



1025: Why Your Lymph System Matters More Than You Think (and How to Boost It) (Solo Episode)

Child: Welcome to my mommy's podcast!

Katie: This episode is brought to you by BIOptimizers, and I love this company. And specifically today I wanna talk about one of the favorite things that they make, which is called Masszymes. So let's be real. We all kind of start this part of the year saying, we're going to eat cleaner, train harder, feel lighter.

But it's not just what we eat and what we do, it's what we absorb. And if our digestion is sluggish, the body just can't keep up. And this is why I love Masszymes all year, but especially this time of year because it's a simple digestive ritual that's made a huge difference for me. It's loaded with 18 enzymes, including four times more protease than top competitors, to help us break down dietary protein, carbs, and fats efficiently.

And I've shared before, I've done a whole episode on enzymes and how this was really, really impactful for me personally. But this means that we get better nutrient absorption, less bloating, and more real energy from the food we're already eating. I'm also a big fan of nutrient loading and really maximizing that in our food too.

And enzymes help us get the maximal benefit from this. It's this hardworking, yet smooth enzyme blend, and it's been a favorite of mine for years, and a customer favorite for over 20 years. It's a ritual that your stomach will thank you for anecdotally. I feel like I really don't get sick now that I have made these a regular part of my routine.

A lot of people find they don't have post-meal food hangovers or bloat after taking these, just clean energy to crush goals all year long. For a limited time, you can save up to 26% off their products and bundles during the New Year New You Sale by using my code `wellnessmama15` at checkout.

And select bundles are on sale for up to 45% off, so you can get a massive discount there. Visit bioptimizers.com/wellnessmama and use the code `wellnessmama15` at checkout. To get the best deal on Masszymes and all BIOptimizers products. So that's bioptimizers.com/wellnessmama and the code `wellnessmama15`.

So start 2026 with a stronger gut, more energy, and better digestion.

This episode is sponsored by BON CHARGE, and I love so many of their products from their red light face mask to their sauna blankets and everything in between. They focus on high-end wellness tech, and if you're interested in how light can help you, which I talk a lot about, BON CHARGE has so much to offer.

Studies have found that specific red light frequencies can help reduce fine lines and wrinkles when used at the correct brightness and strengths. And some products don't get

these correct. The frequencies of red and near infrared light stimulate cellular activity at a mitochondrial level, which I talk a lot about on this podcast.

This can create better energy efficiency in a given location of the body. For instance, red light on your face gives more cellular energy for biological processes. This can help to decelerate the signs of aging and lead to firmer, plumper skin. So the long-term results you can see when using an LED mask over time are things like, reduction in the appearance of fine lines, reduction in the appearance of wrinkles, reduction in under eye bags, firmer skin, tighter skin, reduction in signs of aging, scar fading, plumper looking skin, reduction in visibility of blemishes, and visibly clearer looking skin.

I'm always a fan of getting natural light from outdoors, but for people who are wanting to kind of tackle the aging process head on, this is in a way to kind of give your body some extra benefit from these specific wavelengths of light.

The safe, non-invasive beauty treatment is going to be around for a while, and for a good reason given the results people are seeing. If you wanna check out the BON CHARGE Red Light Face mask, and all of their products, you can go to <https://boncharge.com/wellnessmama> and use the code wellnessmama for 20% off.

Katie: Hello and welcome to the Wellness Mama Podcast. I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com, and in this hopefully somewhat short solo episode, I'm going to delve into a topic that I got to learn a lot about a few years ago, and I get a decent amount of questions around and it's been incredibly helpful to me. So I'm gonna share what I've learned, which is the topic of the lymphatic system, how this relates to detox, how it matters more than we think and ways to support it.

This is something I sort of didn't really know anything about for a lot of my life and hadn't really paid attention to until more recently. And something that I found really does have a correlative effect for me related to my energy levels and to how I feel, especially. And which makes sense when we get to understand it.

And as I learned about the lymphatic system more, and I've been grateful to learn from some incredible teachers, including past guests of this podcast, like my friend Kelly, which I'll link to those podcasts as well, but just how incredible the lymphatic system is, how it doesn't have an innate pump like our heart does.

So it depends on us for proper movement and the beautiful ways that we can support it and how it supports us in return. As always, this is my opinion only. It's for inspiration and information only, never as advice or prescription. And of course, if you have any kind of condition, I always encourage you to seek qualified and professional help for that, whether it be medically or otherwise.

I'm just simply sharing what I've learned and find interesting and what has worked for me. Of note, I found it fascinating that we, our bodies actually have more lymph than blood. I'll get into why this matters also as past guest Justine I'll link to her episode as well, as she says we're actually 99 plus percent water molecularly, and this has ties into the lymphatic system as well.

I will talk about the critical role of the lymphatic system in detox, immunity and energy, especially energy, is the one I notice a lot. As well as practical ways to support our lymphatic systems' innate flow, and then lesser known ways to support lymphatic health. As well as signs that our lymphatic system may need some additional support.

And I will link to, like I said, further resources around this in the show notes as well. As background, I mentioned briefly that we have almost twice as much lymphatic fluid as blood, but it's so rarely talked about and certainly not as well understood as blood. We don't test it like we test our blood.

Many of us never even think about our lymphatic system. Turns out a little intention and thought about the lymphatic system can have really far reaching benefits for a lot of areas of life, and this might be a missing piece for a lot of people. The lymphatic system is our body's drainage and defense network.

It helps move things throughout the body, including things we might not want in our body and want to get out, like waste or toxins. It also is a transport for immune cells. Those don't just happen within the bloodstream. So the lymphatic system has cross over into many aspects of health. And in this episode, I'll go deeper on what it does. Signs of kind of any problem that might be going on in the lymphatic system or sluggish lymph and some practical evidence-based ways that we can naturally work with our lymphatic system and support it. So, lymphatic system 101, if you aren't super familiar with this or what it does.

The lymphatic system is a vast network of vessels, nodes, it also includes our spleen our thymus and our tonsils. You might notice a couple of those are sometimes referenced as being non-important, and it turns out we're learning more and more, the body doesn't make mistakes and we do actually in fact have all of our organs for a reason. You know, I had my tonsils removed as a child when I had recurring strep that was much more commonly done when I was a kid.

And it turns out we're now finding out more and more that the tonsils do serve an important role. And sometimes I wish I still had mine to be able to do those jobs. The main jobs of the lymphatic system are to carry away cellular waste and toxins. This one is really important and I think fat-soluble vitamins will be their own solo podcast soon.

They tran- the lymphatic system helps transport fat and fat-soluble vitamins, including of course the four soluble vitamins are A, D, E, and K, which are each fascinating. With fat soluble vitamins, of course, we do wanna be careful we need them in certain ranges. Deficiency is not good, neither is toxicity. Most vitamins we will simply flush out if we get too many, but the fat soluble ones we do have to be careful about.

And our lymphatic system helps those actually get where they're going. And the lymphatic system helps move immune cells or lymphocytes throughout the body. Estimates suggests that we have 8 to 12 liters of lymphatic fluid versus five liters of blood, but unlike blood, this is a key distinction that's very important to the core concept of this podcast, lymph has no central pump. So of course our bloodstream has our heart. It relies on movement, breath, muscle contractions instead of a pump. So our heart is always pumping our blood. In order for our lymphatic system to move correctly, we must move. And I feel like this is a thing I did not understand for a lot of my life.

It's also potentially a reason why even if we are exercising or working out at some point during the day, there is still a negative effect to sitting too much. I think there's many reasons for this, of course, but I strongly suspect this lymphatic aspect is one of them because if we are not moving enough adequately and throughout the day.

If we are not breathing enough in the right way throughout the day, if we're not using our muscles in some way, our lymphatic system is not fully moving. Now there are things we can do externally and otherwise to help our lymphatic system move. And I'll get into some of those in a couple minutes in this episode, but I just feel like the really important concept to understand and highlight if you take nothing else away from this episode, is that your lymphatic system technically is bigger than your blood system. You have more lymphatic fluid than blood, and unlike your blood, which has a heart to pump in and circulate it, your lymphatic system depends on you for movement, and this is one of many reasons humans are meant to move. So why does lymphatic health matter?

I also hear the topic of lymphatic detox floating around a lot, and I'm not gonna go deep into that concept because to me it's a little bit of a misnomer. Our lymphatic system is deeply involved in our body's natural detox pathways and mechanisms. However, it is not something that we need to externally detox.

I think that actually like makes the concept more confusing and puts less autonomy in our hands. All we need to do is support it in what it naturally needs, and it will do its work as it's supposed to. When we don't do this, there are signs of sluggish lymphatic like swelling, fatigue, brain fog, weakened immunity, and skin issues.

Of course, those can be related to other things as well, but there's research showing that poor lymphatic flow is linked with chronic inflammation, lymphedema, and even neurological disease progression. That was in *Nature Reviews of Immunology* in 2021. Now there is a detox angle here. When we talk about detox, I feel like the liver and the kidneys get a lot of attention or the gallbladder, but lymph is the transport system.

If it's stagnant, even if other things are working well, detox stalls. In reverse of that, when we support our lymphatic system, we give our bodies, all of our bodies detox pathways a best chance at remaining effective. So there's other things of course to do as well to support the body in detox, but supporting the lymphatic system is a big one.

So in that sense, let's go into how do we support the lymphatic system. There are thankfully some evidence backed practical tools, and the great news is that most of them are free and easy. You have probably already guessed by now that movement is a big one. Not just exercise because I feel like we actually do a disservice when we make exercise a separate category and to-do list item that we do for an hour a day. But normal human movement throughout the day as much as possible is really, really supportive of the lymphatic system. In fact, walking is one of the most simple but effective lymphatic support tools because muscle contractions and the slight impact of walking pump lymph throughout the body very effectively.

Humans were arguably made to walk and not just on a treadmill for 30 minutes a day. But throughout the course of our day as just human animals. Another one that I love, this one I have it in my house, is rebounding. And I can link to a rebounder in the show notes. It's basically a mini trampoline. I have one in my house as well as a big trampoline in my backyard, but this increases lymphatic flow by up to 15 times compared to rest.

And that actually was from research NASA did on gravity and fluid shifts. So a little bit of rebounding a couple times a day can go a long way. These are very gentle bounces on a little trampoline. Literally like I'll spend maybe 10 or 15 minutes, ideally a couple times a day, very gently bouncing on the trampoline, and I notice an energy boost from that.

A little bit less supportive than walking or rebounding, stretching and yoga. Also help move lymph, especially if there's a twisting or inversion aspect to this. This is also why lying on the ground with your feet straight up against the wall, so basically your butt is against the wall. Your feet are straight up for 10 or 15 minutes at night, is also lymphatically supportive as well.

Now another way that doesn't get talked about as much is breath work or just even proper breath. And how this relates to lymph. When we do deep diaphragmatic breathing, this

serves as a lymph pump and is also highly effective. I've had many guests on before to talk about how a lot of us are not breathing optimally.

I know this is something we all do every day. It's also seemingly something we could improve on quite a lot. But if we could even just slightly extend the length of our breath and the length of our exhale and involve our diaphragm more, this helps to move lymphatic fluid more efficiently. Now a cool thing here is that the thoracic duct, which is the largest lymph vessel, is directly stimulated by breath and movement.

So breathing is something we can all do pretty much anywhere hopefully. And so it's one we can, if we can just learn to make a habit throughout the day, to be a little more aware of our breath and do some deep diaphragmatic breathing that can actually have a noticeable impact on our lymphatic system.

And I feel like those two as well as hydration, which I'll get into later, but movement, breathing and hydration are really the core of anything we're gonna do to address lymphatic. However, if we get those things dialed in, there are additional things we can do as well, which are more manual techniques.

I don't feel like these in any way replace movement and breath work. But they are add-ons, especially if we wanna give some extra support and love to our lymphatic system. And this would be things like dry brushing, which I have written about before. And I will link to those in the show notes on how to do them and my method for that.

But this is basically taking a gentle bristled brush and brushing your skin in a particular pattern, basically towards your heart to help stimulate lymph flow via the skin and the superficial vessels. A lot of people also notice a burst of energy when they dry brush as well from this movement of lymphatic fluid.

There's also, I'm a big fan of this, it's hard to find sometimes, but lymphatic massage, there's research showing this can improve edema and improve immune function. Also is a gentle type of massage that feels very good. The pressure is akin to if you were trying to squeeze honey out of a sponge, so slower, deeper pressure, versus hard. And then we can release key lymphatic points, and I also linked to some resources about this, but we have them in our neck, in our collar bones, underarms, abdomen, groin, behind the knees and elbows and gentle pressure works wonders here. But just like little pressure or pumping of these points can help stimulate the lymphatic system as well.

There's also, of course, lifestyle supportive habits that are great for our lymphatic system. I mentioned hydration, so elaborate on that a little bit. Lymphatic fluid is mostly water. Mild

dehydration thickens lymph quite a bit. So this is one we wanna pay attention to quite a lot. I talk a lot about minerals.

I won't rehash all of that here. I'll put some links in the show notes. But hydration plus minerals and electrolytes can be very supportive. Makes the lymphatic system quite happy. Another one that's not as well known. This one is fascinating to me, and you're gonna hear me talk more and more about this in future episodes, but natural light, sunlight, helps regulate nitric oxide and circulation, which indirectly boosts lymphatic flow. There's also a lot more emerging, fascinating in depth research into the structure of water, how light impacts that, and how this might come into play with our fascia and our lymphatic system specifically.

So as we learn more about that, I will talk more about it in future episodes, but the key summary there is proper hydration and proper light exposure benefit essentially every area of life, including our lymphatic system. And then another one, this is not at all necessary, but can be very beneficial if you have access to it, is a mixture of sauna and cold therapy, also known as contrast therapy.

When you do that together, because the heat expands our blood vessels and our lymphatic vessels, the cold contracts them. So when we go back and forth, this creates a pumping effect. There are also some lesser known supports that I wanna touch on. I definitely don't think these are required. I do think in some cases they can be helpful, and one is vibration plates or whole body vibration.

I'll link to resources about this as well. I don't feel like based on the data, this is as effective as a walking or rebounding, or at least that it should not replace those things. However, it can supplement those things if you're already doing those things. I also am a big fan of this, which is castor oil packs on the abdomen, or lymph nodes, lymph node areas.

This doesn't have as much research to back it, but is traditionally supportive and a lot of cultures have used this for many years. It's also considered largely very safe. And it's something I've done for a variety of different things. I did castor oil packs on my thyroid at times in the past. I do liver packs sometimes at night.

And I feel like it can be helpful. And then there are some traditional herbs that are sometimes recommended. I have not personally done a lot of experimentation with this specific to lymphatic, but these would be things like red root, cleavers, burdock, and others. Briefly, I'm gonna touch on some signs that your lymphatic system might be asking for some additional support.

This would be things like frequent colds and infections because of that immune supportive aspect of the lymphatic system. Swollen glands, especially if you have them in the neck or

lymph nodes in here, you might feel like marble size things in your neck, puffy face or eyes, often that's gonna be the only symptom is that you feel more puffy and kind of swollen, especially in the morning. Chronic fatigue and brain fog. Of course, those can be related to a vast many things, but lymphatic system is one of them. Bloating and fluid retention, especially in the legs. So if you have wear tight pants and it squeezes your leg and then there's a line after you remove your pants or your sock, you see a line that can be a sign your lymphatic system might want some support. And also because everything is so interrelated and the lymphatic system is part of detox, if we have skin issues like acne or eczema, there's often at least a lymphatic component. Not that that's necessarily the only connection. However, supporting the lymphatic system can be helpful here as well.

So, because I got the question about lymphatic detox a lot. I wanna address this specifically. People ask, how do you detox your lymphatic system? And I wanna clarify that we don't detox it, we simply support it. It is part of our detox system, part of our natural drainage. So we don't need to do anything external.

We need to support what it already does. This is like I've talked about, focusing on things like daily movement, hydration and mineral balance. Regular sweating, which is good for many things including our lymphatic system. And then if they're helpful manual techniques like massage and dry brushing, we can avoid things like chronic sitting, tight restrictive clothing, even mild dehydration and processed foods that increase inflammation.

I'm also briefly gonna touch on a daily lymph flow ritual that we can do. Just some tips of how to integrate this throughout the day and things that I often, but not always do in case it's helpful for you. The first being, starting with hydration. So every morning, I've mentioned this before, I drink a big glass of mineral rich water.

I'll add different minerals, salt, different things depending on the day. And I try to do this outside in the natural light, barefoot on the ground whenever possible. And the reason here is that lymph fluid is mostly water, so even a tiny bit of dehydration thickens it and slows it down. Another one is deep breathing, so I'm trying to get better at diaphragmatic breathing, which is inhaling deeply through the nose, letting our belly expand, holding for a few seconds, and then exhaling through the mouth.

Doing this for 10 to 15 cycles. The reason this works is that the thoracic duct, which is our largest lymph vessel, pumps more effectively when internally stimulated by deep breaths. This is another thing I try to do outside in the sun, touching the ground whenever possible. Then movement is a huge one. So I try to work into my day whenever possible, one or more of these things, rebounding.

Again, NASA showed that this can increase lymphatic flow by up to 15 times. Not 15%, but 15 times. Walking, walking in place, stretching, yoga, twist, inversions, whole body vibration plate. If you've already got the other movement, because again, we, our lymphatic system has no pump. The only way it moves is if we move.

I also do really enjoy dry brushing and self lymphatic massage. These are both very inexpensive. You can do them at home. They don't take much time. You can use a natural bristle brush or your hand. I like to use a brush, sometimes with a little bit of castor oil on it, and there is a mechanism to this, so I will link to that in the show notes.

But you want to brush or massage toward the heart after opening up all those lymphatic points I talked about. So like from feet to legs to groin, from hands to arms, to armpits, from abdomen and clockwise circles, and then chest and neck toward the collarbone. The reason is this stimulates superficial lymph vessels and helps open major drainage pathways.

Also, you might have even seen me do this on podcast before. If you're watching this on video, I often throughout the day will just rub my collarbone like this. On each side to open lymphatic flow and then try to move in between podcasts, do some gentle bouncing, and get some light for that extra support.

And then again, I will, anytime I get the chance to mention light exposure, support your lymph by getting light exposure whenever possible. Step outside for natural sunlight, even for just a few minutes. This indirectly boost your lymphatic system because it regulates our circulation, our nitric oxide, and our circadian rhythm.

All which also have crossover impact into the lymphatic system. And then totally optional extra boosters that you can experiment if you have the availability would be sauna and cold or contrast shower, heat and cold alternating, castor oil pack on the abdomen in the evening where I even sleep with them at times, and gentle release of lymphatic points whenever you have time throughout the day.

So wrap up and key takeaways. Our lymphatic system is a silent but essential detox and defense system. One that we often don't talk about, can easily support, and that moves when we move. So it depends on us to work optimally.

It does not have a central pump. We are the pump. Through our movement, through our breath, through our habits, through our light exposure. A few simple daily practices can keep it moving and protect long-term health, including emerging evidence showing this even might have crossover into some of the really big diseases that we're just starting to understand.

So I leave you with the idea that motion is lotion and for your lymphatic system, it is life. It only moves if you move. I hope this inspires you to ideally hydrate and move around outside in the sun, touching the earth and support your lymphatic system a little bit extra today. I would love if you would leave me an honest rating or review as well as feedback on what topics you would love to hear in the future on this podcast.

Guests you would love to hear from or any other feedback that feels relevant to you. I do read all ratings and reviews and they help other people find this podcast and help us keep going, so I'm deeply grateful if you would take two minutes and leave an honest review either way. I am so grateful that you spent your time with me today.

It's always an honor that you would choose to share your time and your energy and your attention with me, and I hope that you will join me again on the next episode of The Wellness Podcast.