

# Scar massage for the hand

Physiotherapy & Occupational Therapy

## Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for patients who have scar tissue after hand injuries or surgery. It explains how to massage the scar to keep the tissues as flexible as possible and therefore avoid adhesions (internal scar tissue).

## Why do we get scars?

Scars are a natural part of the healing process following an injury / surgery. The body forms a latticework of fibrin (tissue-glue) and collagen fibres which develop 5-21 days after an injury.

Movement at this stage is important to encourage the fibres to develop in straight lines – this will avoid the tissues just ‘lumping’ together and becoming difficult to move.

After this period the scar tissue starts to shrink and become stronger. Scar tissue can sometimes get stuck to surrounding tissues forming what is known as ‘adhesions’. This can result in brief shooting or ‘electrical’ pains on movement, particularly when you stretch the hand out to reach an item at arm’s length. Similar pains may also occur spontaneously while you are doing nothing.

Massage can help to break down the adhesions and make the scar more flexible. This ‘re-modelling’ period can take up to 6 months. The colour of the scar will also change from red to pink as the healing process progresses.

## Why are some scars worse than others?

There are many factors that influence how scars are formed. The main factors are the site on the body, genetic factors (such as different skin types) and whether or not you have been able to, or have been told to move the area.

**The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.**

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let’s work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

## How do I massage my scars?

This technique is known as pressure massage:

- Place a non-scented moisturising cream or oil onto the scar
- Start at the edge of the scar and begin massaging using the thumb of your other hand
- Use a gentle pressure on the delicate areas and firmer pressure on the tougher areas. Massage in large circles, trying to move the skin around to break down the scar tissue
- Massage the scar and surrounding areas for up to 5 minutes. Stop if the scar becomes sore.

## Are there any side-effects or precautions for scar massage?

Your therapist has assessed you as being safe to practice this technique and it is unlikely that you will experience any ill effects. However if you experience severe soreness or pain during or after massage, please stop and speak to your therapist before carrying on.

Name of therapist:.....

Contact telephone number: .....

Out of hours/emergency contact details:.....

## English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

## Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

## Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

## Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

## Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

## Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。