

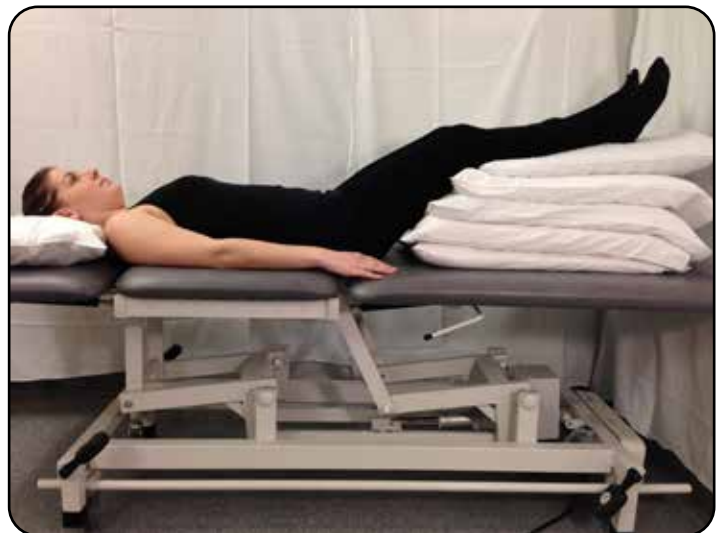
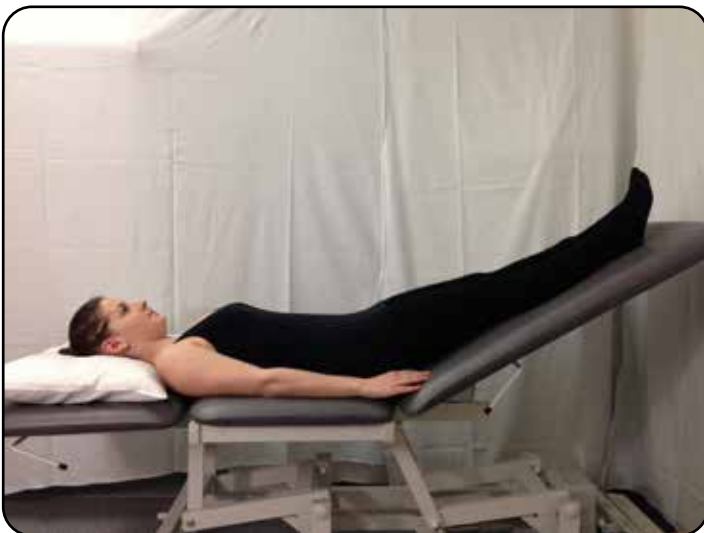
# Positions for Lower Limb Swelling

## Instructions

- After an injury or surgery, swelling (edema) in the limbs (arms or legs) is common. This swelling can be painful, and affect movement and your ability to do daily activities.
- One of the easiest ways to manage swelling is to elevate (raise) the swollen limb.
- The goal is to elevate the swollen limb slightly above the level of the heart. This helps the extra fluid move back towards the heart for circulation to the rest of the body.

## Positions in bed

- Lying in bed with your legs elevated is the best position to help lower swelling.
- It is best to lie on your back.
- Elevate your legs above your heart, while keeping your upper body flat.
- If you have a hospital bed, you can do this by elevating the foot of the bed.
- If you are in a regular bed, use pillows to elevate each leg. Place the pillows lengthwise under each leg. Use as many pillows as needed to elevate your legs above your heart.



## Position when sitting

- When sitting in a chair, use a stool to elevate your legs. You can place pillows on top of the stool if needed.



## Positions when standing

- Walking warms up your muscles and helps get fluid moving.
- Avoid standing still for a long time, as this will make swelling worse. Try walking around or marching on the spot. While you are standing, move your toes up and down to keep the fluid moving.
- You may use a compression bandage, stockings or a pressure garment when standing or walking to lower fluid build-up in your ankles. Talk to your occupational therapist or physiotherapist about which type of compression garment or bandage would be best for you.
- After walking or standing for a period of time, go back to a chair or bed and elevate your legs as described above.

**What are your questions? Please ask.**

**Therapist:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Designed by: Nova Scotia Health Library Services*

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