



Post-Operative Scar Tissue Management Protocol

Scar tissue is a normal part of the healing process following surgery. The goal of scar management is to help improve scar mobility, decrease adhesions, reduce sensitivity, and improve the appearance and flexibility of the scar.

Scar Care

1. Incision Care

- Do **not** begin scar massage until the incision is completely healed and closed.
- There should be **no open areas, drainage, scabbing, or signs of infection** before beginning scar mobilization.
- Once fully healed, the scar may be gently cleaned with soap and water and patted dry.
- Do not aggressively pull or stretch the skin during the early stages of healing.

2. Scar Massage

- Once the incision is fully healed, begin gentle scar massage **1-2 times daily**.
- Use the pads of your fingers to apply gentle pressure directly over the scar.
- Massage using:
 - Small circular motions
 - Side-to-side motions across the scar
 - Up-and-down motions along the scar
 - Gentle skin rolling/lifting as tolerated
- Begin with approximately **5 minutes per session** and gradually increase to **10 minutes per session**.
- The goal is to mobilize the scar tissue and underlying tissues rather than cause significant pain.
- Mild tenderness or pulling is acceptable; **sharp pain, significant swelling, bleeding, or skin breakdown is not**.
- Scar massage may be performed with a small amount of lotion or scar-specific silicone gel to reduce friction.

3. Silicone Scar Treatment

- Once the incision is completely healed, consider **silicone gel or silicone scar sheeting**.
- Apply silicone according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Silicone products may be used for **at least 2-3 months** and longer if the scar remains raised, firm, or symptomatic.
- If using silicone sheeting, remove and wash the skin and sheet regularly.
- Discontinue use if significant skin irritation or rash develops. Silicone sheeting is generally used only on healed skin, not open wounds.

4. Physical Therapy / Manual Therapy

- Physical therapy may be utilized for persistent scar adhesions or restriction of motion.
- PT may include:

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- Scar mobilization
- Soft tissue mobilization
- Myofascial release
- Desensitization techniques
- Range-of-motion exercises
- Stretching of tissues surrounding the surgical site
- Scar mobilization should be progressed gradually based on tissue healing and the specific surgical procedure.

5. Desensitization

- If the scar is hypersensitive or painful to touch, begin gentle desensitization once the incision has healed.
- Start by lightly touching or rubbing the area with progressively different textures.
- Perform for **2-5 minutes, 2-3 times daily**, as tolerated.
- Gradually increase the pressure and texture as sensitivity improves.

Important

- Do **not** perform scar massage over an open incision or before adequate wound healing.
- Stop scar massage and contact our office if you develop increasing redness, warmth, drainage, wound separation, significant swelling, or worsening pain.
- Scar tissue can continue to mature and remodel for **many months after surgery**, so improvement in scar flexibility and appearance is gradual.

Goal: Improve scar mobility, decrease adhesions and sensitivity, and restore normal soft-tissue flexibility while allowing the surgical tissues to continue to heal.