



Essential Alchemy

The Ancient Art of Healing Naturally

Season 4, Episode 16: Lymphatic Drainage 101 with Desiree De Spong

Jodi Cohen: Hello and welcome to Essential Alchemy. Alchemy is defined as the power or process that changes or transforms something in a mysterious or impressive way. My hope is that the information in this podcast can help you transform your mood, your energy, and physical health, or even connect some dots to help you shift your mental or emotional state. I'm your host, Jodi Cohen, a bestselling author, award-winning journalist, functional practitioner, lifelong learner, and founder of Vibrant Blue Oils, a company that sells proprietary blends of high-quality, organic, or wildcrafted essential oil remedies designed to help you return to your ideal mental, physical and emotional state. You can find out more about me and my company at vibrantblueoils.com. And with that, let's get started with today's episode.

Hello, I'm Jodi Cohen, your host, and I'm so excited to be joined by my fellow Lymph and fascia enthusiast, Desiree De Spong. She's the founder and CEO of Model Health stands at the forefront of lymphatic therapy and has created two amazing at Home Tools, an orb and a flow vibrate that can really help you kind of integrate your practice at home. So welcome. Thank you for joining me.

Desiree De Spong: Thanks Jodi. It's a pleasure to be here.

Jodi Cohen: So tell me a little bit about how you got into this, how you started developing your at home tools, what really prompted this brilliant business?

Desiree De Spong: So 20 years in the industry, I had been a lymphatic therapist but also a teacher. So I was teaching in the US and here in New Zealand and Australia and I think it just as part of being a clinician, you identify where the gaps are and so it became more about developing product or technology that could fill that gap. So for example, our main point of sale is a practitioner-only product called Rezo, which is a compression device and that was due to manual lymphatic drainage. It's very time spent. It can be costly and it's quite hard to get a really good practitioner and especially in your location it's you can be traveling hours. So this has filled a gap in clinics where they can now offer a therapy that's consistently the same and gets the same outcomes. But recognizing that we also had gaps in our suits.

So for example, and for obvious reasons, I can't put compression around your throat, so we wanted to adapt a product and especially now with the insight of the glymphatic and knowing that we do have a lymph in the brain that needs to be managed. There was the developer, the flow vibrate, but where the benefits have come in as people are getting rid of the puff in their face and they're seeing changes to jaw pain.

Desiree De Spong: Dr. Christine Schaff an example, uses it for the vagus nerve. So we started to see other uses and then the other key one that was missing in the suit therapy was in the armpits. Now I've been working in breast cancer for 20 years. I still speak for a lymphedema group every other month and it is an area that I've got a lot of passion around needing women to improve their overall breast health. So this was one that you could put into your armpits, but we also added in an oscillation and vibration so that we could work with fascia as well because we know how the impact of that can have on your body if it's rigid and not creating flow.

Jodi Cohen: Do you want to show your device and just give people a quick overview of how you recommend people use it and the benefits?

Desiree De Spong: Certainly. So this is your flow vibrate and Yes, when I developed it, people kind of made the comment that it looked kind of like something else that was used, and trust me, it was not the reasoning behind it. It was when I used rapid release technology for example and I've been using that in clinic for a very long time and saw the advantages to using vibration, but that tool is phenomenal but really noisy and quite cumbersome to deal with. So it was all about creating micro pulsations around, sorry, the face area, oh, hang on, I can never get this camera right there we go around so that what you're trying to do is drain and the head is designed to get around the contour of through the neck and then there's a whole sequence of under the face you want to be able to get through all the different drainage points.

Sinus, it's really good for the sinus and it's been able to be great for the headaches congestion in the brain fog, it has three vibrations, so basically a mild medium, large, so it's a higher strength and so the light one, we're putting more around the face. We don't want to be putting too much vibration. We want to create little pulsations, improve the collagen blood flow, everything that's going on. But as we go into other areas when we use it in the body for example, you may want to do it down, there's a group of lymph nodes that run down from above the collarbone down into the armpit. We would use them there. You can also use this in the armpit as well. It can be used on the abdomen. There are lots of different ways that you can use the flow vibrate by increasing the vibration.

So that was the one that was developed for the face. The orb came about my own frustration, A thinking about the axilla, but B, the pressure points when you get that point that you just can't get anything through and most balls are quite large and they're really hard to lie on. So this is only a seven-inch-sized ball, but I wanted the oscillation because to me it's about breaking out vibration to create a stimulus so fantastic for lymphatics and getting fluid moving. So it can be operated very similarly, not so much around the face but in the other areas of the body like you would the flow vibrate.

Desiree De Spong: But the flow orb is more designed to try and break out fascial scar tissue because you can either lean on it so you can up against the wall and get into that knot in the back of your shoulder.

It can be maneuvered up and down, so across the chest wall. So you're just rolling it great for releasing the diaphragm and we have videos up on YouTube on how to do this and so then, but one of the things or there's a few things that have come out of this since we've launched it, arthritis, the elderly are noticing a significant change by just holding it in their hands where plantar fasciitis, so in the feet that just rolling it under that bridge of the foot is starting to break up that and I got to use it firsthand. I achieved a break my ankle not that long ago and so I got this fasciitis, sorry, in my, sorry that's how we say it in New Zealand. I was able to break that up with this pelvic hypertonic, really tight pelvic area. We had one of the most amazing feedbacks we've had and we subsequently got more is a woman of 20 years of incontinence and pelvic pain due to surgeries having a baby and issues relating to female stuff.

And she had used it for 20 minutes on either side of her sit bones and then she had just come back to report for the first time that afternoon. She had no issue with her pad like it was dry and she had no pain. She's gone on to use it every day for a month has no pain now and is not incontinent any longer. So that's when we know you are shifting. I'm also a big believer that we sit too much and of course, we're building up fluid in the pelvic basin and we're building up rigidity in that area. So to be able to maneuver that abdominal fluid, lower pelvic fluid can not have benefits for women in their health and men. So the thistle has become quite a hit for us because, and I do believe it's because it's got the oscillation and it is one of those tools that you go and lean into it and it's quite strong. You can feel the vibration in the floor for example, but you're just going, oh yeah, oh that's good. And that's where we are seeing huge results.

Jodi Cohen: When I love that you have kind of the one-two punch so to speak because one of the things that alluded to me, you mentioned kind of a lymph under the arm for me it was really tight fascia in the back that was kind of locking the lymph and preventing drainage. So if you can talk a little bit about the interplay between fascia and lymph and how both of these tools, I mean I think this is something everyone needs at home.

Desiree De Spong: So there's an old saying structure equals function, right? For example, if your back is out of alignment, you talk to any osteo or any chiropractor, and they'll talk about how the lymph is impeded and fascia is all about the glide, about the movement, about the fluidity, and those two interplay the lymphatics. So they literally are interlinked. So if the fascia is rigid and there's no movement, the lymphatics aren't going to drain.

Desiree De Spong: If the body is so toxic and full of much fluid, it's creating a real swelling and then pushing against the fascia, it's going to impact on how the fascia again moves. So we know when you're really swollen it's hard to move, it's putting pressure on the muscle, your body can't actually maneuver it out. And a lot of people, especially with lower edema, so when it comes to the back, if you are holding tension, you are holding lymph.

It's quite simple. It's not rocket science to me, but it seems to for some reason we forget to keep it simple. I think that's my issue. And so if the vertebrae is out or the fascia is tight, especially in around the shoulder area, we do a lot of sitting again and we are moving and hunching over which diminishes our breath, which is then not the deep diaphragmatic, which means you're not moving the fluid through the chest wall. We have to breathe. I mean I don't know if you remember that old thing we used to say I must increase my bust, but the technique of doing that was pumping through the chest wall to get the fluid up through, especially through the thoracic duct, but to get the chest wall moving because breast tissue, especially the female has no muscle. So you are relying on that movement and breath to be able to get the fluid to move. So if we're more hunched over, we're getting more restriction in our fascia in our back, especially around there's a group of nodes around the back of the arm called subscapula and they have played an interplay with when you start getting that real overflow of fluid through here or up in the back of the arms, it's usually because the subscap is so tight and the fluid is now pooling and around those lymph nodes.

Jodi Cohen: Yes, I definitely experience that and notice a lot of people. Can you walk us through what your recommended ritual is or what you do every day so that when people get this they kind of have a starting point do you start with the clavicles or how do you advise people to get started?

Desiree De Spong: So my thing with flow vibrate is my thing is to do it in the morning. You always, no matter what you try to do, you wake up with a bit of puff, right? So for my thing is like my flow vibrates my morning routine. I'm on either a vibration plate or I'm doing something where I'm sitting here and draining. You usually always start left side because all your lymphatic fluid ends up on the left side. So you obviously go what we call proximal to distal, which means that we want to open up the gateways or open up the dam sites to be able to draw fluid in. So for example, I'd be going from here down my neck into it, there's a big group of nodes here, but there's one called the jugular digastric, which is kind of the big center point of all drainage and then you're coming in under the chin and then you're coming down through the actual, this is hard to do in front of a video and down through the face here because actually there's a group of lymph nodes down through here.

Desiree De Spong: So through this quadrant now there is what we call a watershed in the face means that this quadrant here comes down through here, the wrist drains out. So you saw this is when you're sweeping out, you can come in under the sinuses and the forehead. Now if you want to go down into the armpits, that's when we're coming through up through to here and then into the armpit and you can actually place it around on those subscap nodes, which is sort in the crevice at the back of the arm there. So if I show this area...

Jodi Cohen: Yeah, that's where it was tight and what setting do you like it on the lowest setting for the face and then you on the face one?

Desiree De Spong: Yes, I tend to go one up to here and then I would go down into two and maybe even three into the armpit. It really comes down to one of the most important things about lymphatic drainage it's not supposed to be hard. It's not supposed to be intense because it sits just under the skin, 75% of your surface lymphatics are just under the skin. So it's about creating the little pulsations to get those lymphatic vessels to literally open close and pump the fluid through. So it's not about pushing this so hard that it bends on this like this. You want it just to glide and that will create, but slowly it's not about 20 times. I'd rather you do two really slow techniques and then that way you get that vibration having its greatest impact under the skin.

That's what we recommend with the flow, vibrate with the flow or this can be modified. I wouldn't use it on the face. I think it's a little bit intense for that, but where I would go is, so with the flow vibrate, you can start under the clavicle too. We do have nodes here, but you can just, all you're doing is rolling them under your hand. It's not meant to be high-pressure. I don't want it to hurt. I want you to go, oh yeah, you know what? When you go like that, the body lets go and the fascia lets go. So you start to create momentum faster instead of being so used to let's get the pain out really hard. I'm like, no, let's create the glide and the movement. So it's all about switching the hands and just creating this rock and roll across the body and you can come up and just hold in above in the termini area, so above the collarbone if you want, because we still want to open these pathways, but then we can be rolling up through here because a lot of people get lots of tension through the pec muscles.

We can be just holding it under the armpit so we can be just then placing it around the subscap and leaning. I mean the great thing is you can do this in front of a TV, it doesn't have to be or you can be reading a book or watching a podcast or the good thing about this is you do not have to a vibration plate, you have to go and stand on it. You have to create change. The idea is to create regular daily care or self because that is the key to any progress in health is to put time aside for yourself.

Desiree De Spong: But sometimes we're busy so it's more or less thinking, well when could I combine that into just like I clean my teeth every day or I shower, how can I combine this into my day-to-day life? And as I said, there are YouTube videos to watch on how to do it for opening up the abdomen, using sorry, the diaphragm and then working on the abdomen. It can be great for knotting the small intestine because I find that a lot of people hold their tension there and if we can release that, we can also use it on the inside of our legs, which is where our inguinal nodes are. And then it can also be great as I said for the fascia. So if you want to roll it up and down your calves, if you want to be able to use it on your feet feels amazing at the base of the feet.

Jodi Cohen: And would you let pain, like you mentioned you hurt your ankle, if somebody has a sore knee or a twisted ankle, would you let pain be the guide? Like something's tight in discomfort, like put it there?

Desiree De Spong: Yeah, when we first got the prototype, I had a colleague, who had had three knee surgeries, couldn't get a full range of motion, couldn't crouch right down and I just had him lay this under the back of the knee there's a set of nodes called the popliteal and we just had it on us to try and break up on the second setting of this and then I just got him to use the flow vibrate up and around the knee cap just to see if we could get some momentum and afterward he did it for an hour afterward he got a full range of motion.

Jodi Cohen: I have to be honest, it's funny, we went on an Italian vacation to Pano where I did more downstairs than I think I've done in 20 years. My knees were not happy. I started playing with my lymph and fascia oil. I can now do things with my knees that I haven't done in years. So I'm super obsessed with the ball for hip mobility and things like that. This is amazing. I should ask, what do you think of combining essential oils or castor oil with your products and would you do it before or after? How would you do that?

Desiree De Spong: I would do it as part of the therapy. So now the great thing about the flow vibrate is you can, well to a certain degree submerge it, really wash it. You can actually water and all the rest because it's silicone. This is silicone as well, but you can't submerge it because there are certain little areas where you can open it up for where the screws are. But as long as you've got a good wet clean white that you can use afterwards, then definitely combining the two will make a significant difference as far as I'm concerned. But just think for this one, I would only be putting a mild bit on just to get that glide and then I'd put more on afterward. But this one you can easily put as much as you want on because it's easy to claim this because it's all in one.

Jodi Cohen: Amazing. And you recommended starting once a day. Do you think that's enough to start to see an impact? Should people do it twice a day?

Desiree De Spong: Well, most people have reported once a day they do see an impact, but if you are dealing with an injury or you are dealing with something that's quite chronic, then twice a day is going to make the most significant. I think again, always coming back to pain is your measure or discomfort because the one thing people aren't always aware of is that when you work with fascia it has a ripple effect. So as I for example unleashed the fascia in my foot, then I started getting hip issues. Now the hip was because the hip had compensated for so long now I had to work with the hip and then the shoulder because of what they call anatomy trains of fascia or interlinked. So don't think it's created a new problem, it's just an unraveling. And if we understand that then we kind of go, oh, okay, cool. Well, I've obviously dealt with that side of the issue, but guess this is where it all maybe started from and then you work with that. So it's all about breaking it down to recognizing that it's not just going to be one area, there may be two or three that you have to work with once when you are working specifically with fascia.

Jodi Cohen: That's actually a really valid point. I have heard death starts in the feet, so feet are a good area to start. I've also heard the abdomen because of the shallow breathing. Do you have ideal starting points for unraveling fascia knowing that it will have a ripple effect?

Desiree De Spong: I come back to, I'm quite simplistic. I come back to whereas your pain point because what you've focused on, but it will create a ripple. So for me, it's like let's ease the pain and then observe where you are feeling the referral from that. So that tells you that's another point that needs to be managed. And so you kind of unwrap it because the pain point is usually unless it's been an injury like me breaking my ankle, the pain point is the end of the trail. So let's work back through what happened because you find that can sometimes because you don't always know how it started. So I mean definitely releasing the abdominal areas significantly and the feet, the feet will affect the neck when you release faster. So there is this interrelationship, but because it can get very complicated for at-home users, I personally simplify and just say, go to the pain point but observe where the ripple's going because I suggest you do both.

Jodi Cohen: No, that's great advice. Is there anything I haven't asked you that you'd like to share?

Desiree De Spong: The only thing I would say is that we've seen a significant rise in lymphatic issues in the last four to five years, more so than normal. I think there are more environmental exposures, and I'm not just talking about environmental toxins, I'm talking about emotional environmental issues as well. And the one thing that we've learned about lymphatics is that if you don't sleep well, your lymphatic system doesn't work well. If you're in a constant state of stress of some form, so a dysregulated autonomic nervous system where you're feeling like you're always in that little bit of fight-flight, then you're never going to get that lymphatic system optimized.

Desiree De Spong: So for example, using your parasympathetic blend is phenomenal for downregulating, that stress reaction because that's part of improving overall health is getting back into some sort of equilibrium, not what we did to adapt to what's happened to us over the last few years. And then if we can get our body back going, we are safe, we're okay, I mean get a hug as many hugs as you can a day, the research on that is phenomenal. And that's what they say about flower preo. It's like I've been wrapped up, loved, and hugged. It's that the simple processes, learning to breathe differently, again, improving your abdominal breath, all of those things are going to play a massive impact not only on your overall health and wellbeing but if we are looking at lymphatics and fascia specifically significant.

Jodi Cohen: One of the things that you just mentioned was kind of emotional toxins. Do you want to speak to the issues in the tissues, how emotions get stuck in the fascia and the lymph, and if they're congested, that emotions don't leave and make us feel anxious or overwhelmed?

Desiree De Spong: Well, for us that's been in the field with more of a diverse look at clinical care. And I mean by that we've looked at the Sun New Zealand, we have this model, the Tari Taha model, which is four pillars to your health, which are mind, body, spirit, and Hanau. Hanau is family to us, and it's not necessarily your biological family, it's the people that you surround yourself with. Are they uplifting or are they bringing you down and are they providing you that support and love you need or are they critical and always making your life hard? So those four factors are really important for recovery and health. So emotional, I mean the Joe Deppen of the world has taught us we are what we think. Right? The great thing is we've got plenty of science now to back this, which I think is fantastic as a practitioner that not just, we use the expression woo woo, I'm not just saying stuff, but emotions.

So for example, with lymphatics, your Louise Hay for example would say, what are you holding onto? What are you not letting go of? And so the weight is a big part of that. That can be a protection. A lot of weight issues I see are fluid issues. They're not the actual weight, it's to do with the way the lymphatic system's functioning, but more importantly what they're holding onto. So creating a barrier of support. So for me, emotions play a massive part. We know that both the fascia and the lymphatics, it's a little bit of a chicken and an egg. Is it sitting in the fascia or is it sitting in the lymph? There's a little bit of argument depending on whose side you are on which system you tend to study more, but it doesn't matter at the end of the day, they know cells hold memories.

Desiree De Spong: We know, I mean I've been doing this amazing study in the last eight weeks on the relationship to intergenerational trauma and how that all comes through us on a cellular level and how our behavior is influenced even by our granddad or our great granddad because the learning mechanisms that have come through. So you know that every experience you have has had some impact on you and whether you hold that in the tissues then impacts on how you recover or how your health and wellbeing is. So for me, letting go of your fluids and creating that movement back in the fascia is what helps you just let go of what no longer serves you.

Jodi Cohen: And to that point, I've noticed that when I'm less rigid in my fascia, I'm less rigid in my life. It doesn't matter where I sit in the restaurant or the movie theater, it doesn't matter. I got gluten the other day and I was like...

Desiree De Spong: Take down with the flow rather than, yeah.

Jodi Cohen: Well this was wonderful. Can you please share where people can find your products and find your videos?

Desiree De Spong: Yeah, so we have a website is dub dub dot flow, so that's P-R-E-S-S-O-U-S a.com (flowpressousa.com) and you'll find our products on there. And then we also have a YouTube that says Flow Preso, so flow we know it, and then the P-R-E-S-S-O, and they can see the videos on Flow Vibrate and flow orb and how to use them. And yeah, we have a pretty good setup there and lots of information you can obtain. So the idea is to really get people to, well, my thing has always been to support people to look after self and we know it's a challenge, even us as practitioners, it's a day-to-day reality of reminding yourself to take care of self. So the idea of these products is to simplify it so that we can have people in their flow.

Jodi Cohen: I love that and I love that you have kind of home care if they want to try the Flow Presso device. Can they find a practitioner near them on that site too?

Desiree De Spong: Correct, yes. There's a location map you just put in your area and then it'll come up. Sometimes we are putting them up every day, so just bear with us or connect with us because sometimes we've found that we can, in New Zealand, we're just such a little country, but in the US it could be easier to go overstate to another clinic. It might be an hour as opposed to instate. It's two hours. So you can contact us as well and we'll ensure that we give you any information we have.

Jodi Cohen: This was so helpful. Thank you for your generosity of time. Thank you for these beautiful products, just giving people a way to help themselves. This is really my pleasure.

Desiree De Spong: Thank you. Thank you for having me. It was wonderful and I certainly love your product, so I think the combination would be incredible.

Jodi Cohen: Yeah, I think it's really powerful, and especially I love that you have both the fascia, the lymph, and the home facelift. That's amazing too.

Desiree De Spong: We all need that, right?

Jodi Cohen: At a certain age. Yeah, it seems like we do.

Thank you so much for listening. I hope this podcast empowered you with some useful information and takeaways. If you liked this episode, please consider sharing a positive review or subscribing. I would also love to offer you my free parasympathetic toolkit as a gift just for listening. It will teach you how to activate the most important nerve in your body to turn on your ability to heal. This free toolkit includes a checklist, a video, and a detailed guide. If this podcast prompted any questions, you can always find answers at my blog at vibrantblueoils.com or my book Essential Oils to Boost the Brain and Heal the Body. Until next time, wishing you vibrant Health.