

7. While lying on your back, move the involved arm to 90 degree, actively do hand pumping by making and opening the fist.



8. While facing a wall, place one or both palms on the wall with the hands above shoulder level. Gently press the palms into the wall for several seconds without moving the body. After performing wall press, keep the heel of the hand on the wall and alternatively move all of the fingers away from and back to the wall.



#### Self Massage by the Patient:

Self Massage by the Patient involves slow, very light repetitive stroking and circular massage movements done in a specific sequence with the involved extremity elevated whenever possible. Proximal congestion in the axilla is cleared first to make room for fluid from the more distal areas.

Fluid in the involved extremity then is cleared, first in the proximal portion and then in the distal portion of the limb.

#### Contact your Doctor:

- If there is a change in the size of your arm
- If you have feelings of heaviness and aching when doing activities
- If aching continues

#### Where can I get help?

If you have any queries or problems related to your health, please contact:

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital & Research Centre.

Phone#: +92-42- 35905000

Ext:2192 (Breast Care Nurse Inpatient - 1)

5130 (Breast Care Nurse Outpatient Nursing)

Days: Monday-Friday

Time:8:00am-5:00pm

Reference: Royal Marsden Hospital

NHS Foundation Trust, London(2002)

Reference: Therapeutic Exercise Foundations and Techniques, Fifth Edition by CAROLYN KISNER, PT, MS & LYNN ALLEN COLBY, PT, MS

#### MISSION STATEMENT

To act as a model institution to alleviate the suffering of patients with cancer through the application of modern methods of curative and palliative therapy irrespective of their ability to pay, the education of health care professionals and the public and perform research into the causes and treatment of cancer.

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## Lymphedema & Exercises



 **Shaukat Khanum**  
Memorial Cancer Hospital  
and Research Centre

## Lymphedema

### What is Lymphedema?

Lymphedema is an accumulation of fluid in the tissues below the skin. Long-term swelling of the arm may occur after surgery to remove lymph glands, or radiotherapy to the armpit. This swelling can be controlled. Symptoms include a general heaviness of the arm, a swelling of the fingers or sometimes difficulty putting on a long sleeve. Sooner the treatment is started; the easier it is to achieve good results. Less than 1 in 10 who have had either lymph glands removed or radiation to the armpit will develop noticeable lymphoedema. The risk increases to 1 in 3 if you have had both of these treatments.

### When can Lymphedema happen?

Lymphedema can occur any time after your operation, even up to ten years.

### What can I do to reduce my risk?

Use your arm normally for daily activities at home or at work but remember that injuries may lead to infection or swelling.

### The following precautions will help to prevent the swelling:

- It is important to keep the skin clean. Wash your skin thoroughly and towel dry skin gently, apply a moisturizing cream regularly.
- If you need injections, or blood taken, ask the doctor or nurse to use your unaffected arm (arm on opposite side to your surgery)
- If you need to have your blood pressure measured, ask the doctor or nurse to use your unaffected arm of the affected arm
- Protect skin from cuts, scratches, knocks, burns, insect bites etc. Treat cuts and scratches promptly
- Use hair removing cream to remove hair from your under arm
- Avoid burns from irons, ovens (use gloves), hot saucepans and dishwashing water

- If injury occurs, wash the skin thoroughly and apply a disinfectant
- Consult your doctor immediately if you notice any signs of infection such as redness, heat or pain
- When you cut your nails do not push back your cuticles
- Avoid strenuous, repetitive activity such as scrubbing bathroom tiles
- Avoid carrying heavy weight with your affected arm
- Avoid carrying a handbag over the forearm or shoulder of the affected arm
- Wear loose-fitting clothing in fabrics like cotton, linen or wool wear a bra that fits correctly
- It is advisable to exercise your arms during travel

### What Should I watch for?

Contact your doctor as soon as possible if you notice:

- Redness
- Warmth of the skin
- Pain in the arm
- Fever
- Swelling of the arms

These could be signs of infection and may need antibiotics. Call the on duty doctor at Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital & Research Centre at:

Ph: +92-42-35905000 Ext: 3433, 3435

(Try to see the doctor as soon as possible.)

### What if my arm aches?

If your arm aches it may help if you:

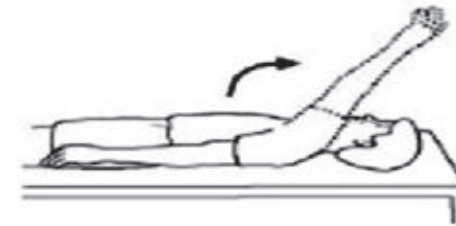
- Sit down and elevate your arm on a cushion
- Twist fingers and open and close your hand
- Stroke arm towards the shoulder

## Simple Exercises to reduce your arm swelling

1. While lying on your back, move the involved arm to 90 degree, start active circular motion of the arm in clockwise and anticlockwise direction.



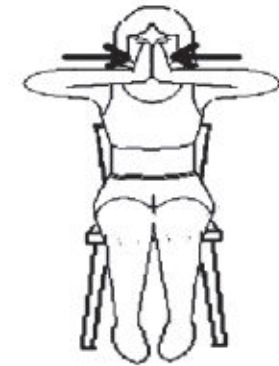
2. While lying on your back with arms straight at your sides. Slowly raise involved arm over your head and back as far as it comfortably will go. Your elbow should be straight. Slowly return your arm to the starting position.



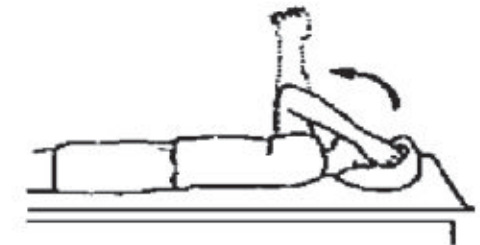
3. While lying on your back, move your involved arm across the chest as far as possible and then back.



4. While on your back or sit on chair with arms elevated to shoulders level and elbows bent and pointing outwards, place the palms of the hands together in front of the chest or head and press the palms together and have normal breathing, count to 10 and relax.



5. While lying on your back with your elbow bent and pointed toward the ceiling. Slowly straighten your elbow and return it to the starting position.



6. While lying on your back, move the involved arm to 90 degree, actively bend the wrist forward then back as far as possible.

