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.