

POST-SURGICAL RECOVERY GUIDE · 06

Lymphatic drainage after a facelift

You were ready for the new face.

Maybe not for the puffy, bruised, slightly lopsided version that shows up first.

That's swelling. It's temporary. And it responds beautifully to a very light touch.

01

What's happening in your body

Your head and neck hold more lymph nodes than almost anywhere else in the body: in front of the ears, under the jaw, along the sides of the neck and above the collarbones. A facelift or neck lift lifts the skin right over many of those pathways, so fluid pools in the cheeks, jawline, under the chin and around the eyes.

Facial drainage is its own specialty, and it takes a delicate, trained touch around the eyes, nose and mouth.

Facial MLD always clears the neck first, then uses slow, feather-light strokes to guide fluid down and away from the treated areas... never on the incisions, never pulling on lifted skin.

02

Your recovery timeline

WHEN	WHAT'S TYPICAL	HOW WE SUPPORT YOU
Days 1–3	Swelling and bruising peak. Tight, numb, puffy.	Head elevated. Cold as your surgeon directs.
Days 5–7	Swelling still obvious, bruising yellowing	First session, with surgeon clearance
Weeks 2–3	You start to look like yourself in photos	1–2 sessions per week
Weeks 3–6	Subtle puffiness, especially in the morning and along the jaw	Weekly or as needed. Home self-drainage.
Months 2–6	Final result settles, numbness fades	Scar and tension care once healed, if needed

03

Your Renu facial surgery plan

First session: often 5–7 days after surgery, once your surgeon clears you. Eyelid surgery and neck lifts follow a similar timeline.

Rhinoplasty is often closer to 7–10 days, and we never work on the nose itself.

How many sessions? Most clients do well with 3–5 sessions over the first six weeks, often weekly or twice weekly at the start.

Home self-drainage. Facial swelling responds well to a simple daily routine. We'll teach you a few gentle strokes to do at home between visits.

04

What a session feels like

You'll rest on your back with your head slightly raised. We begin at the collarbones and sides of the neck, then move up to the face with a touch so light it barely moves the skin. Clean, gloved hands, no oils near incisions, nothing that tugs.

Most people find it deeply calming... and many see visibly less puffiness the same day.

05

What we will never do

- Work on incisions or pull on lifted skin
- Press on the eyes, nose or any area your surgeon has asked us to avoid
- Use facial tools, gua sha, cupping or heat on fresh tissue
- Treat through signs of infection or hematoma

06

At home between sessions

- ☐ Sleep with your head elevated as your surgeon recommends
- ☐ Cold compresses in the first few days only as your surgeon directs, then follow their guidance
- ☐ Wear your chin strap or facial garment if prescribed
- ☐ Avoid bending low, heavy lifting and hot showers on the face early on

- ☐ Go easy on salt, and stay hydrated
- ☐ Do your home drainage routine once you've been taught

WHEN TO GET MEDICAL HELP

Call your surgeon if...

- One side suddenly swells much more than the other, or becomes very firm and painful (possible hematoma)
- Fever over 38°C or chills
- Spreading redness, drainage, or an incision that opens
- Skin near an incision darkens or turns dusky
- New facial weakness or drooping, or changes in vision

08 · QUESTIONS

Your questions, answered

How soon after a facelift can I have lymphatic drainage?

Usually 5–7 days after surgery, with your surgeon's approval.

Will lymphatic drainage loosen my facelift?

No. MLD is extremely light and moves only the surface fluid layer. We avoid the incisions and never pull on the lifted skin.

How long does swelling last after a facelift?

Most visible swelling settles over a few weeks, but subtle swelling can take several months to fully resolve.

Do you offer drainage after eyelid surgery or rhinoplasty?

Yes, with surgeon clearance. We work around the eyes and nose, not on them.

Can I do lymphatic drainage on my own face at home?

Yes, once you've been shown how. Gentle self-drainage between sessions can help, as long as it's light and avoids incisions.

Can I get a lymphatic facial instead?

Not in the early weeks. A medical post-op drainage session is gentler and more targeted. Once you're fully healed, our lymphatic facials are a lovely way to maintain.

WHY RENU

Not all "lymphatic massage" is the same.

After surgery, you're trusting someone with healing tissue. Here's what you get at Renu.

Led by a Certified Lymphedema Therapist with 10 years' experience. Our post-op and lymphedema program is led by Meeghan Mackenzie, RMT since 2005 and a Certified Lymphedema Therapist since 2016. Meeghan earned her CLT through the Academy of Lymphatic Studies' 135-hour Complete Lymphedema Certification, which covers Manual Lymph Drainage and Complete Decongestive Therapy, the same standard used to treat lymphedema after cancer. She is one of roughly 350 CLTs in Canada.

Trained in the world's leading lymphatic methods. Beyond her CLT, Meeghan has trained in:

- Vodder Manual Lymph Drainage, the original method developed by Dr. Emil Vodder and the foundation of lymphatic therapy worldwide
- Földi, the German school behind Complete Decongestive Therapy, named for the Földi Clinic in the Black Forest, one of Europe's leading lymphology centres
- Chikly Lymph Drainage Therapy, which teaches therapists to feel the rhythm, direction and depth of lymph flow, map pathways by hand, and work with scar tissue and fibrosis

That combination lets us choose the right approach for your body and your surgery, not a one-size-fits-all routine.

Over 20 years of hands-on experience, with a clinical focus on oncology, lymphedema and surgical recovery.

Registered Massage Therapy receipts for your extended health plan.

Honest care. We tell you what lymphatic work can do, what it can't, and when you need your surgeon instead.

What to look for in any post-op therapist:

- A regulated health licence (in Alberta, an RMT, physiotherapist, OT or nurse)
- Formal lymphatic or lymphedema certification, not a weekend course
- Light, comfortable technique. If it hurts, it isn't lymphatic drainage
- No pushing fluid out of incisions
- Clear, published pricing, and willingness to work with your surgeon

FOR YOU TO KEEP

My recovery notes

Bring this page to your sessions. It helps us plan your care around your surgeon's instructions.

PROCEDURE

SURGERY DATE

SURGEON AND CLINIC PHONE

CLEARED FOR LYMPHATIC DRAINAGE ON

COMPRESSION INSTRUCTIONS

SESSION DATE	HOW I'M FEELING · NOTES



GIVE FRESH LIFE OR STRENGTH TO.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Facelift on the calendar?

Book your first drainage for the week after surgery now, so you're not scrambling for a spot when you're puffy and tender. Call 403-270-2111 or book at renu.janeapp.com.

BOOK ONLINE

renu.janeapp.com

CALL

403-270-2111

VISIT

200, 209 19 St NW
Calgary AB T2N 2H9

HOURS

Monday to Friday 8:00 am to 8:30 pm
Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

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This guide is general education to support your recovery. It doesn't replace the advice of your surgeon or medical team. Always follow your surgeon's instructions, and seek medical care for any of the warning signs listed in this guide.