



Multi-Layer Lymphoedema Bandaging (MLLB)

Multi-Layer Lymphoedema Bandaging (MLLB) is an intensive Lymphoedema treatment and is one of the types of compression therapies used to help manage severe and complex Lymphoedema. It can also improve fragile skin conditions and help to heal wounds. This leaflet provides you with information about bandaging.

Compression garments are the mainstay treatment to manage Lymphoedema. To maintain the benefits and results achieved from the MLLB treatment, compression garments must be worn. Together, you and your therapist will agree on the length of time your garment should be worn following MLLB treatment. If you don't think you will be able to put your garments on, you must discuss this with your therapist so that all options can be considered. If you are unable to wear your compression garments after MLLB, the swelling will return and the bandaging may not be the best option for you. If you feel unable to commit to wearing your compression garments daily, it is advised that you do not agree to MLLB.

What is MLLB?

MLLB is used to effectively treat and manage Lymphoedema by reducing the swelling and reshaping the limb. The term Multi-Layer Lymphoedema Bandaging is used because many layers of different types of bandages are applied. The layers may include stockinette or liner, wool padding, foam padding, toe or finger bandaging. The top bandages provide the compression and can be either washable or cohesive (sticky). Depending on your needs, bandages will be applied daily, on alternate days or twice a week. MLLB is usually performed for up to three weeks, but occasionally a longer course is required. Each appointment may last up to an hour.

How does MLLB Work?

The bandages create a semi-rigid support to your swollen limb. As your muscles work, they push against the bandages causing a massage effect on your limb. This improves lymphatic drainage and blood flow that reduces the swelling. The bandages can also soften any firm tissues, improve skin conditions, and help wounds to heal. For effective treatment, the bandages must be worn day and night for the agreed duration of treatment. This will be discussed and agreed together with your lymphoedema therapist.

What are the Benefits of MLLB?

- It reduces the size and weight of the swollen limb
- It improves the shape of the limb for better fitting of compression garments
- It improves the movement, function and comfort of the swollen limb
- It softens firm, thickened, and hardened skin and tissues
- It effectively manages chronic skin inflammation
- It reduces and manages leaking fluid from limbs (Lymphorrhoea)
- It promotes the healing of wounds
- It reduces the risk of Cellulitis

Follow the link or QR code to view a short video: www.medic.video/w-lymph



What can be expected during a course of MLLB?

First day of treatment:

- Your limb(s) will be measured and you will be weighed
- Photographs of your limb(s) may be taken with your consent
- Moisturising cream will be applied to the limb(s) being bandaged
- MLLB applied, and the Lymphoedema therapist will provide you with some exercises to do

Following all treatment sessions:

- Bandages will be removed
- You will be assisted to wash/clean and moisturise your limb(s)
- MLLB reapplied
- A re-measuring session may be included
- A measuring session for garment assessment may be included

Final treatment session:

- Bandage removed
- Limb(s) will be re-measured and you will be weighed
- Photos may be taken
- Compression garment will be fitted

Initially when the bandages are applied, you may feel that your movement is restricted. This is normal and it is important that you continue to move and exercise as much as possible. The first night is often the most challenging as you will not be used to the bandages. It does get easier during the course of treatment. As the bandages may be bulky, you may need to consider your working arrangements and driving. Remember, as the swelling reduces, the bandages will loosen. Thus, the more you move and use your limb, the more effective the treatment will be.

What else can be done to help the treatment work?

- Move your limb and body as much as possible
- Continue with your normal activities
- Go for a walk as often as possible
- If your therapist has shown you how to perform Simple Lymphatic Drainage (SLD), it is important that you continue with this during your course of MLLB
- Continue to drink plenty of water to flush your lymphatic system
- Aim to spend at least 8 hours sleeping or resting by lying in a bed
- If you have been given specific exercises, these should be done as often as advised
- If you are sitting for long periods of time, it is important to stand and move about regularly to help the muscle pump move the fluid

What happens if...?

Most people with Lymphoedema have no problems with MLLB. However, some can experience discomfort from the bandages, pins and needles sensation, or discolouration of the toes or fingers. If these problems occur, the following steps should be followed:

- Move your limb and perform the exercises as shown
- Take some pain killers that you are used to taking
- If after taking pain killers your limb is still hurting, you may remove the top layer of bandage and continue to exercise as this will loosen the bandages further

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- Should you have no relief from your symptoms, then remove all the bandages and put on your compression garment. Contact the Lymphoedema Clinic as soon as possible for further advice

Some people experience itching. Try moving the limb by doing your exercises, tapping the area and if necessary, take an anti-histamine tablet. Report this problem to your therapist.

If you develop difficulties with shortness of breath (due to large amounts of fluid being returned to your general circulation suddenly), remove the bandages, and contact your Lymphoedema Clinic, G.P. or the G.P. Out of Hours Service immediately.

Useful Tips

- If you had a prescription for your bandages, it is very important that you bring your bandages with you to your first appointment
- If you are having bandaging to your leg you may not be able to wear your own footwear. A prescription for a bandaging shoe will be arranged
- Bring any prescribed wound dressings and creams that you are currently using
- Remember to wear loose fitting clothes to accommodate the bandages
- Report any signs of infection / Cellulitis immediately to your therapist or GP
- Organise your transport arrangements in advance
- Inform the clinic of any planned holidays or commitments in advance
- Avoid podiatry appointments during your course of MLLB

Follow the link or QR code below for videos made by people who have Lymphoedema.

Patient Story

John has suffered with swollen legs for the last 5 years and recently his legs have started leaking lymph fluid. He first noticed that his ankles were swollen after having an episode of Cellulitis. He had been diagnosed with a fungal infection in between his toes and had forgotten to apply the antifungal cream, which was the reason for his repeated Cellulitis. He found getting shoes to fit a massive problem and therefore his mobility and social life had reduced. He spent most of his time sitting in a chair watching the TV, and his weight increased by 3 stone over the last few years.

After being referred to the Lymphoedema clinic, John and his therapist worked on a joint treatment plan that supported him in being able to go and watch his local rugby team. His plan included the daily washing and drying of skin, applying cream, including his antifungal cream. As John had experienced repeated Cellulitis, his therapist arranged a long-term prescription of prophylactic antibiotics from his GP. The therapist arranged two weeks of MLLB to stop the leaking. He was prescribed temporary bandaging shoes, was encouraged to move his legs whilst sitting in the chair and to start walking daily.

This extra activity, together with a healthy eating plan, enabled John to lose a stone in weight over the next 3 months. The leaking legs stopped after bandaging and he was able to once again wear his own shoes. To maintain this improvement, compression garments were prescribed and he wears them daily.

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