

The Role of Manual Lymph Drainage in Improving Wound Healing and Accelerating Recovery after Cosmetic and Plastic Surgery

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Abstract

Manual Lymph Drainage utilized in the acute postoperative period removes 'stagnant' oedema, supporting the function of the lymphatic system, supporting, and improving wound healing and optimizing the scarring process, and accelerates the healing process. Any cut, incision and wound that breaches the skin and underlying tissues will produce some degree of scar. No matter how it occurs, scar formation is the body's natural reaction to that trauma. The 'replacement' tissue is quite different to the original 'normal' tissue. If the wound healing process is faulty or mismanaged, the scar tissue can cause tightness and restriction causing pain and discomfort. And be unsightly causing distress and dissatisfaction in the patient. The lymphatic system plays a major part in the wound healing process. Growth of lymphatic capillaries in the wound bed is essential during the normal wound healing response. Indeed, lymphatics have been recently associated with granulation tissue formation, matrix remodeling and leukocyte trafficking in wound healing. However, the accumulation of postoperative oedema affects the wound healing process due to lingering cellular debris affecting cytokine and growth factor production. Postoperative oedema can be removed more quickly by instigating Manual Lymph Drainage within the first 7 days, reducing oedema and improving and reducing the possibility of unsightly and problematic scars.

Biography

Petra Erving is a Certified Lymphoedema Therapist and Scar Tissue Release Therapist based in Northern Ireland. She has worked with post Cosmetic and Plastic Surgery patients since first completing training in Postoperative and Post-Trauma Massage through the Centre for Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery and the School of Orthopedic Massage, Ann Arbor, Michigan in 2006. She has worked in the NHS in two of London's leading teaching hospital: St George's Hospital and

Ealing Hospital in their lymphoedema departments where she treated both primary and secondary to cancer lymphoedema. In 2012 she introduced Manual Lymph Drainage to London Bridge Plastic Surgery in Wimpole Street, London where pre & postop MLD was integrated into the surgical fees and became the first private plastic surgery in London to offer this service on-site to all surgical patients.