



Exercise Recommendations For Individuals Living With Lower Limb Lymphoedema



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**AUSTRALIAN LYMPHOEDEMA EDUCATION,
RESEARCH AND TREATMENT CENTRE
(ALERT)**

For specific details about how this framework was developed, please refer to the following publication:

Davies, L. M., Koelmeyer, L., Gaitatzis, K., Paramanandam, V. S., & Thompson, B. (2025). Reaching consensus on exercise recommendations for individuals living with lower limb lymphoedema: a Delphi study. Disability and Rehabilitation, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2025.2578424>

Please address all correspondence to:

Dr Luke Davies

E: luke.davies@mq.edu.au

This framework was developed by academic researchers at the Australian Lymphoedema Education, Research and Treatment Centre at Macquarie University.

Researchers

Dr Luke M Davies

Dr Belinda Thompson

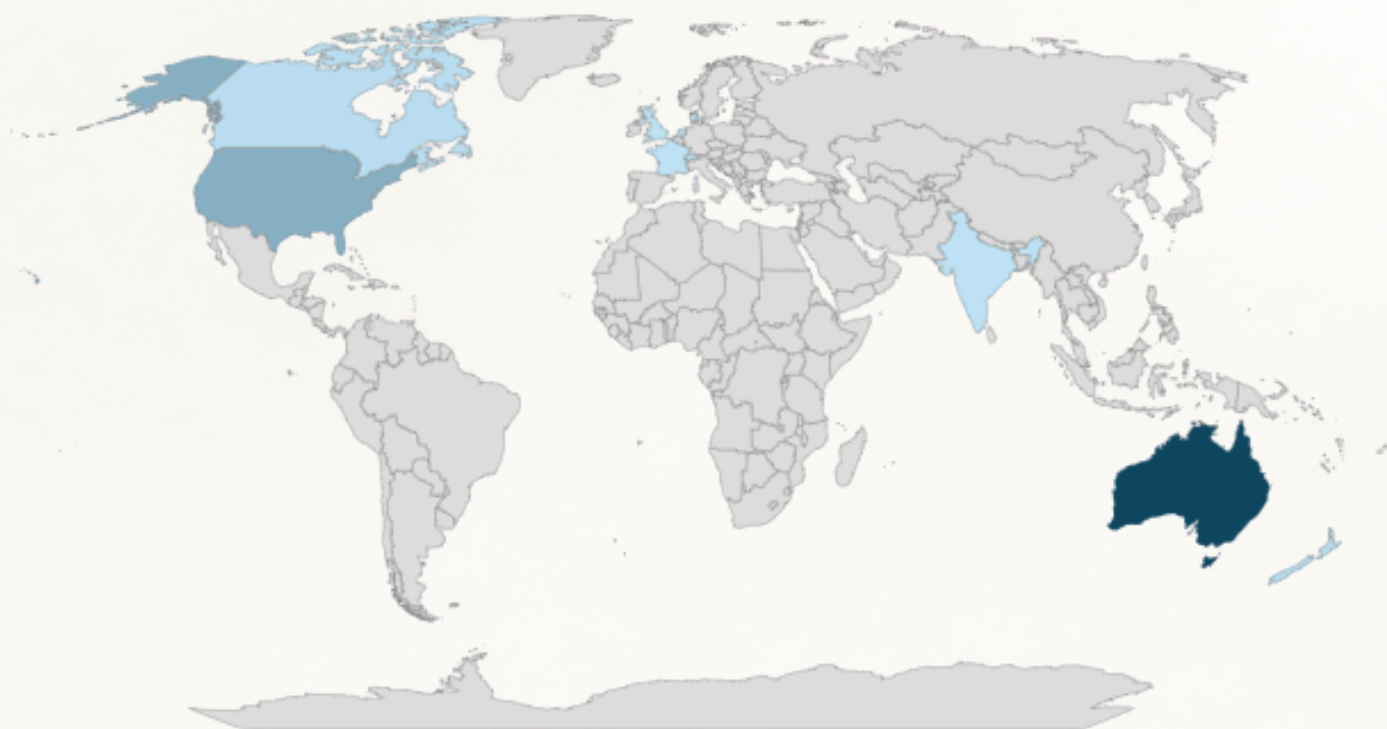
Ms Katrina Gaitatzis

Dr Vincent Singh Paramanandam

A/Prof Louise Koelmeyer

How was the framework developed?

We established an International Panel and conducted an e-Delphi survey to achieve expert consensus on exercise recommendations for individuals living with lower limb lymphoedema. The Delphi panel comprised 54 experts from 10 different countries and included physiotherapists, occupational therapists, exercise physiologists, myotherapists, osteopaths, physiatrists and lymphoedema researchers.



The Delphi Panel considered a draft framework (developed by the research team using relevant documents identified in the literature) of 68 exercise recommendations mapped across three domains (resistance, aerobic, and flexibility) as well as 3 statements regarding the use of compression garments and exercise.

Over two rounds the panel rated their agreement on whether each exercise/compression garment recommendation was important for individuals living with lower limb lymphoedema. The final framework comprised 26 exercise recommendations and 3 recommendations regarding the use of compression garments and exercise.

Exercise recommendations for individuals living with lower limb lymphoedema

The purpose of this framework is not to dictate the manner in which healthcare professionals must prescribe exercise; rather, it is to offer best-practice exercise recommendations for individuals living with lower limb lymphoedema. It is important for healthcare professionals to consider the patient's individual presentation, apply sound clinical reasoning, and adopt a holistic approach to optimise both safety and effectiveness when prescribing an exercise program as part of a management plan.

Recommendations for wearing compression garments while exercising

- When participating in exercise a compression garment should always be worn **OR**
- If wearing a garment is a barrier to performing exercise individuals can trial readily available sports compression (e.g. 2XU and skins) and closely monitor their response **OR**
- If wearing a garment is a barrier to performing exercise individuals can trial exercise without a garment and closely monitor their response

	Resistance Exercise	Aerobic Exercise	Flexibility Exercise
Frequency	• Perform 2-4 resistance exercise sessions each week • If performing >3 sessions per week develop a split program that ensures at least 48 hours recovery before exercising the same muscle groups	• Spread aerobic exercise across 5 days of the week • Perform 3-7 aerobic exercise sessions per week • Perform aerobic exercise on most days of the week	
Intensity	• Minimum of 2 sets of 8-15 reps with at least 60% of 1RM	• Perform aerobic exercise at a moderate intensity • Perform aerobic exercise of at least moderate intensity, unless individual preference is for low intensity • Perform aerobic exercise at 11 to 14/20 on the Borg Rating of Perceived Exertion scale	• Stretch to limits of mild discomfort (you should be able to feel a stretch, but it should not be painful)
Type	• Free weight • Body weight • Resistance bands	• Walking • Swimming • Water based exercises • Stationary cycling • Exercises that use large muscle groups • Any activity the individual prefers or enjoys	• Static stretching (for a minimum of 30-60 second holds at least twice) • Dynamic stretching (pre-exercise perform dynamic stretches actively moving through range of motion) • Mobility exercises (e.g., range of motion)
Time	• The session duration should be between 20-30 minutes	• Perform aerobic exercises of 5-40 minutes per session; weekly total of 150minutes • Build up to or over 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity • Perform continuous or intermittent aerobic exercise (minimum of 10-minute bouts accumulated during the day) of 30-60 minutes	



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