



## **Lower Extremity Exercises for Managing Edema**

---

### **While exercising, remember:**

- Take deep breaths during and after each exercise, and after each set of exercises
- Pace yourself - perform each exercise slowly
- Follow exercise directions as listed
- Notify your therapist if you have any questions or concerns
- Do not force movements that cause pain or discomfort
- Do not hold your breath while exercising

### **Ankle pumps**

- Point your toes towards your nose and hold for 4 seconds
- Then point your toes towards the floor and hold for 4 seconds

### **Repetitions:**

### **Quad squeeze or leg kicks**

- If lying, squeeze your upper thighs down toward the bed while breathing out and hold for 2-3 seconds. Relax and breathe in.
- If seated, kick your leg forward and hold for 4 seconds. Slowly lower your leg and repeat exercise with opposite leg.

### **Repetitions:**

### **Glutal squeeze**

- Squeeze your buttocks together while breathing out and hold for 4 seconds (pretend you are pinching a coin between your buttocks). Relax and breathe in.

## **Repetitions:**

### **Deep breathing**

- Take a deep breath in through your nose. Expand your stomach out (let the air fill your belly). Pause. Purse your lips and slowly exhale your breath out.
- Try placing your hands on your stomach to feel it rise and fall with your deep breaths.

## **Repetitions:**

### **When you are experiencing edema/swelling, remember:**

- Avoid sitting for long periods of time. Moving the legs will help to move fluid and reduce swelling
- Change positions frequently and elevate leg(s) as much as possible
- These exercises are intended to increase blood flow in legs as much as possible.
- Performing these exercises from foot to knee to buttocks will help move fluid.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by University of Michigan Health for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by University of Michigan Health and for which University of Michigan Health does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Reviewers: Leslie Pierce DPT  
Edited by: Karelyn Munro BA

Patient Education by [Michigan Medicine](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last Revised 06/2021