

Supporting your health

Valerie Collins Val Collins received her Physical Therapy degree from the University of Connecticut in 1983. Her primary practice areas have always focused on integrating hands on care and exercise to help people regain the active lifestyle they desire.

Soon after moving to Chapel Hill in 1995, she began experiencing the symptoms of lymphedema and the frustration of a lack of clear diagnosis and treatment for these symptoms. While seeking out techniques for treatment, she became interested in all aspects of lymphedema. Steadfastly refusing to “just have to live with it,” she finally obtained resolution of her symptoms for the first time in 10 years from Manual Lymph Drainage.

This led to further study of the benefits of complete decongestive therapy. Val then attended the Academy of Lymphatic Studies for further professional training and is now a Certified Lymphedema Therapist.

Val and her husband, Ed, have been actively involved in the Carrboro community since their two teenagers were tots. When not working and taking care of her family, Val’s interests include gardening, hiking, cooking, reading, and painting.

Network Provider For:

Blue Cross Blue Shield, Medicare, Private Healthcare Systems (PHCS), Health Care Savings

Payment

Most insurance companies cover the Lymphedema Program services provided by the physical therapists at Balanced Physical Therapy. The Women’s Health and Cancer Rights act of 1998 requires group health plans that provide coverage for mastectomies must also cover physical complications resulting from mastectomies, such as lymphedema.

Because of the changing nature of insurance coverage, we verify insurance coverage prior to office visits. Physical therapy services do not require physician referral in North Carolina. For information about your specific coverage, contact Anne Marie Schneider at 919.244.4947 or amschneider@balancedpt.com. To discuss other payment arrangements, contact Balanced Physical Therapy directly.

The compression garments utilized for treatment are not provided directly by Balanced Physical Therapy. Balanced Physical Therapy will assist you in working with suppliers to receive the appropriate garments. The suppliers we use will assist you with determining and obtaining insurance coverage for garments purchased directly from them.

Contact Us

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Location

**Balanced Physical Therapy
at Balanced Movement Studio**

304 W. Weaver St., Suite 103, Carrboro, N.C. 27510



Lymphedema Program

Valerie Collins
Physical Therapist
Certified Lymphedema Therapist

Carrboro • Chapel Hill • Durham

*Everyone has the power
to heal themselves.*

We give you the tools to move beyond pain

Our Philosophy

At Balanced Physical Therapy, we combine our expertise in movement and pain with our philosophy of compassion and respect. We believe everyone has the capacity to heal themselves — we simply provide the opportunity and tools for you to achieve your goals. Physical problems exist beyond the body, impacting many aspects of a person's life. With our help, you can reclaim your body's potential, and learn skills to maintain your well-being.

A Personal Approach

The initial evaluation is generally done one week prior to starting the treatment program series. A program will then be structured for your specific limitations and desired outcomes. The treatment series then consists of daily visits until initial symptom control is achieved. Each time you visit, you will receive one hour of individual attention from a physical therapist who is a Certified Lymphedema Therapist.

What is Lymphedema?

Lymphedema is a swelling of a body part, most often the extremities. It is the result of an accumulation of protein-rich fluid in the superficial tissues, which can have significant consequences for the patient if left untreated. Once present, this chronic and progressive condition will not disappear again.



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Causes of Lymphedema

Primary lymphedema is caused by malformations of the lymphatic system and may be present at birth or develop later in life, often in puberty or during pregnancy.

Secondary lymphedema is more common and often the result of surgery or radiation therapy for cancer. Surgical procedures in combination with the removal lymph nodes, such as mastectomies or lumpectomies with the removal and/or radiation of axillary lymph nodes, are a very common reason for the onset of secondary lymphedema. Other causes include trauma or infection of the lymphatic system.

Treatment Methods

Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT) Since there is no cure for lymphedema, the goal of the therapy is to reduce swelling and to maintain the reduction. For the majority of patients this can be achieved by skillful application of CDT, which is safe, reliable and non-invasive.

Manual Lymph Drainage (MLD) This gentle manual treatment technique increases the activity of certain lymph vessels and manually moves interstitial fluid. Applied

correctly, a series of MLD treatments decrease the volume of the affected extremity to a normal or near normal size and is applied daily in the first phase of the therapy.

Compression Therapy The elastic fibers in the skin are damaged in lymphedema. In order to prevent re-accumulation of fluid it is necessary to apply sufficient compression to the affected extremity. In the first phase of CDT compression therapy is achieved with the application of special short-stretch bandages. These bandage materials are used between MLD treatments and prevent the re-accumulation of lymph fluid, which has been moved out of the extremity during the MLD session. Once the extremity is decongested, the patient wears compression garments during the day. In order to achieve best results, specially trained personnel should take measurements for these elastic support garments.

Exercises A customized exercise program is designed by the therapist for each patient. These decongestive exercises aid the effects of the joint and muscle pumps and should be performed by the patient wearing the compression bandage or garment. Vigorous movements or exercises causing pain must be avoided.