

Managing Lymphedema and Maintaining Leg Health During the Summer

If you are living with Lymphedema or another health-related issue that causes certain body parts to swell, chances are that you will notice more discomfort and edema during the summer. OccFit Solutions would like to help you increase your comfort and safety during in the heat and humidity.



The summertime can affect your lymphatic system's natural "pumping" rhythm. Extreme temperatures (both hot and cold) are primary causes for a slower pumping lymphatic system. Some other common causes of swelling and infection in the summertime include

Air travel

- Summer is a popular vacation season, but air travel can be difficult for those living with lymphedema or other health-related issues that cause certain body parts to swell. An airplane's cabin pressure becomes much lower than it is on the ground. Like the summer heat, low pressure can slow the lymphatic system's natural rhythm and lead to swelling.
- Tip: Put on your compression garments before getting on the plane and be sure to leave them on for 2 hours after landing to allow your body to adjust to being back on the ground!

Sun exposure

- Sunburn can raise your body's temperature and can cause the area to have an inflammatory response.
- You will sweat more often during the summer months, so be sure to keep your compression garments clean and fresh with regular washings to avoid skin irritation.
- Tip: Try to stay indoors during the hottest hours of the day and wear plenty of sunscreen while your outdoors. Clothing with moisture-wicking fabric will help keep you cool and can also protect your skin from UV rays.

Insects bites & Nicks/Cuts

- In addition to the sun, your skin is also exposed to mosquitos and other biting insects. Bug bites can easily increase your risk for infection. Outdoor activities such as gardening, camping, and fishing may result in couple of nicks and cuts.
- Tip: Use insect repellent and wear lightweight clothing that covers your skin. Mosquitos and other insects are dense in wooded areas and around water, so try to avoid these spots during dusk hours. If you do get bitten, avoid scratching the area. Clean any breaks in the skin with soap and water or alcohol wipes, then apply antibiotic ointment. Don't delay in seeking medical treatment if you notice warmth, redness, pain or increased swelling near the site of the cut.

Stay Active & Keep Cool

Staying active is fun and beneficial for your health. Exercise can even improve your lymphedema prognosis! Be sure to drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. Be careful to avoid wearing damp compression garments for extended

If it feels too hot to comfortably perform physical activity outside, don't worry! There are plenty of exercises that can be performed indoors:

Lymph Drainage Exercises for Upper Extremity Lymphedema Prevention & Management

Shoulder Shrug

1. While seated or standing and your arms down by your side, raise your shoulders towards your ears as you inhale
2. As you exhale, press your shoulders as low as they can
3. Return to a relaxed position
4. Perform this movement 8-10 times, then rest



Shoulder Rolls

1. While seated or standing, lift your shoulders up towards your ears
2. Rotate your shoulders back and down, making a smooth, continuous motion
3. Repeat this movement 5-10 times in each direction



Shoulder Circles

1. While seated or standing, hold your arms out to the side at shoulder height with your palms facing down
2. Make small circles with your arms, keeping them at shoulder level
3. Repeat this movement 5-10 times in each direction



Isometric Chest Press

1. While seated or standing, place your palms together in front of your chest.
2. Exhale and push your hands firmly together. Hold this position for 2-3 seconds
3. Inhale and relax. Perform this exercise 5-10 times

