



Look younger for longer

» with anti-ageing expert **Lesley Reynolds Khan**

Scar SOS

Baring your body in summer is daunting enough without scars. Here's my guide to what can help: Scars can really affect self-esteem and are, unfortunately, permanent. Mild ones can be reduced with over-the-counter products, such as **Palmer's Cocoa Butter Formula Vitamin E Scar Serum, £9.95**. However, severe scars may need specialist treatment. The first step is finding out which type of scarring you have. It's best to see your GP (certain treatments are available on the NHS) or go to an experienced dermatologist or cosmetic doctor.



RAISED SCARS

These include keloid and hypertrophic scars. Keloids are raised, lumpy, often red or purple and may get larger than the original wound.



TREATMENT

» **Cortisone/steroid injections.** You might get these on the NHS or else expect to pay from **£150 per session**. Can take up to 10 treatments, a month apart – there should be visible change in a month.

» **Laser resurfacing** (1-3 treatments, a month apart), can reduce redness and flatten skin. There may be discomfort and redness afterwards, but results should show as soon as the skin heals. From **£400 per treatment**.

» **Silicone gel** (from chemists) can fade hypertrophic scars, but may take several months. **Dermatix Silicone Gel, £35.99**.

They are common on back, chest, neck, earlobes and on the back of the head, and can also occur after incisions. Hypertrophic scars, also lumpy and red, don't get bigger than the injury. They may be itchy and painful.



Pregnancy can stretch the skin

STRETCH MARKS

These are actually scars that occur when the skin is stretched over a short period of time, for example after fast weight gain or pregnancy.

TREATMENT

I have yet to see any cosmetic creams make a huge difference to stretch marks. I'd recommend

Fractora, a radiofrequency treatment that tightens the skin, reducing the width of stretch marks. It can cause some discomfort and requires 10 days' downtime, after which the results on the skin should become visible. From £1,000 (visit www.harleystreetskinclinic.com to check it out).

BURNS



'Contracture scars' occur after burns and can look

unsightly and puckered. They can also cause a tightening of the skin, which can lead to restricted movement and pain.

TREATMENT

» **Skin grafts**, where skin from other parts of the body is used to replace scarred skin.

» **Scar surgery** – see right.

ACNE/CHICKEN POX SCARS



This type (known as an atrophic scar) is indented or 'pitted'.

TREATMENT

» **Fractional laser treatment** like Fraxel re:pair, for deeper acne scars, stimulates the skin's healing process. Can be painful, so allow a week to recover. Skin will improve in 3-6 months after it. Two sessions may be needed, around three months apart. From **£2,000 a session** (www.fraxel.com).

» **Microneedling** can help mild acne scarring. Fine needles are rolled over skin. Seen by the skin as damage, it regenerates. You'll need 3-6 treatments, 4-6 weeks apart. From **£250 a session** (www.genuinedermaroller.co.uk).

Surgical solutions

Surgery to reduce the scar may be a last resort, but there is a risk of further scarring (especially if you're prone to keloids). See your GP.

Camouflage make-up

Full-coverage make-up can seamlessly disguise scars. It is sometimes available on



prescription, so see your GP. Try using Keromask Starter Kit, £2.99 (tel: 01634 673335).

» Lesley is an anti-ageing expert for the Harley Street Skin Clinic (www.harleystreetskinclinic.com)

» If you have a beauty question you need answered, email asklesley@natmags.co.uk