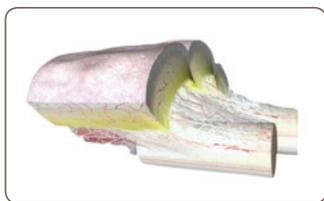


SCAR HEALING

ALTERNATIVES TO INVASIVE PROCEDURES



fascia diagram, courtesy of
Dr. J.C. Guimberteau

BY JOHN F. BARNES, PT

TRAUMATIC OR SURGICAL SCARS CAN BE a problem because they tend to grow inside the body of an individual, in a very unique pattern similar to a vine. Scars you see on the surface are just the tip of the iceberg. As scars begin to pull on pain-sensitive structures, they can create pain and deepen the lines of the face, making one look older than necessary. There are a number of reasons for scars to form. They can be the result of surgery, infection, tissue inflammation or injuries. A scar can appear anywhere on the body. In addition, the composition of scars can vary. They can be sunken, lumpy, colored or flat. They can also be painful and itchy. One of the most beneficial therapies for scars is the myofascial release, which is a gentle, hands-on technique that has been proven to be highly effective in reducing pain, headaches, fibromyalgia, minimizing scars and in increasing tone of the face and neck areas, producing a more youthful appearance.

Scars can have an internal drag effect, coupled with gravity on the musculature and skin, which increases the sagging that tends to occur in some people. Myofascial restrictions tend to overstretch the elastic myofascial complex. The myofascial complex consists of collagen, elastin and musculature, and the stretching of the elastic component is what leads to the acceleration of the aging process, creating lines and wrinkles and decreasing tone.

The fascial system

Fascia is tough, connective tissue that spreads throughout the body in a three-dimensional web from head to foot without interruption. The fascia surrounds every muscle, bone, nerve, blood vessel and organ of the body, all the way down to the cellular level. Therefore, malfunction of the fascial system due to trauma, surgery or inflammation can create a binding down of the fascia, resulting in abnormal pressure on nerves, muscles, bones or organs.

It is believed that an extremely high percentage of people suffering with pain, unwanted premature effects of aging and/or lack of motion may be having myofascial problems. These individuals must go undiagnosed, as the importance of fascia is just now being recognized. All of the standard tests, such as X-rays, myelograms, CAT scans, electromyography, etc., do not show myofascial restrictions.

Fascial restrictions can exert tremendous tensile forces on the fascial, neuromusculoskeletal and pain-sensitive structures. This enormous pressure (approximately 2,000 pounds per square inch) can create the symptoms of pain, decreased muscular tone in the face and neck or chronic facial tension.

Fascia at the cellular level creates the interstitial spaces and has extremely important functions of support, protection, separation, cellular respiration, nutrition, elimination, metabolism, fluid and lymphatic flow. In other words, the fascia is the immediate environment of every cell of the body. This means that any trauma, surgery or malfunction of the fascia can set up the environment for poor cellular efficiency, necrosis, disease, pain and dysfunction throughout the face, neck and body.

In addition, many people who have had surgical cosmetic facial procedures enjoy very

positive and dramatic results. But, sometimes the face looks and feels abnormally tight; this can create pain, headaches, temporomandibular joint disorder (TMJ) pain and an unnatural look.

Troublesome scars

Myofascial release can be very helpful post surgery following mastectomies, breast reduction and augmentation. Once healing has occurred after a mastectomy, myofascial release techniques performed below and above the scar area can be very helpful in eliminating the pain, and this technique can also soften the scar. However, scars grow inside the body like a vine, and can reach into the respiratory diaphragm and into the neck. This can cause breathing problems and—due to the strength of the vine—create a pulling sensation, forcing the client forward, which creates a posterior strain in the back and neck, and results in headaches, and neck and back pain.

Breast augmentation scars are usually under the breast, resembling a “C” on its back. It then can come up under the breast midline and there usually is a scar around the nipple. The nipples have to be repositioned and many sensory nerves are severed. The resulting scar is often not attractive, and can become thick and dark. Myofascial release can be helpful in

continues

TIP

Q: How do you go about marketing MFR?

A: “To date, I have over 20 regular MFR clients, most of whom were previous massage clients. Once they felt the difference MFR made in their pain relief and that it was the solution, not the impostor, they began asking me for MFR. My best advertising is their word of mouth.”

- Lori Walters, LMT,
Owner of Serenity Spa, LLP
Merced, California
www.serenityspamerced.com



photo courtesy of Myofascial Release Seminars

FASCIAL UNWINDING

With the exception of emergencies, clients should consider a fascial unwinding treatment before considering surgical procedures. With the client's acknowledgment, professionals would benefit from employing the following techniques excerpted from the article “**Fascial Facial Unwinding! For a More Youthful Appearance,**” which originally appeared in the December 2010 issue of *LNE & Spa*.

MYOFASCIAL PRINCIPLES

Learning where the fascial restrictions lie and how to release the restrictions by applying gentle pressure into the direction of the restriction creates a deeper therapeutic treatment with long-lasting results.

At first, the elastic component of the fascia will release, and at some point in time, the collagenous barrier will be engaged. The barrier cannot be forced (it is too strong). Wait with gentle pressure, and as the collagenous aspect releases, the esthetician should follow the motion of the tissue, barrier upon barrier, until freedom is felt.

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softening and lightening up these scars. Many times the sensory nerves become hypersensitive and the breasts cannot be touched. Bras and blouses can become very uncomfortable.

Augmentation is performed most of the time for cosmetic reasons or after mastectomies. Too many times the breasts do not look natural; they can become hard and do not feel or look normal. Sometimes the breasts

are not level. Unfortunately, many surgeons do not recognize that fascia twists throughout the body, creating torque. When the patient is lying on the surgical table, breasts appear to be level, but since they are not naturally positioned (not standing) and "out of gravity," it is not until the woman is

Myofascial release creates a unique specialty for spa professionals, which results in increased income potential.

standing up that you can see the fascia drag, which creates a high or low breast. After augmentation, breasts can also become hypersensitive or have decreased sensation. Myofascial release can reposition the breast of the female client and create a more soft, supple and natural appearance.

Myofascial release creates a unique specialty for spa professionals, which results in increased income potential. The spa owner can offer myofascial release facials and body treatments as a special service and an alternative to invasive procedures to increase client satisfaction and earn higher profits. ■

John F. Barnes, P.T., is a nationally certified massage therapist. He is president of the Myofascial Release Treatment Centers and International Myofascial Release Seminars. Barnes has trained



more than 50,000 therapists and physicians in his highly successful myofascial release approach. He has been a keynote speaker at the

American Back Society Symposiums for more than 25 years.

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