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\* HAVE YOU TRIED

# Scar therapy treatment

*Scar therapy aims to help relieve discomfort and improve the function of scar tissue*

Words: Karen Young

Following an injury, accident or surgery, people can suffer from discomfort, pain and restricted movement on or near the affected area. This is because scar tissue – much of which actually forms beneath the skin, in the underlying dermis, fascia, muscle and ligament – lacks the organisational structure and integrity of ‘normal’, healthy skin.

Similarly, people who have certain inflammatory conditions, such as endometriosis and some forms of bowel disease, can suffer from adhesions in the abdominal or pelvic area.

In recent decades, a number of therapies that specifically target scar tissue have come to the fore, including scar tissue release, scar massage and ScarWork. While each varies slightly in terms of title, origin, approach and techniques, they share a number of common elements, which all aim to restore function and aid healing.

“During ScarWork treatment, the therapist will use a variety of gentle techniques on and around the site of the scar or adhesions to help improve feeling and functionality in the affected tissue,” explains Emma Holly, a ScarWork practitioner who received an FHT Highly Commended Excellence Award in recognition of her work. “These include sweeping, stretching and ‘press and release’ movements, with the client rarely feeling any discomfort.”

Following treatment, clients often report improved movement in the area, a reduction in pain or discomfort, restored feeling, and an improvement in the appearance of any external scar tissue.

However, treatment can benefit clients on an emotional level too. “Many people hate their scars, never touch them and are upset looking at their body,” says Emma. “Combined with the trauma and stress of surgery or injury, this causes a mixture of emotions. Allowing someone to connect with you and bring comfort through positive touch can be very beneficial to the healing process.”

Treatments are carried out once wounds or external scarring has healed, and approval may be needed beforehand if you are still under the care of a specialist. Yet, interestingly, old scars – even ones that have been there for a number of decades – can respond just as well to treatment as more recent scars.

Sessions typically last 30 minutes to an hour and cost £40 to £70, depending on the length of treatment, location and practitioner. 

*The Federation of Holistic Therapists (fht.org.uk) is the UK's leading professional association for complementary, holistic beauty and sports therapists.*



**Always seek advice**

*Treatments should only be used alongside standard medical care and not as an alternative. Consult a GP or other health professional first.*

## Five benefits of scar work treatments

1 Scar massage treatments are often recommended by surgeons to promote optimum scar healing after surgery, including Caesarean section and breast cancer surgery.

2 Some conditions can result in adhesions in the abdominal or pelvic area, affecting the function of nearby tissue and organs. Scar therapy may help to release some of the restriction associated with these conditions.

3 By reducing tightness and encouraging mobility between the layers of skin, fascia and muscle, range of movement is often improved.

4 Trapped nerves and irritated scar tissue can be a factor for prolonged discomfort. Therapeutic touch may reduce pain.

5 Therapeutic touch can be a powerful way to aid emotional recovery and help us to accept changes.