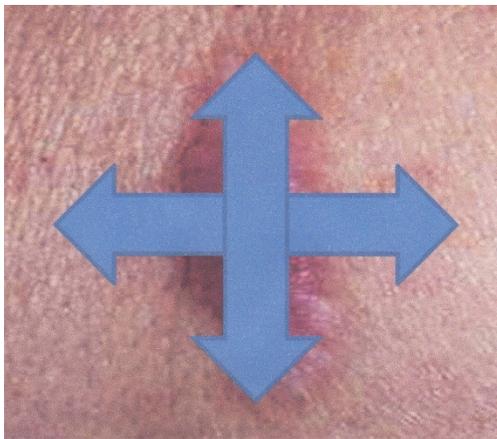


Scar Management

Scar is normal outcome of surgery or injury to your hand or arm. Usually when we think of scar, we are thinking of the scar we can see on the surface of our skin. Happily, that scar usually takes care of itself, but the underlying scar tissue, which we cannot see, is another matter. That underlying scar tissue can become thick, firm, and uncomfortable. It can also limit motion and bind up internal structures such as nerves and tendons. These tips may help you avoid or reduce unattractive, excessive, or firm scar buildup.

- **Massage** you scar and the surrounding tissues 3-4 times each day. You can start this as soon as your sutures are removed, or when directed by your therapists. Start with a light rotation of the tissues and over the next couple of weeks increase the intensity of the massage. Do not make the scar area hurt, if massaging is uncomfortable, you may be applying too much pressure.
- **Vibration** is another means of applying a mechanical force to break up scar tissue. We may use a vibration massager in the clinic from time to time. There are a variety of massage devices available on the market which you can purchase if you are interested in using vibration massage at home.
- **Motion!** Your therapist will tell you which exercises are specifically geared to help prevent scar build up in your hand and arm.
- **Compression** can help flatten a scar. If you notice that any of your scar areas are raised, tell me. I may be able to come up with something to help flatten the scar tissue so that it looks and feels more natural.
- **Silicone gel** is a product sold at most pharmacies to help flatten and soften scar tissue. This is a very expensive product and may help flatten superficial scar, but is unlikely to have much effect on deeper scar tissues.
- **Protect the superficial scar** by keeping it out of direct sunlight for about six months. This will help the scar tissue mature into a more natural skin tone instead of retaining a deep pink color.
- Remember, **scar may continue to form for about 12 weeks**, so for many of you, you will need to continue scar management long after you have stopped coming to therapy. As long as you feel scar, massage scar.



We recommend using cocoa butter with vitamin E. You can purchase at any grocery/drug store.