

Guided Visualization for the Lymph Vessel System of the Leg

This guided visualization may be incorporated with self-massage. You can tape this for yourself and use soothing music with water sounds in the background.

Find a quiet place where you can allow your body to rest. This may be lying down or sitting in a supported way.

Close your eyes and feel your body melt into the chair or bed. Breathe in and out and with each breath let go more and feel the support of the surface under you.

Now bring your awareness to your breath. Notice how you are breathing... the rise and fall of your chest, the movement of your ribs with each breath, the rhythmic movement of your abdomen.

With each breath the lymph fluid moves in small waves towards the sea of your heart. Again and again the waves wash towards the shore, bringing cleansed fluid back to the terminus in your neck and then to your heart.

Breathe in and out. See the streams of lymph vessels in your neck trickling fluid along the sides of your neck towards terminus. See and feel the pathways down the back of your neck trickling through the trapezius muscle on the top of your shoulder, into an open terminus on each side. Breathe in and out.

Again and again come back to these trickling streams and encourage their movement, little eddies, currents moving the clear fluid back to your heart. Rivers flowing to the sea, from each cell and the fluid bathing them. Slowly and gently, a steady rhythm moves, completing a cycle in your body, reminding you who you are. Breathe in and out.

Now bring your attention to the lymph nodes beside your sternum, your breastbone. And with each breath, "light up" pairs of these nodes in between each rib space – like tiny Christmas tree lights.

Continue to encourage these nodes to light up as you perhaps feel them soften, and sense a flow of fluid from between your ribs moving through them.

You may then bring your attention to the pairs of lymph nodes on either side of your spine, all the way down your back. Again, take time, "lighting up" these nodes in your mind's eye, feeling them soften, encouraging those that need extra support.

Breathe in and out and feel the waves rippling to the sea.

Just below your diaphragm, nestled underneath it, close to your spine, is a well – a collector of the waters of your body. When full, this well of light, Cisterna Chyli, sends shimmering waves of fluid into the thoracic duct in your chest. This waterway pulses wave after wave of fluid towards your left terminus and of course your heart.

Imagine the thoracic duct flowing freely, drawing fluid from the abdomen. Breathe in and out.

Now bring your attention to the tributaries that flow into Cisterna Chyli. These multiple streams flow on a diagonal from each leg through your belly towards the well.

All along these streams are lymph nodes, like pearls on a necklace or strings of lights in the sky. In your imagination, light up these pathways with puffs of light to each node. Start closest to Cisterna Chyli and work your way on both sides to the top of your thigh. Again and again gently send puffs of light to these nodes and notice the trickling fluid moving faster towards the well. Breathe in and out.

If there are pathways that are sluggish in your abdomen, encourage the streams to find another choice. Perhaps your streams will swirl one way or another around a blockage to find free movement again. Gently encourage the waters through the landscape of your body. Breathe in and out and notice your abdomen rise and fall.

Next come to the top of your thigh. The lymph pathways here trickle fluid through nodes and under the inguinal ligament into the abdomen. Send light to these nodes and notice them soften and move fluid out of your leg into the rivers of your abdomen. Breathe in and out.

Perhaps your body is moving the fluid in your thigh to the outside of your leg and then along surface streams all the way past the waist to your ribs and armpit. If so, support this choice as you imagine these streams returning fluid to the heart. Breathe in and out.

Waters from your lower leg may move into these streams. Some streams from the ankle and foot travel deep, as if underground, staying deep behind the knee. These streams may follow the nerves through the seat muscles, into the sacrum. Here they connect with the tributaries on the way to Cisterna Chyli.

Breathe in and out and see all these waterways gently moving fluid back to the sea.

Notice which pathways are trickling well. Perhaps some, or all, need some support along the way. Breathe in and out, continue to support these rivulets to drain to the sea. Take the time you need to feel all the pathways open and moving water to the sea.

And now bring your awareness to your whole body. How are you feeling? Is your body more relaxed? Do some areas of your abdomen, upper or lower leg feel softer and more comfortable?

Breathe in and out, feeling each wave caressed by a breath of thankfulness.

Reprinted from Langfield, S. & McFarland, J. (2000). *Where the Rivers Meet the Sea: Using the Body Mind Spirit Connections in the Management of Lymphedema*. Cookstown: Cookstown Centre for Wellness, 42-3.