

ABDOMINAL SCAR MASSAGE AFTER CESAREAN SECTION

After cesarean section delivery, the scar can be painful, cause weakness in the abdominal muscles, and prevent healthy movement of the organs in the pelvic region.

Scar tissue can cause pain with daily activities and impair normal movement patterns. Scar massage manipulates the tissue on and around the scar to improve mobility and function of the abdominal muscles. Scar massage can even prevent excessive scarring, improve the appearance of the scar, and decrease sensitivity to the area.

- For the first few weeks after surgery, it is normal for the scar to be pink/red and slightly raised. If your scar is causing excessive discomfort and/or restriction, please call your healthcare provider.
- Scars itch as they heal and can have areas of numbness.
- Lotion is not recommended during scar massage because it decreases the friction between the layers of tissue needed for scar mobilization.



There are **two** strategies for massaging abdominal scars:

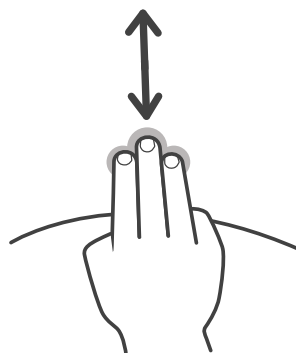
- 1: Stretching and desensitizing the skin **around** the scar.
- 2: Stretching and desensitizing the skin **directly on** the scar.

Scar massage should be performed daily for 5 – 10 minutes until you no longer feel tissue restriction in any direction around and on the scar.

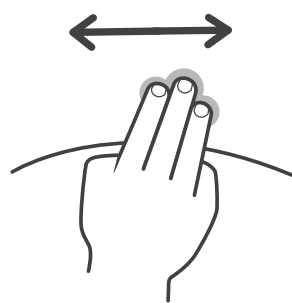
1. SKIN STRETCHING **AROUND** THE SCAR

Begin skin stretching 2 – 3 weeks after surgery, only if the incision is **completely** healed without any scabbing present. Perform scar massage 5 – 10 minutes each day. Always have clean hands with no lotion.

1. Place two fingers 1 – 2 inches from the scar.
2. Stretch the skin by moving the fingers up and down moving around the entire scar.
3. Then, perform skin stretching side-to-side around the scar, followed by clockwise/counterclockwise circles above and below the scar.
4. Massage completely around the scar, repeating each movement 5-10 times.



UP-AND-DOWN



SIDE-TO-SIDE



CIRCLE

References

- Dominguez S. Scar massage after c-section. The Pelvic Chronicles Blog website. <https://www.foundationalconcepts.com/the-pelvic-chronicles-blog/scar-massage-c-section/>. Copyrighted 2017. Accessed June 15, 2021.
- Wallace K. Massage for your abdominal scar after a cesarean birth. Kathe Wallace Pelvic Resources website. <https://kathewallace.com/resources/downloads/abdominal-scar-massage-after-childbirth/>. Copyrighted 2020. Accessed June 15, 2021.

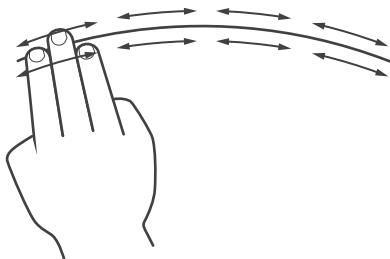
2. DIRECT SCAR MASSAGE

Begin 3 – 4 weeks after surgery as soon as the incision is **closed and well healed**.

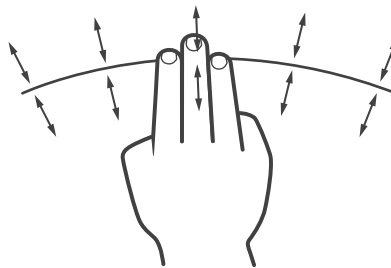
1. Hold the pads of two or three fingers together. The fingers should be slightly arched.
2. Place pads of fingers on the edge of the scar.
3. Stretch the scar by pushing fingers ½ inch in one direction. Hold scar stretch for 5 – 10 seconds. Then repeat the same in the opposite direction.
4. Move along the scar every ½ inch – 1 inch and repeat over the entire length of the scar, stretching in all directions (up/down, side to side, and diagonal).

TIPS!

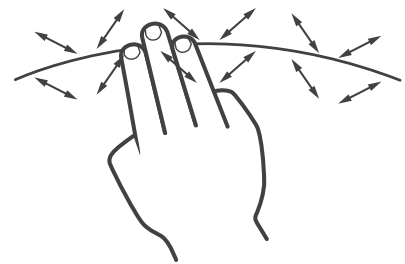
- Apply different depths of pressure with your fingertips depending on your comfort level.
- It is normal to experience a pulling or burning feeling when you are stretching the scar. If you feel an area that does not move as easily, spend extra time massaging that spot. The scar should eventually move freely over the deeper tissue.



SIDE-TO-SIDE



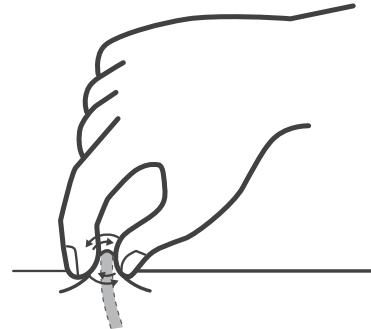
UP-AND-DOWN



DIAGONAL

SCAR LIFT AND ROLL

1. Lift scar away using index finger and thumb.
2. Roll the scar between fingers for 5 – 10 seconds.
3. Move along entire length of scar repeating every ½ inch – 1 inch.



After childbirth, it is common to experience abdominal weakness and low back pain. If your pain does not subside, please contact your primary care provider/or Ob-Gyn to obtain an order for physical therapy.

BIRTHING CENTER – MCLAREN THUMB REGION

1100 S. Van Dyke Rd, Bad Axe , MI 48413

(989) 269-1605

For more information about our Birthing Center visit
mclaren.org/main/locations/birthing-center-mclaren-thumb-region--1167

