From Surgeon to Survivor

Doctor Finds Relief After 38 Years With Help From McLoughlin Scar Tissue Release® and Integrated Movement With Cyndi George

"Your Daughter May Not Survive...."

Christine's mother couldn't believe the doctor's chilling words.

Only a few weeks before, the energetic 12-year-old discovered the softball sized lump in her neck while at the table doing homework.

Antibiotics didn't help, and the lump grew quickly. Soon, Christine couldn't turn her head, prompting doctors to schedule the potentially life-threatening surgery.

The tumor was diagnosed as a benign cystic hygroma, a rare, fluid filled sack caused by a blockage in the lymphatic system that's usually diagnosed in babies.

However, almost immediately following surgery, the drain spot swelled up and the scar became painful and tight.

This started a pattern of recurrence that came and went for the next 38 years.

A Childhood Dream Becomes a Nightmare

Inspired by her childhood experience, Christine achieved her dream to become an emergency room trauma surgeon.

On the surface, Dr. Christine looked like she had it all, expertly balancing the demands of a busy ER trauma surgeon, with raising a family of 3 young children in faith-based school and juggling their hectic hockey and activity schedules.

But behind hustle and bustle of daily life, the doctor held a dark secret.

Dr. Christine's Journey

- **12 Surgeries**
- **Childhood Tumor**
- **C-Section Scar Opened 3 Times**
- **8 Spinal Surgeries**
- **25+ Scars**
- **Pain Level 10 - Mainly Bedridden**

How Dr. Christine Found Relief

- **McLoughlin Scar Tissue Release®**
- **Active Isolated Stretching**
- **Diaphragmatic Breathing**
- **Pilates**
- **Reiki**

"I'm 1,000 percent better than before I started working with Cyndi!"

When she was 8 months pregnant with her second child, Dr. Christine sustained a fractured pelvis at the hands of her abusive husband who pushed her violently onto the hardwood floor.

Unable to medically treat the break due to her advanced pregnancy, complications of this injury required her to give birth to both her second and third child via cesarean section.

The scar didn't heal well after the second C-Section, and developed a painful, fluid filled lump called a seroma that caused ongoing discomfort.

Some 8 years later, Dr. Christine faced another scare with a hysterectomy and removal of a potentially cancerous ovarian mass.

"I felt frightened and alone in a loveless, abusive marriage," she recalled. "Fortunately, the mass tested benign, but I was left with a scar that was pulled in, rock hard to the touch, and raging with stinging, burning pain."

Then, less than a year after her cancer scare, Dr. Christine and her family were T-boned in an alcohol related crash that would change her life forever.

Christine required a total of 8 surgeries over the next 8 years to treat her multiple level spinal injuries, including a crushed T12 (lower back) vertebra that was literally left in pieces.

X-ray of rods in Dr. Christine's back

Medical staff tried to put Dr. Christine back together with a series of spinal disc fusions, rods, plates, and screws.

During one of these surgeries, she suffered a punctured lung and a 2nd degree burn to her armpit and chest due to surgical complications.

"I became unable to function", she said. "The injuries affected my head, my neck, my torso, my arms, and my legs."

Dr. Christine had tried everything, including several courses of physical therapy and rehabilitation, while her medicine cabinet overflowed with an array of prescription and over the counter bottles, tubes, patches, and creams.

"But nothing completely relieved my symptoms and pain."

> "My pain level was a 10 and I was confined to bed much of the time. My stomach wretched and my body curled and contracted into the letter C. I could not sleep or eat and was wasting away. My weight plummeted from 138 to 98 pounds."

With her joints frozen and stiff, this doctor who had once performed delicate lifesaving surgery, could not even open a bottle of water, or independently lift her arm over her head. Unsteady balance and dizziness made her feel like she could come crashing to the ground at any moment.

Even breathing or moving her head induced licks of fire and nausea.

Finally, Some Hope

Intrigued by a sign in the window, and desperate for relief, Dr. Christine, now age 50, gingerly hobbled into Cynshine™ Pilates and Integrated Movement and met with owner, Cyndi George.

Barely able to hold up her head, Dr. Christine recalled saying, "I don't know what half of those services listed on your window are, but I hope you can help me. I'm stuck."

Cyndi began with a comprehensive medical history and found that even muscle testing was nearly impossible without pain.

One thing was for sure: traditional stretches were not the answer for Dr. Christine.

Rather than relieving pain, traditional stretches held for 30-60 seconds can contribute to muscle tightness and soreness by triggering the body's natural protective stretch reflex that causes muscles to tighten up.

Cyndi George knew a better way.

Cyndi began sessions with gentle range of motion using the Active Isolated Stretching protocol, also known as the Mattes Method after kinesiologist, Aaron Mattes.

As the name implies, Active Isolated Stretching isolates the muscle that's being stretched, and then releases it back to its neutral position after only 2 seconds. The muscles stay relaxed, and the tissue gets rehydrated, relieving tension. The process is a gentle, gliding motion that often yields greater movement, flexibility, and circulation with each repetition.

To help facilitate deeper breathing, and support physical and emotional releases, Cyndi also incorporated diaphragmatic breathing exercises and Reiki energy work into the treatment plan.

Dr. Christine made modest gains in her movement, flexibility and breathing, but there had to be more that could be done…

The Missing Link

No longer able to practice medicine, the talented surgeon had at least 25 scars on her body from the various medical procedures she endured over the years.

Scar tissue is formed from cells that come from the smooth fibrous connective tissue under the skin called fascia. Fascia provides structure for organs, muscles, and tissues in the body while also supporting smooth movement, posture, and position sense.

Think of fascia like an internal web that connects the body together.

During the healing process, the body forms scars by laying down strands of collagen rich, fibrous connective tissue to fill in and heal the cut or injured area.

The problem is that these scar fibers are not arranged in a nice, smooth orderly way. Instead, they're deposited haphazardly, in all different directions.

This can cause scars to become hard or thickened. They may even adhere to and pull on the underlying fascia, muscles, organs, and other tissues in the body -- sometimes far away from the original site of the surgery or injury.

These adhesions can cause a blockage of blood and lymph (fluid) flow, restrict movement, and cause a host of symptoms such as pain, itching, loss of sensation, swelling, or discoloration.

Dr. Christine had them all.

Enter the McLoughlin Scar Tissue Release® (MSTR®) technique, a gentle, non-invasive intervention developed by British bodywork specialist, Alastair McLoughlin.

Using light, finger-tip pressure, MSTR® remodels the scar tissue to realign the haphazard fibers in a more orderly way and release them from underlying structures.

This helps to support improved movement, sensation and increased blood and lymph flow to promote the body's natural healing process.

Starting with the area that could bring her the most relief, Cyndi carefully treated the scars from the metal rods in the middle of Dr. Christine's back.

At first, the scars felt "tight and produced a wicked feeling of hotness in my torso," Dr. Christine shared. "Sweat drenched my clothes, and I felt like I was being cut and stabbed and then twisted on that knife at times."

Sometimes tears would well up from the deepest part of her being, because with every scar comes a memory of an event that caused it.

Shortly after beginning the McLoughlin Scar Tissue Release® technique Dr. Christine discovered a surprising change:

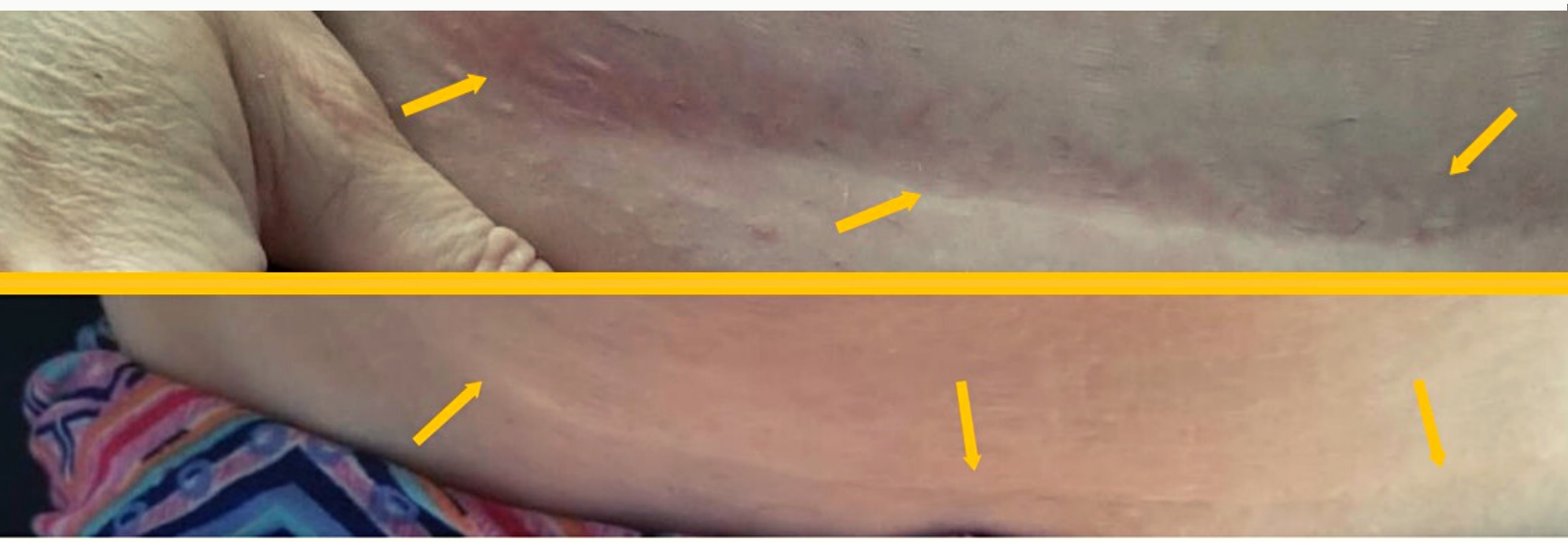
Everything in the body is connected!

"It felt like the scars began to connect to each other in terms of feeling sensation in one scar while working on a different one. For example, especially while working on my C-section scar, the lung scar felt like it was being pulled."

> "I would feel so much better after each session." Able to eat a little, sleep a little, breathe more deeply and have my pain reduced at least by 50%."

"Cyndi's keen ability to "read" Dr. Christine's body meant that there was never a set agenda for each session.

Together, the pair worked slowly, skillfully integrating MSTR® scar techniques with the breathing, Active Isolated Stretching, Reiki energy work and eventually some Pilates, to meet Christine's body and mind right where she was at a given moment.



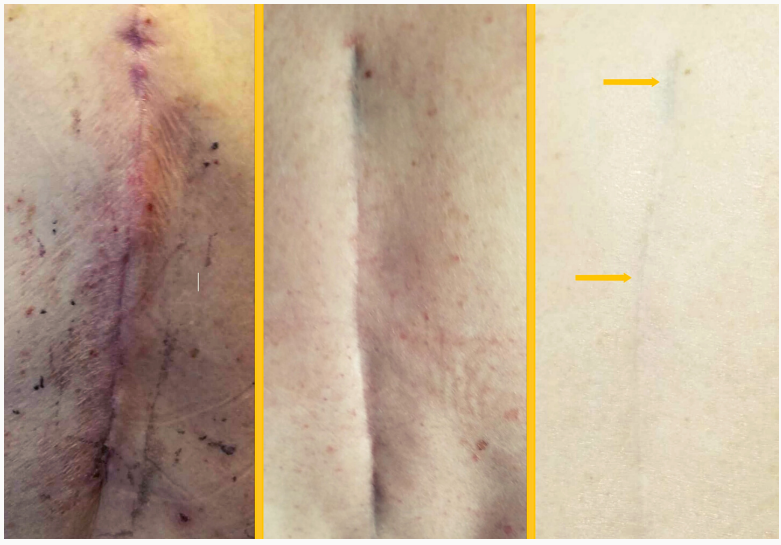
C-section scar. Top photo: Before treatment. Bottom photo: Approximately 8 weeks later after 6 treatments

New Beginnings

Dr. Christine attended sessions at Cynshine™ Pilates and Integrated Movement for nearly a year to address her complex needs, receiving an average of 5-6 treatments per scar for the smaller scars and 10-12 sessions for longer ones.

As a bonus, the scar remodeling process continues inside the body even after treatment ends. Improvements in scar remodeling maintain extremely well for years, unless additional injury, tissue trauma or other health issues occur.

Adding 20 pounds back to her petite frame, Dr. Christine regained her ability to take a deep breath, stand upright, and walk without folding over into the letter C.



L to R: Spinal rod scar post surgery, 4 months & 2 years later. (1 year since MSTR®)

She learned to ride a stationary bike and regained the ability to perform everyday tasks like brushing her hair, opening a water bottle and reaching up into a cabinet.

Her C-Section scar and stretch marks faded away almost completely. In fact, all the scars became much lighter and more pliable.

Blinding pain reduced to a sense of tightness and a tingle that Dr. Christine described as "1,000 percent better" than before she started working with Cyndi.

And that area on the side of Dr. Christine's neck from her tumor removal at age 12?

It's smooth, quiet, and completely pain free, ending 38 years of inflammation and discomfort.

"If I hadn't found Cyndi, I seriously doubt I'd be alive now," Dr. Christine shared. "She is a very caring and compassionate individual. I always left a session able to move better. As for my personal life, I'm safe and finally surrounded by people who support me."

"I'm a survivor!"