

# Laser Treatment for Scars: Everything you wanted to know but were afraid to ask

If you have ever had a scar, then laser treatment is something you may have considered. But - as with any procedure - it's good to do your research before proceeding. The aim of this article is to do exactly that. It will answer basic questions such as "What is laser treatment for scars?", "What are the benefits?", "What are the side effects", and "What are the alternatives?" By the end of this article you will have a comprehensive understanding of the basics of laser treatment.

## What is laser treatment for scars?

The [American Society of Plastic Surgeons](#) defines laser treatment as the use of lasers to...

*"...send short, concentrated pulsating beams of light at irregular skin. This removes unwanted, damaged skin in a very precise manner one layer at a time."*

Put simply, the lasers burn away the damaged layers of skin. It may seem counterintuitive to *burn* away scars, in particular if the scar is from a burn itself, however the fact is that lasers are so precise, that only the unwanted layers of skin are targeted. Furthermore, this process stimulates the body's natural ability to heal.

## Are there different types of laser?

In short, yes. There are two main types of laser:

### 1. Ablative laser

The word "ablative" comes from the Latin "ablativus" which means "to take away". In other words, this type of laser removes layers of skin. Examples of ablative lasers are the carbon dioxide (CO2) laser and the erbium laser. (Source: [Mayo Clinic](#)).

This type of laser can be of particular use in treating wrinkles, as it causes a minor burn, subsequently prompting the skin to heal itself. The resulting new layers of skin are tighter and smoother than before, diminishing the appearance of wrinkles (Source: [Phoenix Society](#)).

### 2. Non-ablative laser.

As the name suggests, this type of laser does not remove layers of skin. By contrast, this laser stimulates skin and collagen growth.

## What are the benefits of laser treatment?

There are many benefits to laser treatment. First and foremost, it can reduce the visibility of scars, as well as minimize scarring. Scar prevention further of abnormal scarring can possibly be achieved when laser treatment is performed prior to scar formation, thus "pre-empting" the appearance of the scar.

Second, it can reduce scar pain and itching. Third, by reducing scarring, it can increase the range of motion. Of course, this only applies to scars which were limiting movement (Source: [American Academy of Dermatology](#)).

## How effective is laser treatment?

Laser technology has improved greatly over the years. To quote an academic study:

*“Over the past decade, refinements in laser technology as well as advances in laser techniques have enabled dermatologic surgeons to define the most appropriate lasers to use for different scar types without the adverse sequelae and recurrence rates noted with older surgical revision techniques and continuous wave laser systems.”* (Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/14716440>)

However, as with any procedure, the outcomes will depend on a variety of factors. The experience and training of the surgeon is, of course, essential. Knowing which type of laser to use, in which circumstances, and *when*, are all vital decisions, so having an experienced surgeon will help to ensure the right decisions are made.

For example, non-ablative lasers are more appropriate during the development phase of scars, whereas different types of laser are more appropriate after scar maturation.

## What are the side effects of laser therapy?

Extreme side effects are very rare, however short term side effects occur. These include:

- Sensitivity to the sun (this is why it is recommended for patients to avoid sun exposure post treatment);
- Redness, swelling, or itching;
- Infection;
- Changes in skin color.

(Source: [The Mayo Clinic](#))

Because of this, it is strongly recommended that an appropriately trained and qualified surgeon is chosen. This will help to reduce the chances of negative side effects.

## Are there any alternatives to laser therapy?

There are several alternatives to laser therapy. These include chemical peels, filler injections, surgical scar revision, and dermabrasion. [Read more about scar treatment options.](#)

The correct choice for you will depend on your type of scar and specific circumstances. An experienced and well qualified plastic surgeon can help you make the correct decision.

## Further Information about [Plastic Surgery for Scars in Miami](#)

If you are looking for a [plastic surgeon for scars in Miami](#), then you may want to consider Dr. Thomas Zaydon. Dr. Zaydon has many years of experience removing and reducing the appearance and symptoms of scars and scar tissue. Read more about Dr. Zaydon in his role as a [plastic surgeon expert witness](#), [workers' compensation plastic surgeon](#), or [Contact Us](#).