

A Look at Lymph (Part 1 of 2)

What it is, What it Does, and How You can Help it Along

By Holli Beall, LMT

What it is:

Lymph – A clear, yellow fluid that is derived from blood, runs through the lymphatic pathways and is gradually shifted back into the blood stream. Lymph bathes all your body's cells, and helps keep tissues healthy by delivering nutritive materials and carrying waste products away.

Lymphatics – A delicate pathway of vessels through which lymph fluid travels. Lymphatics have a similar structure to veins; both consist of sectioned and valved tubes. When lymph is pushed from one section of tube to another, a valve closes to prevent the lymph from draining back into the previous section. This keeps it flowing in one direction, toward the heart. The lymphatics also follow the same path as veins.

Lymph nodes – These small nodules act as filters for the lymphatic system and are located in clusters along the pathway of the lymphatics. Lymph nodes resemble the shape of a bean, and range in size from the head of a pin to one inch in length.

Lymphocytes are white blood cells that play a major role in healing wounds and fighting infections, and are produced in the nodes.

Lymphocytes help neutralize harmful bacteria and toxic substances that are carried to them via lymph, thereby preventing the spread of infection to other areas of the body. The toxins become harmless and are passed back into the lymph system, eventually reentering the blood system for elimination. Lymph nodes are located in the back of the head; around the neck muscles; under the floor of the jaw; in the upper extremities at the bend of the elbow, under the armpit, and under the pectoralis muscle; along the blood vessels of the abdomen and pelvis; and in the lower extremities at the groin and back of knee. Nodes can swell and become painful when they are overloaded with more toxins than the lymphocytes can handle (this is what most people call swollen glands).

Lacteals - Specialized lymph vessels in the walls of the small intestine that absorb fat in the digestive tract. This lymph substance is called *chyle* and has a milky white appearance from the absorbed fats.

Lymphatic organs – *Spleen* – Located on the left side of the body, under the 10th rib. The spleen is the main filter of the body and the blood; it produces antibodies to help prevent infections. *Thymus* – Located under the breastbone, this is the master gland for the immune system. *Tonsils & Adenoids* – The body's first defense against bacteria and viruses, they combat infection of the ear, nose and throat region.

In the next issue, we'll take a look at what the lymphatic system does and how you can help it along. In the meantime, take a look at our current special...

- LYMPHATIC MASSAGE SPECIAL -

Lymphatic massage is a very gentle, extremely relaxing type of bodywork. During the months of March and April, 5 Elements, Inc. Licensed Massage Therapy will offer a 10% discount on an hour long lymphatic massage session. To take advantage of this lymphatic massage special, purchase a gift certificate, or schedule any massage session, please call me at 847-845-9663.

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Ramp Your Metabolism!

With spring right around the corner and the weather (hopefully) starting to turn warmer, it's a great time to think about planning for those summer vacations. What do I mean? Well, summer is generally a time for fewer clothes – so if you want to show off firm body parts instead of soft body parts, here are some tricks to help ramp up your metabolism and get ready for some summer fun...

- 1. Spice It Up!** Did you know that spicy foods actually can kick up your metabolism? It's true – even a food like horseradish has been documented as raising metabolism as much as 25% for a period of time. Even exercise doesn't have quite that same short term effect! So, if you are a person that enjoys things a little spicier, try spicing up your meals with spicy mustards, salsas, and horseradish or wasabi. (They also don't really contribute any calories either.)
- 2. Boost Your Lean Tissue!** Lean tissue is the determining factor of your body's base metabolism. If you want to kick up your metabolism for the months (and years) to come, add a pound or two of muscle and watch what happens. Muscle requires calories just to maintain (unlike fat, which doesn't require any energy at all to store) and it burns even more when you work it. Plus, more muscle means more energy stores – you'll be able to do more throughout the day. It's a win-win situation!
- 3. Eat Frequently!** Eating is a metabolic motivator, and that means that your body needs to spend energy, so it makes sense to eat meals multiple (4-6) times during the day. Have you ever heard that celery is technically a negative calorie food because it takes more energy to chew and digest than it provides? Well, everything you eat takes energy to chew and digest, and a good lean protein takes the most energy of all – keep your lean protein intake consistent and your metabolism will kick up every time you eat!
- 4. Exercise!** Just like food, exercise is another metabolic motivator. Just as what goes up must come down, so should we spend the energy that we invest into our body. Unlike our savings accounts, we want to spend every "penny" that we put into our bodies and then a little bit extra to keep our body's fat stores down nice and low.
- 5. Sleep!** Sometimes easier said than done in today's fast-paced world, sleeping is a time when your body recharges and repairs both mentally and physically. The more consistent your sleep habits can be, the better your body will be able to handle stresses, and stresses are fat storage triggers, the opposite of where we want to be.

What's Your Big Game?

With the Super Bowl all finished up and the Olympics just completed as well, it's a great time to reflect on the athletic prowess of people who have spent years working toward a specific goal. Like any big event, it's sometimes easy to take these competitions out of perspective. For one, they are generally geographically distant and two, most of the feats performed by these athletes seem far out of reach. The question then is this – what is your big game?

What is that goal or challenge that your life is directed toward? A ship without a crew will need more than luck to sail out of one port and reach its planned destination. And yet a ship with a crew can pilot a ship from one harbor to another without actually being able to see where they are going until the last 1% of the journey, and yet because the crew has planned out both a destination and the legs of the journey to reach that destination, ships across the world sail into harbor virtually without incident.

What's your big game? What's your driving goal right now? If you don't have one, it might be time to a hard look inside and take the first step in moving forward. As the saying goes, if you don't aim at a target, you can bet you're not going to hit it. If the time is right for a fitness goal to be part of your life, give a call (815-477-0980) or e-mail jim@findyourstrength.com and I'll be sure to help show the steps necessary to reach that goal.

Merchant Spotlight: Randall & Vine Wine Shoppe, Inc.

As many of you know, my interest in wine has grown quite significantly over the past year and during that time, I've explored quite a few different purveyors in the local and not so local area. One of the merchants that really stood out in my opinion was the fine people that own and run the Randall & Vine Wine Shoppe across from the Algonquin Commons mall on Randall Road. In addition to have a varied selection of wines and specialty spirits, Brian and Jen really bring a lot of warmth and passion into their business and it is readily felt when walking into the store. Focusing on health and a love of all things wine, Brian and Jen present not only wine bottles in a very open and relaxed atmosphere, but also wine education through classes, home parties and wine dinners at partner restaurants like Montarra. Here are some words from the owners...

"At Randall & Vine, we believe that finding the right wine should be easy and fun. We offer a large variety of fine wine and an opportunity to taste wine daily at our tasting bar. My wife and I have used our passion and knowledge from years of collecting wine and travel to many of the major wine regions of the world (including Hunter Valley Australia for our Honeymoon) to create a Shoppe with variety and unparalleled service. I began my journey many years ago fueled by a sip of wine and imagination. Come and share this experience with us.

Mention that you saw us in the **Fitting Fitness In™** newsletter and receive 10% off through March 31, 2006!"



Brian & Jennifer Hoepfner – Owners
1497 South Randall Road, Algonquin, IL 60102 (Next to Oberweis and Giardano's)
(847) 854-3703
www.randallandvine.com.

"The marksman hitteth the mark partly by pulling, partly by letting go."

- Egyptian proverb

Funky Facts...

↳ Dr. George Washington Carver, an American scientist, made over 300 products from peanuts, including a milk substitute, face powder, printers ink, and soap.

↳ The first toothpaste, a thousand years ago, was a mix of honey, salt, and ground glass.

I'd Love to Hear From YOU!

Whether your goal is to lose weight, get in the best shape of your life, or anything in between, I can help you.

I'd love to hear from you – even if you just want to say "Hi!"

I'm full of energy, and people tell me – a pretty fun person to talk to. So please don't hesitate to call me up with any questions you have about health and fitness related issues. There's never any pressure and no obligation. I'm a resource...and a friend!

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Take a Look at Your Arm

If someone says to you, "Make a muscle," what do you think of? For the vast majority of people, it means a flexed upper arm, muscles straining and bulging under skin. Here's a quick look at the muscles that make up the arm and what they do.

The bulk of the muscle in the upper arm is actually the triceps muscles (tri = three heads). The triceps straighten your arm at the elbow. The biceps (bi = two heads) flex the elbow. Together, these two muscle groups make up the bulk of your arm muscles.

Other important muscles of the arm help to control your fingers and the rotational ability of your wrist. These muscles are located on or around the elbow joint. If you have ever had tennis elbow, you know where these muscles are, as tennis elbow is another name for inflammation of the tendons (tenonitis).

Working your arm muscles is actually pretty simple. In order to have nice toned arms, spend time with exercises that work the extending and flexing motion of the elbow joint. Thankfully, most exercises that work the chest or back hit the arms in a secondary fashion. By mixing up your arm exercises between multiple-joint movements and single joint (elbow) movements with a handful of exercises, you'll be well on your way to having the kind of toned arms that look great all year round.

Simple Beginnings – Joseph Pilates...

Did you know that Joseph Pilates was a sickly little child who later became a circus performer? Born in 1880 in Germany, Joseph's father was a prize-winning gymnast of Greek origin (original name Pilatu). His mother was a German naturopath, someone who believes in stimulating the body to heal itself. Joseph suffered from asthma, rickets and rheumatic fever, and his inability to fight back against childhood bullies drove him to a life journey into fitness and health.

Growing up, Joseph was a boxer, a gymnast and a skilled skier and diver. In 1912, he performed in a British circus as a Greek statue act with his brother. But it was during WWI when Joseph began jury-rigging equipment from bed springs and other parts to help rehabilitate wounded or diseased troops. He named his methods 'Controlology.'

His equipment was designed because Joseph didn't want to use his own strength to move something, believing that his whole body could be used by slowly resisting other movements or forces. He moved to America at 45 and opened a dance studio in New York. He died in 1967 at the age of 87 from emphysema from smoking cigars. His 'Controlology' was later dubbed simply 'Pilates.'

Thanks for the Kind Words!

"The weekly [High Gear for the New Year] meetings help keep everything "top of mind," and it's been very informational. I can't imagine that anybody who's attended hasn't walked away with something they can use or apply to help themselves achieve a better level of fitness, whether through diet, exercise, or a combination thereof.."

- Jim Hendricks