

Department of
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Scar Massage



How do Wounds Heal?

Wound healing typically goes through the following phases:

Phase 1: Inflammation

- It is the body's way of removing devitalised tissue (dead tissue), debris and foreign substances in response to an injury.
- This phase usually lasts over 5 days for a clean wound, but may last longer for an infected wound.
- You may experience swelling, redness and/or pain.

Phase 2: Fibroplasia

- During this phase, fibroblasts, which are responsible for the production of collagen, elastin and proteases, grow in the wound while inflammation cells decrease.
- The skin starts to rebuild as new capillaries form to carry blood and nutrients to regenerate new skin at the wound site.
- This phase usually lasts 2 to 6 weeks.

Phase 3: Scar Maturation

- During this phase, the new tissue matures.
- The scar gradually loses its red appearance as blood vessels that are no longer needed are removed through apoptosis (cell death).
- This phase varies depending on the depth and size of the wound, and may last up to several years.
- A fully matured scar is flat and close to the colour of your skin tone. An immature scar may be raised, red and darker than your skin tone.

When Should I Start the Scar Massage?

You are advised to start scar massages during the fibroplasia phase.

You may stop scar massages when the scar has fully matured.

What is the Recommended Duration and Frequency of Each Scar Massage?

The duration of massage depends on your tolerance levels and the size of the wound.

A general guideline is approximately 10 minutes, at least twice and up to four times a day.

How Should I Perform the Scar Massage?

The scar massage should be applied:

- Perpendicular to the scar with firm pressure moving away from the scar
- In small circular motions (clockwise or anti-clockwise) with firm pressure

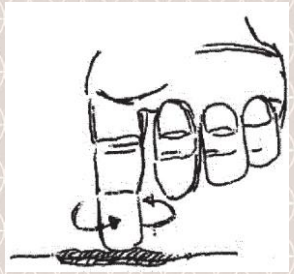
You may use your thumb, or one or two fingers depending on the size of the scar.

NOTE:

Creams should be used to prevent injurious friction and superficial tissue damage. Oil-based creams are recommended as they are not rapidly absorbed into the skin, providing better lubrication.

Only gentle massage should be performed on newly-healed or recently adherent grafts.

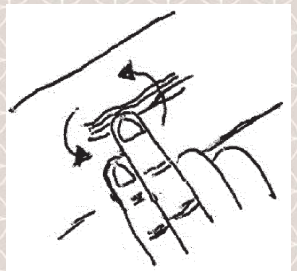
Avoid performing scar massage on fragile skin and open wounds.



Firm pressure is applied on the scar in small circular motions with one finger



Firm pressure is applied perpendicular to and moving away from the scar



Firm pressure is applied on the scar and areas surrounding the scar in small circular motions with two fingers

What are the Benefits of Regular Scar Massage?

Scar massage can result in the following benefits:

- ✓ Encourage wound healing
- ✓ Reduction in adhesions
- ✓ Reduction in itching
- ✓ Desensitisation & sensory re-education
- ✓ Increase in joint range of motion (ROM)

To learn more about scar massage, please contact an Occupational Therapist at TTSH Rehabilitation Centre during office hours (Monday – Friday, 8.30 am – 5.30 pm).

Training will be provided to ensure the scar massage is carried out properly.

TTSH Rehabilitation Centre

17 Ang Mo Kio Avenue 9,
Singapore 569766

Contact:

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