

## Treatment Goals Treatment Plan

☞ Specific lymphatic drainage techniques are described in the chapter on non-Swedish techniques. The therapist spends 15 to 20 minutes on lymphatic techniques to treat an edematous limb.

### Acute

**Reduce the edema if safe to do so. Decrease pain or discomfort.**

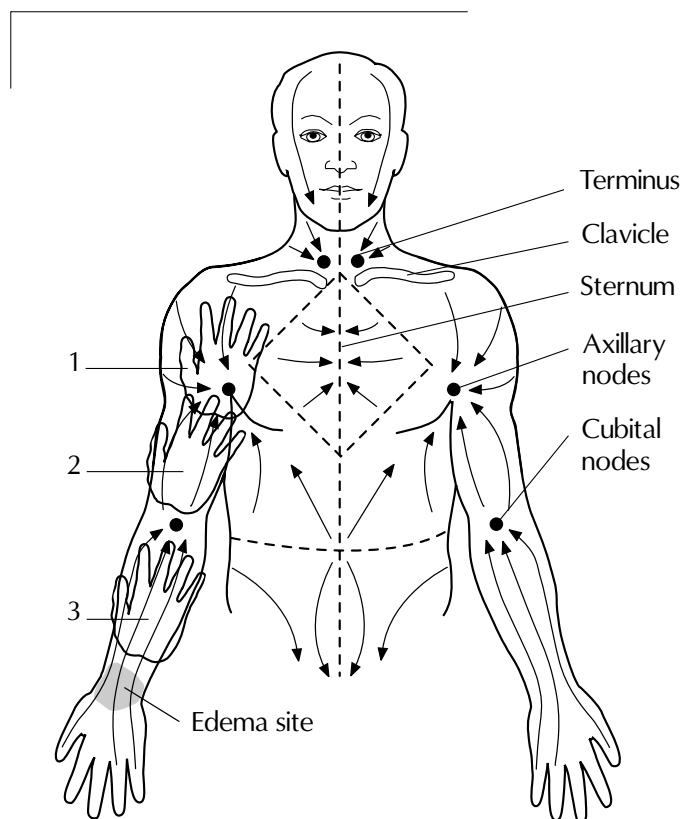
☞ If the initial treatment goal is to decrease the edema, lymphatic drainage is performed first, before any general work to compensating structures or specific local massage. This greatly reduces the pain and congestion.

**Decrease sympathetic nervous system firing.**

☞ If the initial goal is to accustom the client to the therapist's touch, to decrease the sympathetic nervous system firing and to treat compensatory structures, Swedish massage begins on the trunk or the contralateral limb, followed by lymphatic drainage of the edematous limb and Swedish massage treatment for the specific condition.

☞ In the case of edema resulting from an acute trauma, the positioning of the client depends on the location of the edema and the client's

comfort. If the edema is in a limb, the affected limb is elevated **in a pain-free range** and pillowed securely. If the edema is in the trunk, the client is positioned so the edema is uppermost. In all cases, a **cold hydrotherapy** application such as an ice pack or a gel pack is applied to the edematous area.



**Figure 18.3**  
Sequence of hand positions for lymphatic drainage, starting proximally and working distally towards the edema.

### Specific Treatment

☞ The client is directed to do **diaphragmatic breathing** throughout the treatment to facilitate lymphatic return. All work is performed in a slow, soothing manner to reduce pain perception.

☞ Assuming that the initial treatment goal is to reduce edema, the therapist begins with nodal pumping at the terminus, then the proximal lymph nodes of the injured limb (Kurz, 1989; Casley-Smith, Casley-Smith, 1986). Following the drainage patterns of the lymphatic vessels, stationary circles and the local lymphatic technique are used proximal to the edema (Figure 18.3).

☞ Starting proximal to the edema, light