



Dr. David G. Williams circa 1985

ast month I discussed the importance of improving lymphatic flow throughout your body, and the many positive implications that flow can have on your health. The recognized benefits you can experience can be truly amazing. As I ex-

plained, studies are beginning to demonstrate how proper lymph drainage is essential if your body is to remain disease-free. Additionally, obstructed or poor lymphatic drainage has been linked to two of the most common forms of cancer (breast and the prostate), and plays a pivotal role in the metastasis of various forms of cancer throughout the body.

It is my hope that you have already started to implement many of those ideas and techniques that I covered last month. They will go a long way in improving practically any health problem you might experience. In this issue, I'll show you how to further facilitate lymphatic drainage through very specific massage techniques.

Maximum Lymphatic Drainage

Lymphatic massage differs drastically from other forms of massage, and there are a few "rules" that will let you achieve maximum lymphatic drainage.

When most people refer to lymphatic massage they use the term "manual lymphatic drainage," (MLD) which was coined by Dr. Emil Vodder and his wife, Estrid, when they first presented their research to a 1936 medical symposium held in Paris. The Vodders had achieved very profound effects using very specific low-pressure movements.

As I mentioned last month, approximately 70 percent of the initial lymph vessels are located in,

Performing Under Pressure

or just below, the skin. These small, initial vessels drain into larger vessels called pre-collectors, then into even larger lymph vessels called collectors all of which eventually drain into the thoracic duct (which traverses your chest cavity).

The lymph moves through the vessels partially from a "vacuum" effect created by breathing (which I explained in detail last month), muscle contraction, and from a light stretching of the skin. The Vodders discovered how to utilize a very light stretching movement of the skin to dramatically increase lymph flow. This very gentle pressure is just one of the factors that distinguishes MLD from other forms of massage therapy. Understanding these various differences will help you achieve some amazing results on both yourself and others.

Not Your Ordinary Massage

The most difficult point to grasp for most people seems to be that of using light pressure. As a general rule, the pressure should be deep enough that you don't just slide over the skin but light enough

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You will observe with concern how long a useful truth may be known, and exist, before it is generally received and practiced on.—Benjamin Franklin that you don't feel any muscles, tendons, etc. underneath the skin. This works out to about one to four ounces of pressure. You can readily check how much pressure this is if you have access to a kitchen or other small scale.

During massage, the skin should not redden nor should the pressure ever elicit any pain. Most people (including professional therapists) can't believe that such a light pressure can provide any benefit. Keep in mind, however, that the lymph vessels you are draining are located, for the most part, within the skin—and it doesn't take much pressure to compress the skin. Excessive pressure will not only collapse the initial lymph vessels, but can also tear the filaments that hold the small vessels in place. And research has shown that while proper massage can increase lymph flow by as much as 20 times, using too much pressure can collapse the vessels and dramatically impede flow for hours.

(This possibility of damage is one of the primary reasons deep massage techniques are not recommended to relieve edema, or areas of fluid retention. Fortunately, however, broken filaments will generally reform within a 24-hour period, and proper lymph flow resumes on its own. If you're considering a massage for another purpose, such as relaxation or tissue healing, go ahead—the change in lymph flow is only temporary. I wouldn't recommend daily massages, though.)

Applying too much pressure is one of the primary reasons most therapists don't see optimal results when trying to promote lymphatic drainage. Heavy pressure and deep massage may be indicated in reducing scar tissue and freeing adhesions, but it doesn't work to promote lymph flow.

When I was in Cuba years ago, I was given a tour of one of their health spas that they hoped to promote to future tourists. One of their so-called lymph draining therapies required the patient to stand naked against a stone wall while being shot with ice cold water from a high-pressure fire hose. It was an incredible sight to see, and from the individual's facial expressions and cries, I'm sure it increased circulation. However, I tried to explain to the attending doctors that, except for the increased gasping for air, their "therapy" probably had very little effect on improving lymph flow. It appeared to be something they had adapted from Russian KGB interrogating techniques rather than something a spa patron would enjoy.

A Delicate Touch Is All It Takes

When the skin is lightly stretched, lymph vessels in the skin first open and then are stimulated to contract and move lymph fluid along. Rather than a straight stretch, however, Dr. Vodder felt the effect was even more pronounced when a slight circular or spiral component was added to the motion.

Based on his research, one would apply a light pressure to the skin, gently stretching the skin in the proper direction using a motion resembling a circle. After making five to seven expanding spirals that move gradually toward the node, relax any pressure you've applied with your fingers but don't remove your fingers from the surface of your skin. Keeping the fingers in contact with the skin allows the lymphatic valves to close and the lymph to be sucked further down the lymphatic channels. You will develop a rhythm and proper speed to the massage as you gain experience.

A re-sealable sandwich bag and just a little water can help demonstrate what you should feel while performing the massage. Place several tablespoons of water in the bag and remove all the air. (With the bag lying flat there should be enough water to separate both sides of the bag completely.) Put the bag on a soft surface like a bed or chair. While gently massaging the water from one corner of the bag to the other release the pressure and visualize the water being sucked away. If you're able to feel the surface of the bed or chair through the bag, you're probably applying too much pressure.



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Moving in the Right Direction

From the illustrations I've included at the right, you can readily see the direction that the lymph needs to move. It's important that you follow the proper direction since forcing lymph in the wrong direction can damage the small lymph vessel valves. It's always best to refer to the drawings since the lymph channels don't flow straight towards the thoracic duct. In draining the different quadrants of the breast, for example, you'll need to massage in completely different directions.

Where you begin your massaging action to drain lymph fluid is also extremely important. With most massage techniques, the general goal is to increase blood flow to the heart by starting at the furthest points and massaging toward the heart. In lymphatic massage, however, always begin your massage nearest to the node that you're draining to (check the accompanying charts relating to the part of the body you're working on).

Start about four inches (one hand-width) away from the node and begin to push the lymph toward the node. When you reach the node, slide your fingers lightly back about eight inches (two hand-widths) and massage to your original starting point. Continue the process to the end of the line—always pushing the lymph fluid in the direction of the node—then move on to another node if desired.

This procedure first clears the lymph in front of the node—which accomplishes two things. First, it clears the area so more fluid can move to the node. Second, it creates a suction effect that helps pull more fluid down the path. Generally, lymph has to pass through three or more nodes before entering the venous system.

Modified Brazilian Lymph Drainage Technique

A few years ago, researchers in Brazil took a closer look at the hydrodynamics of lymph flow. While there was never any question of the effectiveness of manual lymphatic drainage, they were trying to simplify the process. They came to the conclusion that using rollers might be just as effective as, if not more so than, circular massage. (Lymphology 02;35:91-93)

The rollers they utilized were very similar to stiff hoses or tubing, and they seem to work well on certain parts of the body. For example, a 6-inch-long



Note: Arrows represent the direction of lymph flow. Black dots represent lymph nodes.

hose (about 1 to 1-¼ inch in diameter) can be used to massage the upper thigh. Again, it is suggested that you start closest to the lymph nodes at the groin and work your way back to the knee—always pushing the lymph toward the nodes and also pausing after moving the hose an inch or so. (With the hose, you'll use a gentle rolling motion rather than small circles.)

I've gotten the best results with this technique when I used it on the arms and legs. I've found that a short piece of automotive heater hose (for the leg) and fuel hose (for the arm) work well and can be purchased for next to nothing at most automobile parts stores.

The tubing comes in especially handy for individuals who must regularly do their own massage to relieve edema in the lower extremities (feet, ankles, calves, et cetera.) Manual massage is still best, though, for draining smaller, less uniform areas such as the breast, shoulder, face, et cetera.

Ignorance Is the Kiss of Death

Lymphatic drainage isn't something normally taught in medical school. In fact, the only time most doctors hear or read about the need for such therapy is in association with lymphatic filariasis that results in elephantiasis—a condition in which



NEWS TO USE FROM AROUND THE WORLD

And So They Grow

SASKATOON, CANADA—Researchers at the College of Kinesiology, University of Saskatchewan recently sent me details of some of their latest work that many parents might find useful. They have developed an online tool for predicting the adult height that children will reach.

By simply plugging in the age, standing height, sitting height, and weight, you can get an accurate (95 percent correct) indication of the future height of healthy children aged eight to 16. The steps involved are simple to follow as long as you take accurate measurements and follow the directions, which are explained in detail.

The formula has been validated primarily on Caucasian children at this point, and the team is planning to investigate whether its accuracy holds true for other races as well.

Details can be found at the Web site *athena.usask*. *ca/growthutility/* (note: there's no *www* and the letters must be all lowercase).

That Snore's a Killer

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT—Years ago I warned about the dangers of sleep apnea, the condition where individuals repeatedly stop breathing while asleep. While some studies have linked the problem to an increased incidence of cardiovascular problems—such as high blood pressure, atrial fibrillation, and heart failure—a new study reveals it can also cause strokes.

microscopic parasitic worms in the lymphatic system cause thickening and enlargement of the limbs or scrotum. Since elephantiasis is a tropical disease and, thus, not commonly found in the US, most doctors here don't give it much thought. Unfortunately, as a result, they don't give the idea of improving lymphatic flow much thought either.

Improving lymph flow through the specific massage techniques I've outlined here (or through the other methods I covered last month) can have a dramatic impact on your health—particularly for individuals who have undergone surgeries, severe trauma, infections, or radiation treatments for cancer. Problems will most frequently result in swelling in the hands or feet, depending on where the damage occurred. However, as I explained last month, the immediate effects of poor lymph flow might not always be that noticeable. It could take months or even years before you begin to see the problems. Researchers at Yale School of Medicine found that sleep apnea doubles the risk for the development of stroke and subsequent death. Severe apnea more than triples the risk. What might be even more surprising was that the risk increased without regard to the patient having any of the other usual risk factors for stroke (high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, smoking, et cetera). This latest study supports a similar study at the University of Toronto last year, which found that sleep apnea patients were as much as four times more likely to suffer strokes than were those without the problem.

In the three-year Yale study of 1,022 patients, a total of 697 had sleep apnea. Stroke or death occurred in 72 of those patients, in contrast to only 16 in the group without sleep apnea. (*NEJM 05;353:2034–2041*)

Seeing Dick Clark's condition on his New Year's Eve broadcast was a grim reminder of just how serious and debilitating strokes can be. *Stroke has become the third leading cause of death in the United States, behind heart disease and cancer, and the number-one cause of long-term disability.* This year, 700,000 people in this country will suffer a stroke—and 163,000 will die as a result. It's a problem you want to avoid at all costs. (See "The Test of Time" on page 62 for a tip on how to prevent damage from a stroke in the first place.]

Unfortunately, although it affects one in five adults, sleep apnea still isn't recognized as a serious problem in this country. Most people, generally bed partners, consider it (and the associated "industrial strength snoring") more of a nuisance rather than a sign of impending death or disability. In fact, what still brings most

One good example of the type of incident that would cause the problem is the removal or irradiation of axillary lymph nodes during breast cancer treatment. Following such a procedure, it's not uncommon for these women to experience fluid retention or edema in their associated arm. While the swelling might not be that noticeable, these women often experience one or more symptomssuch as "pins and needles," dull aching pain, pressure, or a generalized weakness in the muscles of the shoulder, arm, wrist, or hand. Lymphatic drainage massage can relieve these problems by getting the lymph moving up the arm and around any damaged or missing nodes. (And a 20-pound purse or backpack thrown across the shoulder impedes lymph flow in even the healthiest of individuals.)

You should consider poor lymph circulation as a contributing factor if you have any of these ailments:

- High blood pressure,
- Chronic fatigue,

NEWS TO USE (CONTINUED)

sufferers to the doctor is their constant fatigue and lack of daytime energy.

The problem occurs when the upper airway sags and blocks the airway due to excess tissue or loss of muscle tone. It is more common in people who are overweight. As an interesting side note, one study involving over 300 National Football League players found that 14 percent of them experience sleep apnea. That's five times higher than males of the same age in the general population. In linemen, the biggest NFL players, the rate was even higher at 34 percent. (*Sleep Med* 03;4(4):317–325)

If your bed partner suffers from sleep apnea, urge him or her to address the problem. The treatment is simple and effective. The problem is often corrected by simple weight loss. However, it may also be caused by a deviated septum, or enlarged tonsils or adenoids (more common in children). In many cases, apnea can be easily and painlessly treated using a machine that blows air into your nose to keep the airway open as you breath. It is called a C-PAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machine.

We often live with impending health problems that provide little, if any, warning. For instance, we may miss subtle clues of the beginnings of diabetes, high blood pressure, or heart disease—but that's not the case with sleep apnea. It gives one of the loudest, and clearest, signals that there's a serious, underlying condition that needs to be addressed. You wouldn't even think about ignoring the high-pitched, irritating screech from a

- Depression,
- Heart disease,
- Constipation, bowel impaction, or adhesions,
- Chronic upper-respiratory infections involving the sinuses, tonsils, or inner ear,
- Bladder and vaginal infections,
- Arthritis (particularly rheumatoid arthritis),
- Heaviness and/or tension in a limb,
- Aching, bursting pain, or over-all joint stiffness, or
- Skin problems—such as eczema.

Some leading heart specialists even believe that poor lymph flow is now a primary cause of our heart disease epidemic.

Additionally, if you have one particular troublesome joint or limb it may be linked to lymph system damage somewhere along the pathway.

Doctors never bother to tell their patients, but during surgery the lymph system will be sacrismoke alarm, and you certainly shouldn't ignore the ground-shaking snores associated with sleep apnea.

More Good from Pomegranate

CLEVELAND, OHIO—Not too long ago I reported on research that showed that drinking pomegranate juice can have a very significant effect on reducing the degree of atherosclerotic plaque formation in high-risk cardiovascular patients. In that same article I mentioned other research where the juice might also be a valuable tool in the treatment of diabetes and in the treatment and/or prevention of cancer of the breast and prostate. New research now shows pomegranate juice contains compounds that block protein molecules that break down the cartilage in joints.

Pomegranate extracts were shown to block the protein Interleukin-1b, which creates an over-production of inflammatory molecules that result in damage and destruction to joint cartilage. (*J Nutr 05;135:2096– 2102*)

I suspect this latest will be just one of many studies that will continue to validate pomegranate fruit, juice, and extracts as powerful tools we can use to protect our health. It's one item I suggest including in your diet sooner rather than later. You can find pomegranate juice at grocery and health food stores, and even some larger retailers (such as Costco). Whichever one you choose, make sure it's only juice or a concentrate, with no added sugars.

ficed—which is one reason that I'm a proponent of micro-surgery over larger-scale surgical methods. Future generations will look back and scratch their heads as to why we were so careless and destructive in our treatment techniques.

When Not to Massage the Lymph System

There are a few instances where lymphatic massage is contraindicated—including acute inflammation or infection, malignant tumors, thrombosis, and major heart problems. For instance, in acute inflammation, the tissues will be red, painful, congested, and accompanied by fever. You wouldn't want to push any pathogens or substances further into the lymph system until the body had a chance to deal with them.

There's been a great deal of debate about using lymphatic drainage massage with malignant tumors for fear of causing them to spread. A trend The Test of Time: Stroke Recovery



team of neurologists at the University of Texas has released a very interesting tidbit on how to protect the brain from stroke damage. At a meeting of the American Neurological Association, Dr. James Grotta broke the surprising news. He reported that a shot of alcohol followed by a cup of coffee might be as effective in limiting stroke damage to the brain as some of the drugs now being used in emergency rooms.

Dr. Grotta and his colleagues tested common substances like alcohol and caffeine on stroke-induced laboratory rats. Alcohol alone made the stroke worse. Caffeine alone didn't seem to do anything. However, when the two were combined, the brain was protected from stroke damage. As strange as it may seem, if you or someone you love suffers from a stroke, a viable emergency treatment might just be an Irish coffee.

I am not a coffee drinker, but in this case, I would make an exception. Just so you'll have it in one place, here are the directions for making Irish coffee in the event it ever becomes necessary. Obviously, the sugar and whipped cream would not be used in an emergency.

Traditional Irish Coffee

- 2 cups strong black coffee
- 1 Tbsp. sugar
- 2 oz. Irish whiskey Stir well; top with whipped cream.

Alcohol opens up blood vessels, and caffeine is known to increase blood flow. Both exert their

has sprung up recently in support of such therapy before and following cancer therapy to aid in healing, but I don't recommend it.

Additionally, thrombosis and phlebitis can lead to free-floating blood clots, and you wouldn't want to encourage the movement of such clots in any way. Along the same lines, if you have a major problem with your heart (such as congestive heart failure), increasing the lymph flow could increase its workload—which would be ill-advised.

Ideally, a weekly (or at the very least a monthly) lymphatic drainage massage would be of great benefit to most people. (In the initial stages of dealing effects quickly, and together they appear to prevent stroke damage very effectively.

This is one technique that you must put to use immediately and correctly if it's going to be of any help. I think it would be a bit naïve at this point to expect that EMS technicians or hospital and emergency room personnel will routinely begin to offer Irish coffee to suspected stroke victims. It's something you and your family will need to remember and be able to do quickly on your own if the need arises.

Keep in mind that stroke symptoms are not always dramatic and sudden in onset. Subtle signs you should be aware of include dizziness, dim or blurred vision, numbness or tingling in the mouth or cheeks, weakness in the legs and arms, headache in the back of the head, and nausea and vomiting. The quicker you're able to react, the less brain damage will occur, and the quicker the rehabilitation should be. Even if you're wrong and it turns out not to be a stroke, the risks from an occasional Irish coffee are pretty small.

Not coincidentally, there's an experimental drug that does the same thing as the Irish coffee. Caffeinol is an intravenous combination of caffeine and alcohol. When administered within two hours of a stroke, it reduces damage to the brain by up to 80 percent. It would likely cost a lot more than an Irish coffee, however.

Tip from Vol. 8, July 2000

with chronic problems such as swelling and arthritis, it might be necessary to have lymph massages three times a week.) Research has shown that the pumping action of the major lymph collectors is enhanced for several days to a week after a proper massage. Repeated massages "reset" the nervous system— allowing for better dilation of lymph vessels, which increases their carrying and pumping capacity.

Give yourself (or have someone give you) a good lymphatic massage, and follow the other techniques that I outlined last month to start increasing lymph flow. You'll be amazed at how such superficial work can produce such deep, long-lasting results.



Getting Your Daily Coconut

You asked for suggestions on using coconut oil. I have a delightful way of using it. I take one tablespoon of coconut oil and mix it with one tablespoon of Arrowhead Mills crunchy organic Valencia peanut butter. Mix it smooth. It is almost a confection. It is a great treat that I look forward to at lunchtime.

> — Dorothea L., Easton, Connecticut

I've been using coconut oil for a couple of years now. Everyday I have it in some form or at least munch on some unsweetened coconut and my cat and dog both sit and beg for their daily ration. Some of my suggested uses:

- 1) Moisturize lining of nose to prevent nose bleeds during dry artificial heat of winter,
- 2) Apply to scar tissue—it's more healing than vitamin E oil (also healed old cracked nose of old dog),
- 3) Apply to chapped lips,
- 4) Oil treatment for hair before shampoo,
- 5) If scrambling eggs, mix with egg, water, et cetera,
- 6) Low temperature frying such as eggs or sautéing,
- 7) Add to veggies instead of butter or sauce,
- 8) Mix with spices for a rub to put on meat,

- 9) Add to the water you cook pasta in—my favorite, or
- 10) Popcorn—both in the pan and in place of butter after it is popped.

— Donna H., Frazier Park, California

Thanks for all the suggestions. I had pretty much resorted to just eating it from a spoon. I will now try it as a meat rub, however. I've tried cooking with it and it always seems a little strong for my taste. It does go well with some cooking styles, though, such as Thai and almost any Pacific area. One source I recommend is Wilderness Family Naturals. Their phone is 866-936-6457 and their Web address is www. WildernessFamilyNaturals.com.

Cataracts Drop Right Away

A reader from my neck of the woods wrote in recently to say that he was developing a cataract in his left eye, and wondered what I would recommend he do. Cataracts are a leading cause of blindness, and can be the result of anything from diabetes to steroid use.

You'd certainly rather prevent cataracts than treat them after the fact. I've written about cataracts numerous times in the past, and how bioflavonoids and antioxidants can help you avoid the problem in the first place. If you already have a cataract, like the reader, there is still hope.

There has been some research out of Russia that I have been following for the last few years which is very promising. Dr. Mark Babizhayev and his colleagues at the Helmholtz Eye Institute in Moscow have been studying the effects of the natural compound N-acetylcarnosine (NAC—not to be confused with N-acetylcysteine, which I have written about often and is used to boost glutathione levels) in relation to cataract treatment since about 1991. During this time, Dr. Babizhayev's work has progressed from extensive laboratory testing in animal models to human studies. (*Life Sci 05, Dec.29*) (*Drugs RD 05;6(6):345–369*) (*Rejuvenation Res* 04;7(3):186–198) (*Drugs RD 04:5(3):125–136*) (*Drugs RD 02;3(2):87–103*)

Dr. Babizhayev has discovered that by applying a 1-percent liquid solution of NAC directly to the eye he has been able to prevent cataract formation. Even better news is that his eye drops have actually reduced and eliminated age-related cataracts. These results have all been accomplished without surgery or drugs.

Cataracts result from a clouding of the eye's lens, which never stops growing—much like your hair and nails. Lenses grows from the outside in, though, meaning that the cells at the center are the oldest. As the cells age they are subjected to oxidation and a process called glycation, in which sugars combine with proteins. NAC eye drops have been shown to prevent and reverse the crosslinking of the lens proteins that leads to opacification and impairs vision. Measurable effects have been seen using the drops after only a month of use, and there have been no side effects. (Some of those I've spoken with, however, did occasionally notice a temporary "blurring" in their vision for an hour or two following their use. This effect appears to be from the "melting" or breaking-up of the cataract.)

Dr. Babizhayev's reports suggest that the reversal of the cataract starts at the periphery and works its way inward. During the process, which seems to take about six months, vision becomes clearer. He has shown that over a six-month period of treatment, over 41 percent of the eyes treated with NAC eye drops exhibited improvement in transmission of light through the lens, 88.9 percent showed significant improvement in glare sensitivity, and 90 percent had a significant improvement in visual acuity. In no instances did eyes treated with the drops worsen in any way. His trials have extended for periods of up to two years with only continuingly positive effects being seen.

Dr. Babizhayev recommends applying one to two drops of NAC solution in each eye twice daily. The maximum effect on visual acuity generally occurs within the first three to five months of therapy. Those who had had their cataracts for less than seven years experienced the quickest and best results. Individuals with cataracts for seven to 15 years obtained good results, while those with cataracts for more than 15 years still showed improvements—but they had the least response.

See Your Way to the Drops

I've been following this research for years, but only recently have the therapeutic eye drops become available commercially. Thanks to the Internet, you can now obtain Dr. Babizhayev's formulated product (called Can-C) in the US. There are some competing products that are also being sold in this country. Due to FDA considerations, however, no one marketing these products in the US will advertise their products as being a treatment for cataracts. Instead, they will be for "eye health," et cetera.

I've spoken with numerous individuals, and the two formulas that I will mention below appear to work equally as well. The standard package available for sale (five 2-mL vials) costs around \$40 and will last 35 days if you use two drops per eye per day, or 75 days if you use only one drop per eye. It's definitely a bargain in anyone's book when you compare the other options for getting rid of cataracts—such as surgery.

You can order Dr. Babizhayev's Can-C product from Smart Nutrition, 1765 Garnet #66, San Diego, California 92109. Their phone number is 858-270-9015 and their Web site is at www.Smart-Nutrition.net.

A similar NAC eye drop product, which costs a couple of dollars less, is Eye D'Clare. It can be purchased from Life Enhancement by calling 800-543-3873 or on their Web site at www.Life-Enhancement.com.

The enormous benefits of NAC eye drops should be the topic of every nightly newscast as well as front-page headlines on every newspaper—but you and I both know that just won't happen. Cataract surgery and treatment has become too big of a business. With the oldest baby boomers just now beginning to reach the age where cataracts start to form, the condition will become a surgical "cash cow."

Unfortunately, not everyone in the world can afford surgery. Around the world, cataracts account for over 40 percent of all cases of blindness, affecting over 17 million people. Now, for less than \$200, the world is revealed again.

Take care,

Dr. David Willia

for Dr. Williams, please send them to the mail or e-mail addresses listed to the right. Of course, practical and ethical constraints prevent him from answering personal medical questions by mail or e-mail, but he'll answer as many as he can in the Mailbox section of *Alternatives*. For our part, we'll do our best to direct you to his issues, reports, and products related to the subject of your interest.

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