

# Natural therapy

By Catherine Arnault

as featured in *Fitness for Life* magazine,  
May 2010, pages 82-83



email-newsletter  
May 2010

## Manual Lymph Drainage Massage (MLD)



is a painless treatment that stimulates the body's lymph circulation and decreases injury pain. It's rising in popularity with New Zealand medical practitioners and health clinicians, and Catherine Arnault explains why:

I have worked for many years with people with a variety of conditions, including post-surgical pain and sports injuries. The rehabilitative process requires the right mental attitude, support and good specialist advice. Otherwise the healing process can be slow and frustrating. For those with an active lifestyle, a well-functioning lymphatic or lymph system is an important facet of overall wellness and is essential to achieving your best. Flowing throughout the entire body, this often referred to as the 'second circulatory system' and acts as a major elimination mechanism, expelling toxins through the bloodstream. It also plays a key role in the immune system.

**MLD** was developed in the 1930s and is a form of massage designed to unblock congested connective tissues. Its repeated slow, light, rhythmical movements take into account the direction of flow of the lymph under the hands and can improve almost any inflammatory condition. However injuries need to be treated promptly, before changes such as fibrotic tissue occur, which would end up impairing physiologic function. And for new injuries, such as sprains or fractures, **MLD** can offer benefits in areas where other therapies struggle to get a result. Because the manoeuvres are gentle, they can be applied to very painful and acute conditions without exacerbating them.

### MLD is particularly useful as a sports treatment, as it:

1. Increases the body's lymph circulation and improves the metabolism, helping to eliminate biochemical wastes, especially the lactic acid that builds up during training.
2. Enhances the body's fluid dynamics, thereby reducing swelling and minimising bruising.
3. Supports the immune system, helping to minimise scarring and hastening the healing process.
4. Has an effect on the para sympathetic system, promoting soft tissue relaxation. It can also reduce pain via the 'gate effect', where positive signals from the gentle touch override the pain signals.

**MLD** is also useful as a maintenance treatment for general detoxification. It is helpful in treating lymph oedema or lymph node ablation in cancer patients, and in addressing conditions like insomnia as well. Finally, it can boost your energy levels, increasing your vitality, and leaving you feeling more focused on your daily and activities, and training sessions.

### What should you look for in a MLD specialist?

**MLD** massage movements are different from those of other massage forms. This means that correct training is essential, not only to ensure it is effective, but also for safety reasons. What's more, a therapist's level of training will determine what type of conditions they can treat.

### MLD feels too light is it actually working?

One common misconception, when it comes to **MLD** therapy, is that its light approach cannot possibly be effective enough to bear results. Often those of us with a high level of fitness will go for deep-tissue massage to work out tight or sore muscles, so a soft massage seems counter-intuitive.

However, it is the very gentleness of **MLD** that promotes its health benefits. In particular, you need to remember that it is not a good idea to use firm pressure on oedematous - or swollen - tissues.



Catherine Arnault, founder of the clinic, is an internationally trained health practitioner with more than 30 years of experience and expertise. Your treatment is tailored to your particular needs and addresses the underlying problems that compromise health and vitality, through a wide variety of techniques. The aim is to improve total wellbeing, physical appearance and other post-surgery needs.