

## How to Locate a Certified Lymphedema Therapist in Your Area

The standard of care in the treatment of lymphedema is [Complete Decongestive Therapy](#) (CDT), which is performed by certified lymphedema therapists. Several schools in the United States offer specialized training and certification to physical therapists, occupational therapists, physicians, chiropractors, nurses, or massage therapists.



Therapists attending these courses receive a minimum of 135 hours of specific lymphedema training, which consists of one third class room lecture and two thirds of lab instruction in order to learn the necessary skills to effectively treat lymphedema.

Upon successful completion of this 135-hour course, which includes a written and hands-on examination, the participants graduate as certified lymphedema therapists (CLT).

Unfortunately, at the current time there are no mandatory training standards for lymphedema therapists, and some health care professionals claim to be lymphedema therapists, but have not actually attended and successfully graduated from one of these nationally recognized 135-hour programs.

The lack of standardized qualifications and training can seriously affect the outcome of lymphedema treatment. Recognizing the need for training standards, the Lymphology Association of North America ([LANA](#)) has stepped in to set up standards ensuring a minimum level of training, knowledge and experience. The National Lymphedema Network ([NLN](#)) endorses these standards.

LANA offers a voluntary national competency exam for certified lymphedema therapists who underwent a 135-hour recognized training program. Therapists who successfully pass the national LANA exam may use the initials CLT-LANA behind their names.

Another organization concerned with the training standards for lymphedema therapists in North America is the North American Lymphedema Education Association (NALEA).

NALEA is currently an alliance of the four lymphedema therapy certification schools responsible for training the majority of Certified Lymphedema Therapists (CLT) in North America according to standards set forth by the Lymphology Association of North America (LANA).



The current NALEA member schools are:

- Academy of Lymphatic Studies
- Dr. Vodder School International
- Klose Training and Consulting
- Norton School of Lymphatic Therapy

NALEA associate schools share the unified goal of setting and maintaining the highest standards of lymphedema education in North America and are in agreement regarding the minimum educational framework required to graduate lymphedema therapists. These specialized therapists must be able to demonstrate adequate knowledge and refined manual skills based upon medically sound, evidence-based practice. As such the core curricula of all NALEA programs impart knowledge in the internationally recognized gold standard of lymphedema treatment known as Complete or Combined Decongestive Therapy (CDT) as per the American Lymphedema Framework Project (ALFP), the International Society of Lymphology (ISL), the Lymphology Association of North America (LANA), the National Lymphedema Network- Medical Advisory Committee NLN-MAC, and NALEA.

NALEA functions to:

- Disseminate information regarding training standards to medical professionals, lymphedema patients, certified lymphedema therapists and prospective students
- Inform certified therapists of important developments and current research in the field of lymphedema management
- Monitor the content, scope and delivery models of its member programs curricula
- Maintain qualifications and standards for lymphedema instructors of member programs
- Uphold and strengthen the skills and knowledge base of trained therapists via recertification programs
- Provide an endorsement of quality to member programs by issuing the NALEA logo for posting on member websites and other promotional materials.

More information on this new organization, to include NALEA's position concerning the Lymphedema Diagnosis and Treatment Cost Savings Act of 2010 can be viewed on its Web site <http://www.lymphedemaeducationassociation.com/>

Patients affected by lymphedema should make sure to locate therapists who were adequately trained and certified and meet the standards outlined in the [Position Statement of the National Lymphedema Network](#) on the training of lymphedema therapists.

**Resources to locate a certified lymphedema therapist:**

The "[Find a Therapist](#)" tab on the menu bar on top of this page provides a list of lymphedema therapists who successfully graduated from one of the training schools in the United States and the rest of the world. Most schools will ask for your zip code and email address to provide results online, or send names of nearby lymphedema therapists via email. The list also provides a link to the NLN resource Guide, which offers contact information on lymphedema clinics and therapists.

LANA also provides a list of international contacts for certified lymphedema therapists having passed the national exam – CLT-LANA locator.