

## **Hand therapy, burns management and compression garments: Measuring for an upper limb compression garment**

**Host site senior oncology occupational therapist – Lauren:** Today Margo, on Thursday Island, will be measured for a compression garment.

Through clinical telehealth support from myself, I'll be supporting Rachel Mulqueeny, the senior occupational therapist on Thursday Island.

Hi Rachel. Hi Margo. How are you both today?

**Recipient site senior occupational therapist – Rachel:** Well, thanks Lauren.

**Host site senior oncology occupational therapist – Lauren:** Today, Margo, the purpose of our consultation, or session, is to measure you for a compression garment. While you're both situated on Thursday Island, I'm based here down in Cairns.

So, first things first. We'll start by positioning our patient, usually on a measuring board. Now, I'm aware you don't have a measuring board up on Thursday Island, so we're going to improvise with an overbed table and some extra tape measures.

So, Margo, we want to be seated and positioned on the board with the arm abducted or positioned horizontally out to the side with the palm facing down. So, we also now want to run our tape measure along the edge of the table.

What we're actually going to do now is marking the arms. The first one first is at the metacarpal phalangeal joints, so just at the midpoint.

So, if you want to go ahead and mark those measures.

**Recipient site senior occupational therapist – Rachel:** Perfect.

**Host site senior oncology occupational therapist – Lauren:** And now we can actually get to the process of measuring.

We don't want any tension to be applied to the tape. And obviously we want to be recording the measures as you go.

**Recipient site senior occupational therapist – Rachel:** The last one we've got here is forty-three.

**Host site senior oncology occupational therapist – Lauren:** Perfect. So, what we'll do now, obviously through the educational package that we have produced, we'll now choose a compression garment that is suitable.

What I'll do is show you some tips for getting compression garments on and off. So, the easiest method is a pull-on method. We try and avoid keeping this garment in a single layer. We don't want to gather it as we would normal stockings or socks, simply because it makes it harder to get on and off.

What I'll do is I'll pop this garment on. Often, I find it easiest to fold it to halfway – and then pulling it up the arm. And then you also know when the elbow is in the correct position. That's a very quick overview. Do you have any questions or concerns – anything you would like to clarify with me?

**Client – Margo:** No that's good.

**Recipient site senior occupational therapist – Rachel:** That’s great.

**Host site senior oncology occupational therapist – Lauren:** Thanks for your time this morning. It’s been a pleasure meeting you both and assisting with your prescription of a compression garment.

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**What telehealth service did you provide today?**

**Host site senior oncology occupational therapist – Lauren:** Today I was providing support, training and education to a generalist occupational therapist based on Thursday Island to support, fit and measure for a compression garment for the management of stabilised lymphoedema. Unfortunately, on Thursday Island, there is no lymphoedema or level one trained therapist.

**What telehealth model did you choose for this intervention?**

**Host site senior oncology occupational therapist – Lauren:** Today we used a dual clinician model, where we have both an allied health professional at both sites. So we – here in Cairns – were the hub the site, and Thursday Island was the recipient site. Rachel at the recipient site provides the direct client contact, or the intervention to the patient, with my support, education, and coaching, if you would.

**What technology did you use for this intervention?**

**Host site senior oncology occupational therapist – Lauren:** Today we both – at both sites – both here and in Thursday Island – we used a Tandberg video conference device at both sites. The reason being we needed to ensure that we had a clear image and that during the process and during the intervention I was able to easily see where Rachel was taking the measurements, that I was confident in her ability to take the right measurements. And then – so, we just had a clearer image and were actually able to see the limb and the patient for a successful outcome.

**Do you have to modify your intervention to provide it via telehealth?**

**Host site senior oncology occupational therapist – Lauren:** Occasionally, yes. Unfortunately, sometimes in the room availability that we may have a very large video conference device in a very small room. So, actually being able to manoeuvre and actually get that good clarity of image can be difficult. So, the ways we’ve been able to modify is the use of a computer mounted MOVI for the smaller rooms. Obviously where possible we try and provide, obviously using the largest room possible. But also from a clinical perspective, we also have to look at if they don’t have for example a Jobst measuring board, ways in which we can actually replicate the intervention say using an overbed patient table to be able to give us a good, flat measure to be able to complete the task.

**What are the benefits of providing this service via telehealth?**

**Host site senior oncology occupational therapist – Lauren:** In our experience, the benefits are for the therapist on Thursday Island. They actually may not have to travel to the remote islands. We’ve got the benefit for the patient in this example, the patient didn’t have to take any time off work. They were able to stay at home and actually not interrupt their life and their family’s life. The cost both to the patient and also to the health services at both ends. And certainly a time perspective for the patient in terms of not being able to be away. And it is a timely intervention for both myself, to be able to support Rachel, and her patients on Thursday Island.

**Are there any improvements that could be made to this telehealth service?**

**Host site senior oncology occupational therapist – Lauren:** The compression garment service model, I think, can be applied to other regional and remote sites so that we can actually ensure patients are actually seen closer to home. If there are any occupational therapists or physiotherapists who are generalists in those areas, there is online learning resources available on iLearn and for more information they can contact the Allied Health Professions' Office of Queensland.