Scar Massage

Scar massage is done to prevent scar tissue build up and puckering. It can help your range of motion in that area. You should start scar massage only after all scabs have fallen off by themselves. Massage will not help soften an old scar. Do the massage as directed by your doctor, nurse, or therapist.

How should I prepare my skin?
You can use lotion as directed by your doctor during massage to reduce friction and to prevent drying and cracking of the skin. It also helps to keep the scar soft.
Before your massage, you may use:
- Heat for _____ minutes, _____ times in the day.
- Ice for _____ minutes, _____ times in the day.

Doing the massage
Use the pads or soft tips of your fingers to massage the scar and tissue around the scar. Press firmly, but do not push until you have too much pain.
Use:
- Light pressure
- Medium pressure
- Deep pressure - Use a hard ball or small massage roller to massage deeper into the scar.
Do each massage for _____ minutes. Repeat _____ times each day.

- Circles
  - Using two fingers, make small circles over the length of the scar and over the skin around the scar.
Criss-Cross
- Use two fingers from one hand.
- Pull your fingers across the scar in one direction, and then pull in the other direction in a sawing motion.

Rolling
- Pinch a small amount of the scar tissue between your thumb and first two fingers.
- To roll the scar, walk your first two fingers forward and then slide your thumb forward to keep the “hill” in the scar.
- Do this along the length of the scar.

Stop the massage and check with your doctor if you notice:
- Any redness
- Bleeding
- Moisture or seepage from the scar
- The scar feels warmer than the tissue around it
- More pain at the scar

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at 614-293-3707 or e-mail health-info@osu.edu.

© 2002 - February 22, 2018, The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.