



### Lesli Bell's Summertime Tips

Summer is a difficult time of year for lymphedema sufferers, because symptoms can be exacerbated by increased body heat. The increased activity we usually enjoy during the warm months can also make it difficult for many folks to control their edema.

Some tips for staying well during the summer months:

- Avoid direct sunlight when possible. Shade will help keep your body temperature down and prevent sunburns.
- If compression is part of your independent management program, make sure you wear your compression garments. Even though they do increase body temperature a bit, they may also provide the compression needed to reduce or control lymphedema symptoms. Equally important, avoid clothing that creates a tourniquet effect (i.e. that constricts and blocks drainage).
- If you follow a self Manual Lymphatic Drainage program, increase the frequency; i.e., do it twice a day instead of once.
- While generally beneficial for most people, increased activity can also lead to a worsening of lymphedema symptoms if you are not careful. Warm up and cool down slowly before and after exercise, and increase your endurance gradually over a reasonable period of time.
- **Please** remember to stay well hydrated. Even though sweat glands are not directly linked to the lymphatic system, they have a significant influence on the body's overall fluid balance. So keep those electrolytes balanced!

If your symptoms get worse, make sure to check in with your lymphedema therapist, who will be best able to help you with your specific needs.

Your summertime quality of life depends upon clever juggling. You *can* do the things you enjoy—you just need to make sure that you increase your management techniques and/or modify your activities so that you stay healthy and comfortable.

In other words, manage your lymphedema instead of letting it manage you! Life is not a dress rehearsal!

Be well,

(For more detailed information, visit the Institute of Physical Rehabilitation's excellent web page on lymphedema management during the summer:

[http://www.ipmr.org/pdf/summer\\_tips\\_for\\_lymphedema.htm](http://www.ipmr.org/pdf/summer_tips_for_lymphedema.htm).)