoedema

Information for patients



Leeds Cancer  
Centre

This leaflet is aimed at encouraging movement and activity for patients experiencing lymphoedema to the arm and/ or breast.

## **Movement and activity for arm and breast lymphoedema**

You do not need to restrict or avoid physical activity after an axillary (armpit) intervention.

### **Move within your capability.**

Movement and activity help your body's circulation. This might help reduce swelling. Exercise makes the muscles contract and pushes oedema through lymph vessels.

If you notice any signs of infection to your treatment area; such as redness, heat, swelling, discharge and you may feel unwell – **seek medical attention by contacting your GP or 111 if out of hours.**

### **Positioning yourself at rest**

When you're sitting or lying down, it helps to position yourself in a way that helps the lymph to drain.

With arm oedema, when you're sitting, raise your arm to a comfortable level by putting it on a cushion or a pillow.



## Deep breathing



Scan or click the QR code to watch the video by Cancer Research UK on YouTube:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rku5PGz48c8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rku5PGz48c8)

- You can do these breathing exercises while sitting up in a chair or in bed, or while lying down.
- Relax your shoulders and upper chest.
- Rest one of your hands below your ribs.
- Take a slow, deep, comfortable breath in through your nose, feeling your hand rise as your tummy (abdomen) rises.
- Then slowly breathe out through your mouth, so your abdomen is flat again.
- Do this 5 times

**Arm oedema—Wear your compression sleeve when you're exercising if you have one. Try to do some exercises every day.**

### **Arm, wrist and hand exercises**



Scan or click the QR code to watch the video by Cancer Research UK on YouTube:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcQB6pZmdN0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcQB6pZmdN0)

- Combined movements - sit comfortably in a chair then with your hands touch your knees then touch your shoulders and lift your arms as much as possible without pain, touch your shoulders and then your knees.
- Pretend breast stroke swimming – In a standing position or seated on a chair cross your arms in front of your chest and swing them out to your sides, if this is too difficult try it at waist height. You can also do a pretend backstroke.
- Exercise with a ball - press the ball between your hands, pressing slowly.
- Rest your arm on a cushion with your hand hanging off the end. Bend your wrist down until you feel a stretch, hold for 5 seconds and slowly relax. Then bend your wrist up until you feel a stretch again and hold it for 5 secs and then relax.
- Circles - rest your arm on a cushion with your hand hanging off the edge. Turn your wrist in clockwise circles and then anti clockwise.

- Clench your hand to make a fist and then open and spread your fingers out wide.
- Thumb to finger - using your thumb touch each finger one at a time, as it becomes easier you can start doing it faster.
- Bend and extend - bend your fingers at the knuckles, keeping your fingers straight.
- Hold your hand out with fingers together then spread your fingers out, then close your fingers together again

## Self-care notes

## Useful addresses and phone numbers



Scan or click the QR code for website.

**Lymphoedema Support Network**

Telephone: **0207 351 4480**

[www.lymphoedema.org](http://www.lymphoedema.org)

## Leeds Cancer Support

Leeds cancer support compliments care offered by your clinical team. We offer access to information and a wide range of support, in a welcoming environment for you, your family and friends.

We can be found in the information lounges in Bexley wing and also in the purpose built Sir Robert Ogden Macmillan centre.

## Contact Numbers for Leeds Cancer Support

**Information lounge level - 2 Radiotherapy department**

Open Monday to Friday from 8:00am until 6:00pm,

Telephone: **(0113) 206 7603**

**Information centre Level 1 Outpatients department**

Open Monday to Friday from 10:00am until 4:00pm,

Telephone: **(0113) 206 8816**

## Sir Robert Ogden Macmillan Centre (Leeds)

Open Monday to Friday from 10:00am until 4:00pm,

Telephone: **(0113) 206 6498**



Scan or click the QR code to email

**Leeds Cancer Support Services:**

[Leedsth-tr.cancersupport@nhs.net](mailto:Leedsth-tr.cancersupport@nhs.net)



Scan or click the QR code for website.

**Sir Robert Ogden Macmillan Centre  
(Harrogate District Hospital)**

Open Monday to Friday from  
8:00am until 6:00pm

Telephone: **01423 557 300**

[www.hdft.nhs.uk/services/cancer-services/sromc/](http://www.hdft.nhs.uk/services/cancer-services/sromc/)



Scan or click the QR code for website.

**Macmillan Cancer Services**

Freephone: **0808 808 0000**

7 days a week 8:00am until 8:00pm. Interpreters  
are available if required.

For deaf or hard of hearing people dial **18001**  
followed by **0808 808 0000**

[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)



## Jayne Garforth Macmillan Information Centre



Scan or click the QR code for website.

**The Calderdale Royal Hospital,**  
Salterhebble, Halifax HX3 0PW

Open Monday to Friday from  
9:00am until 4:00pm

Telephone: **01422 222 709**

[www.cht.nhs.uk/services/clinical-services/  
oncology/cancer-information-and-support-  
service](http://www.cht.nhs.uk/services/clinical-services/oncology/cancer-information-and-support-service)



Scan or click the QR code to email

**Cancer Information Services:**

[cancerinformation@nhs.net](mailto:cancerinformation@nhs.net)

## Cancer Care Centre

The Calderdale Royal Hospital, Salterhebble, Halifax HX3 0PW

Open Monday to Friday from 9:00am until 4:00pm

Telephone: **01422 222 709**

## Cancer Support Yorkshire



Scan or click the QR code for website.

**Daisy House Farm,**

44 Smith Lane, Bradford BD9 6DA

Open Monday to Friday from

9:00am until 5:00pm

Telephone: **01274 776688**

[cancersupportyorkshire.org.uk/](http://cancersupportyorkshire.org.uk/)



Scan or click the QR code to email

**Cancer Support Yorkshire:**

[support@csyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:support@csyorkshire.org.uk)

## Maggie's Centre Leeds

Practical, emotional and social support for people with cancer.



Scan or click the QR code for website.

**St James University Hospital,**

Alma Street, Leeds LS9 7BE

Telephone: **0113 457 8364**

[www.maggies.org/](http://www.maggies.org/)



Scan or click the QR code to email

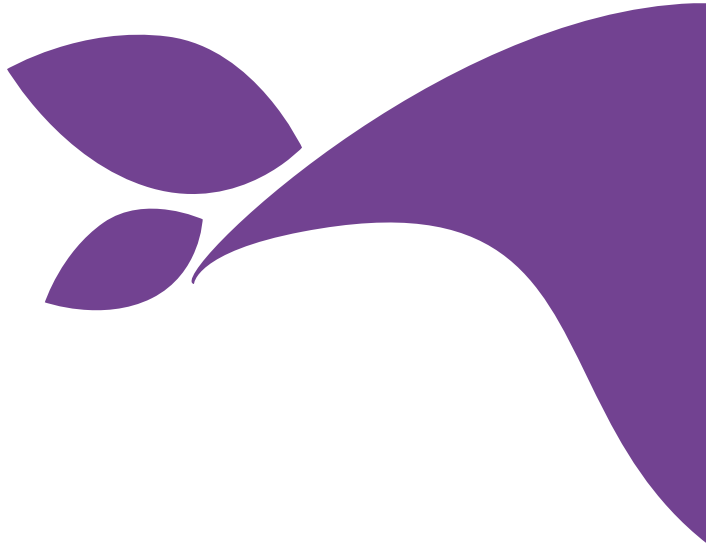
**Cancer Support Yorkshire:**

[support@csyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:support@csyorkshire.org.uk)

You can contact the **Lymphoedema Department**

Monday to Friday during the day.

Hours can vary Telephone: **0113 392 1807**



## What did you think of your care?

Visit: [www.leedsth.nhs.uk/patients/support/feedback-complaints/friends-family-test/](http://www.leedsth.nhs.uk/patients/support/feedback-complaints/friends-family-test/)

**Scan or click the QR code - Your views matter**

© The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust • 1st Edition Version 1  
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