

# Guided Visualization for the Lymph Vessel System of the Arm

*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. This visualization is intended for someone with breast surgery and lymph node dissection on one side only. To adapt it, consult your lymphedema therapist.*

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.

Move to new streams, notice gentle waterways taking fluid across your chest, rippling waters from your “affected” side to the other side. Again and again imagine the little streams finding their way across your chest, through the tissues from one side to the other. From here, they will easily find their way back to the sea. Breathe in and out.

Some streams also move waters across your spine, from the armpit and back of the shoulder through the landscape of your body over your spine and eventually on familiar paths to your heart.

There may also be streams to move fluid from your armpit and the scars downwards towards your waist. These streams wind their serpentine pathways along new routes to more open waterways. All of the pathways leading to the sea, back to the heart. Breathe in and out... and remember who you are.

Next this shimmering fluid moves out of your arm through new found river beds. The streams are all returning fluid to your neck, to the sea. You may notice fluid trickling along pathways in the front of your chest, going to the other side. You may notice a similar movement across your back. And you may feel fluid trickling up your arm from the outside, perhaps all the way from your hand, across the elbow, moving steadily behind your shoulder towards the sea... through the pathways in your trapezius muscle to terminus.

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 into your whole body. How are you feeling? Is your body more relaxed? Do some areas of your neck, chest, or arm 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, 40-1.**