Postnatal Perineal Scar Tissue Management

After a vaginal delivery, if you have had an episiotomy or perineal tear, the scar tissue can become sensitive, painful or raised. This can cause discomfort during daily activities or intercourse. Scar tissue massage can help reduce your symptoms.

When should I start massaging?

- Ensure your stitches have fully healed and there is no sign of infection.
- Wait until you have had your postnatal check with your GP around six weeks.

Scar desensitisation

Prior to commencing massage, you may like to try scar desensitisation to assist with decreasing any discomfort. Try gently touching your scar with a cloth or your fingertips. Using a mirror to visualise your scar can also be helpful.

How to perform perineal scar massage

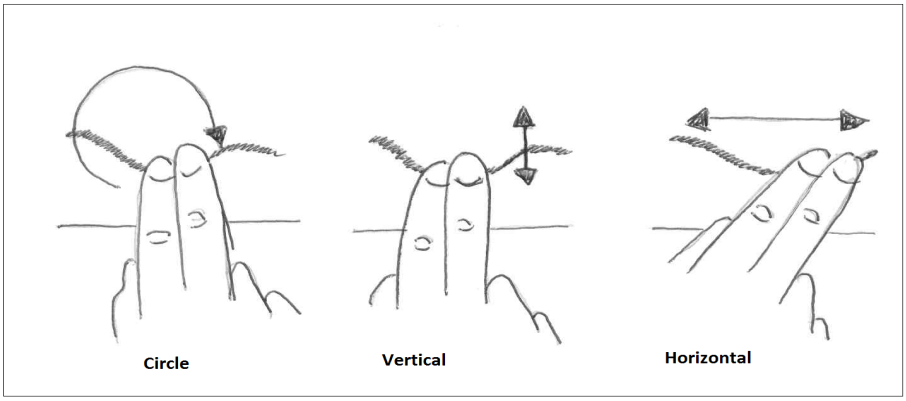
Preparation

- Warm baths or compresses before you start can help relax the muscles and increase blood flow.
- Get into a comfortable position: lying, semi reclined.
- Use a natural oil or lubricant.
- Duration: 5-10 minutes daily or every other day using the following technique.

Technique

- Using the pad of your thumb or fingers, apply pressure and massage in circles over the scar, across the scar (vertically) and along the line of the scar (horizontally).
- Start externally and work over all parts of the scar towards the anus.
- For internal stitches:
    - Insert your thumb into the entrance of your vagina with the pad of your thumb facing down towards the anus and massage in circles, horizontally and vertically.
    - Apply pressure on the back of your vagina and make "U" shapes (going from 4 to 8 on a clock) over the scar.
- This may feel tender to start with but will get better with time.

V2 Effective: September 2024 Review: September 2027







When to seek further advice

- If you have any signs of infection (redness, heat, oozing, feeling unwell) please seek advice from your GP prior to commencing scar tissue massage.
- If you have any of the following symptoms below, seek advice from a Women's Health Physiotherapist.
    - Heaviness/bulging sensation in your perineal area
    - Any problems with loss of bladder or bowel control – such as leaking, soiling or having to rush to the toilet.
    - Difficulties or pain with sexual intercourse.

References

St George's University Hospital (2022). *Scar Tissue Management Postnatal.* Retrieved from https://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/THE_STM.pdf

If you have any questions, please speak to a pelvic health physiotherapist or your GP.
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