

Lymphoedema Information

Head and Neck Exercises

Video for head and neck exercises can be found on our website
www.teessidehospice.org/lymphoedema-clinic

Exercise and movement are an important aspect in managing lymphoedema, so using your head, neck and shoulder muscles may help to reduce your swelling.

We suggest you do the following specific exercises 2-3 times a day and it may take several weeks to build up to doing each exercise, please don't do if you experience discomfort or pain.

It may help to do the exercises in front of a mirror and make sure your shoulders are relaxed and back.

1. **Breathing**

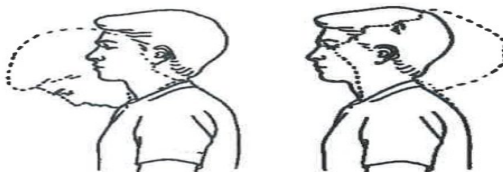
Start with abdominal breathing, place your hands on your stomach, keeping your shoulders still and relaxed. Take a deep breath in and push your hands out by expanding your abdomen muscles. Breathe out and let your hands return to their original position, repeat this **5 times**.



2. Neck

Tilt your head down towards your chest, hold for 5 seconds until you feel a gentle stretch at the back of your neck. Return to the centre.

Now look towards the ceiling until you feel a gentle stretch, hold and try to keep your lips closed. Repeat 5 times in each direction.



Bend your head to the side, trying to bring your ear as close to your shoulder as you can. Keep your shoulders relaxed. Hold for 5 seconds, then return to the centre. Repeat on both sides, 5 times in each direction.

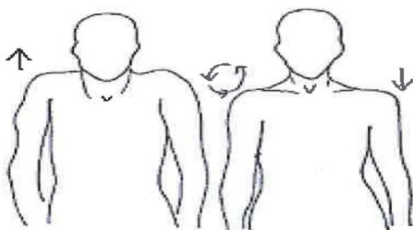


Turn your head towards one side as though looking over your shoulder, keeping your chin at the same height and moving within comfortable limits. Return your head to the centre and repeat on the opposite side. Repeat 5 times on each side.



3. Shoulders

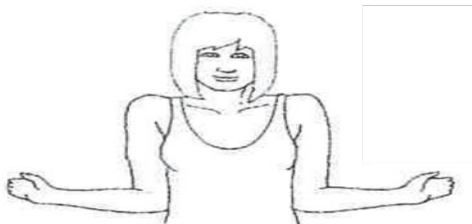
Lift your shoulders up towards your ears as though shrugging your shoulders, hold for a few seconds and gently lower as far as you can, then relax. As you start to feel more confident with this exercise, lift your shoulders upwards and gently roll them backwards as though opening up your chest. Repeat each exercise 5 times



Lift your arms up one at a time, let your thumb lead the way. Only go as far as is comfortable, gradually increasing the movement with time. Repeat 5 times on each arm.



Bend your elbows and keep them tucked into your sides. Gently move your forearms outwards and back again. Repeat 5 times



4. **Mouth**

Open and close your mouth, 5 times

Imagine you are blowing out a candle, 5 times.

Make kissing movements quickly, 5 times

Make an exaggerated smile and hold for 2 seconds. 5 times.

Exaggerate making the vowel sounds – A,E,I,O and U, 5 times.

5. **Jaw**

Move your jaw side to side 5 times.

Move your jaw backwards and forwards 5 times.

6. **Eyes**

Scrunch your eyes shut for 2 seconds and relax, do this 5 times

7. **Breathing**

Finish by doing 5 abdominal breaths (see No 1)

Reviewed April 2022