

Treatment of Scars From Burns and Trauma

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Dedication

To the brave members of the armed forces, who demonstrate and preserve our highest ideals.

—Curtis W. Gaball



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Preface

Scars are life-changing. They can mar appearance, disfigure skin, elicit anxiety, lead to embarrassment, and decrease self-confidence. Affected individuals may shun social interaction. Scars can also be uncomfortable, painful, restrictive, and limit movement. Even the ability to perform the activities of daily living can be impaired. Traumatic and burn scars are reminders to survivors of accidents, abuse, or wartime injuries.

Fortunately, scars can be treated. The visible appearance of scars can be improved. Abnormal color can be reduced, and uneven texture can be blended with that of surrounding skin. Restrictive scars, which may impede the thumb-to-forefinger apposition necessary to hold a fork or button a shirt, can be released. Lasers and energy devices allow the nonsurgical treatment of scars. In time, stem cell treatments and other targeted therapies may offer more precise, complete correction of scars. Until then, multimodal approaches can be tailored for patients' specific needs. Healing scars is a multidisciplinary field pioneered by dermatologists, plastic surgeons, burn surgeons, otolaryngologists, and many others.

In this volume, we do our best to provide a simple but comprehensive approach to scar treatment. Brief chapters are designed to be direct. Text is shorn of extraneous detail, focused on conveying essential information. Beyond the how of treating scars, the why is addressed, since understanding patient motivations guides the design of treatment plans. When appropriate, the quality of the evidence for interventions is assessed. Whenever possible, practical tips are shared. To provide balance, individual chapters are written by expert authors from relevant medical specialties.

If this book allows a reader to better treat a single patient suffering from scarring, we will consider our work a success.

Murad Alam

Chicago

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