

# CONNECT

PELVIC FLOOR FITNESS



## Scar Tissue Mobilization

Restore mobility, reduce sensitivity, and improve how your body moves and functions after c-sections, tearing, episiotomies, and abdominal surgery.

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MEET THE EXPERT

# Hi, I'm Caroline.

I'm a Pelvic Floor Physical Therapist and mom of three. I created Connect Pelvic Floor Fitness because I lived what you're going through — and because when I finally understood what was actually causing these issues, **everything changed**.



In this guide, I'm going to walk you through why scar tissue can impact everything from core function to pelvic floor symptoms, how restricted tissue creates tension and movement limitations throughout the body, and the simple steps you can take to safely restore mobility and confidence around your scars.

This isn't about forcing your scar to loosen. It's about helping your body feel safe enough to move again.



## WHY SCAR TISSUE MATTERS

# Your scar is part of a larger pressure system.

No matter how big or small, whether that's a c-section, episiotomy, spontaneous tearing of the perineum, or small laparoscopic incisions they all matter. This is because the abdominal wall and pelvic floor are directly connected by a web of connective tissue, meaning what happens in one area directly impacts the other.

Think of scar tissue like a lot of tangled spider webs. It can be many layers deep within the abdominal wall or even attach to nearby organs like the bladder, creating tension, restricted movement, and symptoms that can feel completely unrelated to the original scar.

Here's a simple way to understand healthy tissue mobility: move the skin on your forearm right now. It should glide smoothly and easily in all directions.

That's what we want to see around your scars too. When scar tissue is stuck or restricted, the surrounding tissues can't move the way they're designed to — and that affects how well everything functions.

# The rules that make scar mobilization successful.

## 1. You don't have to do it alone

If you feel uncomfortable about approaching scar mobilization, you don't have to do it alone. A pelvic floor physical therapist (find one at [pelvicrehab.com](http://pelvicrehab.com)) or a massage therapist trained in women's health can walk you through the process and help you feel confident doing it yourself at home.

## 2. Always start FAR away from the scar

The #2 rule of mobilizing ANY scar: always start FAR away from the scar and slowly work closer as your body allows.

For example, if the scar is on the left side of your abdominal wall, start by moving the tissues on the right side. If it's a c-section scar, begin near your belly button or even higher, not at the scar itself.

Starting away from the scar matters because direct touch can be painful, especially if this is your first time working with it. It can also bring up unexpected physical or emotional responses. Going slowly gives your nervous system time to adjust and helps you learn how your body responds before moving closer.

## 3. Progress gradually

Start with light pressure in areas farther from the scar first. As your tolerance builds, move closer, and then start light again as you approach the scar itself. Keep progressing as tolerated, always moving toward the scar over time.

# Scar Mobilization Techniques

## **Working toward the scar.**

As you work closer to the scar, you'll move above it, below it, and directly at it.

## **Moving the skin in all directions**

Skip the lotion here, you want enough grip to anchor one side of the skin while you gently stretch and move the tissue around it.

## **Holding stretches and pulls**

Work up/down, side to side, diagonally, and in circular motions. Practice slow, deep belly breathing throughout to encourage blood flow to the area and help your body stay relaxed. Hold each stretch for 30–60 seconds, starting with less time when you're just beginning.

## **Total scar mobilization time**

Start with just 5 minutes and slowly work up to 15 minutes per session as your comfort and tolerance improve.

## **Parallel scar mobilization**

Using small massage strokes along each side of the incision but not directly on top of the scar until you're ready for that.

## **Cross friction scar mobilization**

Working across the scar in a perpendicular direction. This is the most intense technique and should only be introduced once you've built tolerance to gentler approaches.

## **Additional techniques**

- Gentle skin rolling and pinching along the outside of the scar, then directly at it
- Moving the scar itself up and down
- Diagonal massage along the scar

# Start with desensitization first.

This is incredibly common and completely normal. Sensitivity around a scar can come from the nerve endings in the tissue itself, or it can be your body holding onto the emotional experience of the surgery. Our tissues really do store stress and trauma.

If this is you, start with scar desensitization before attempting mobilization. The goal of desensitization is to gradually reduce hypersensitivity and discomfort around the scar area by slowly introducing different textures and levels of pressure, working up to direct touch over time.

## Start with:

A soft cloth or fabric like silk or cotton and gently rub it over the area around the scar first, then directly on it. Begin with very light pressure and increase only as it feels comfortable.

## Progress to:

A rougher texture like terry cloth or a loofah, start light and gradually increase pressure, using circular and diagonal motions.

Makeup brushes and sponges of different densities can also be surprisingly effective.

## Alternating temperatures:

A warm compress (not too hot) or a cold pack wrapped in a cloth applied gently to the scar area. Gradually introduce temperature contrast by alternating between warm and cold.

Always start gently and pay attention to how your body responds. There is no rush but if you push too hard too fast, you can set yourself back.

## Emotional responses to scar touch

Our nervous system can hold onto emotions long after an event has passed or even years later. If touching your scar brings up unexpected feelings, that's a completely normal response.

Notice what comes up. Did you feel yourself tighten or pull away?

Try taking a few slow, deep belly breaths first to release some of that tension before attempting touch again. Breathing helps regulate your nervous system and can make the whole process feel more manageable over time.

### CUPPING & NEW C-SECTION SCAR TIMELINE

# Progressing your scar mobility work.

## Cupping

Once you've built up some tolerance to scar mobilization and have a sense of how your body responds, cupping can be a really effective next step for the abdominal wall. It can feel intense at first, so it's best introduced after you're comfortable with the techniques above.

I've used these cups on patients and have a set for myself at home.

**Important:** Always use lubrication, lotion or oil works well. The sensation should be tolerable, never sharp or overly painful. If it's too intense, reduce the suction or add more lubrication.

## How to use the cups

You can either create suction and let the cup sit in one place for 1–3 minutes, or gently glide the cup along the skin while maintaining suction. Gliding picks up and moves tissue at a deeper level.

Avoid using cups on sensitive or broken skin, or if you're taking blood thinning medication. Bruising after cupping is common and can leave marks that last a few days, this is normal.

## New C-Section Scar Timeline

### **Weeks 0–4**

Wait 3–4 weeks (or until the scar is fully closed) before beginning any direct mobilization; longer if there's been any infection. In the first 3–4 weeks, focus on diaphragmatic breathing. This alone promotes tissue movement and blood flow without touching the scar.

### **Week 4**

You can begin mobilizing the skin around the scar. Follow the desensitization and mobilization steps above.

### **Week 8**

You can begin working directly in the middle of the scar.

### **Week 12**

You can mobilize the full length of the scar.

This isn't about forcing your scar to loosen. It's about helping your body feel safe enough to move again.

Scar tissue work doesn't need to be aggressive to be effective.

The goal is to restore mobility, improve tissue awareness, reduce sensitivity, and help your body move the way it was designed to.

Start slowly. Stay consistent. Pay attention to how your body responds. And remember: what feels sensitive or restricted today can absolutely improve with patience, repetition, and the right approach.

Your scar is part of your story but it doesn't have to define how you move, exercise, or feel in your body moving forward.

Already ready to go deeper?

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Here's to living without limitations,



*Caroline*

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