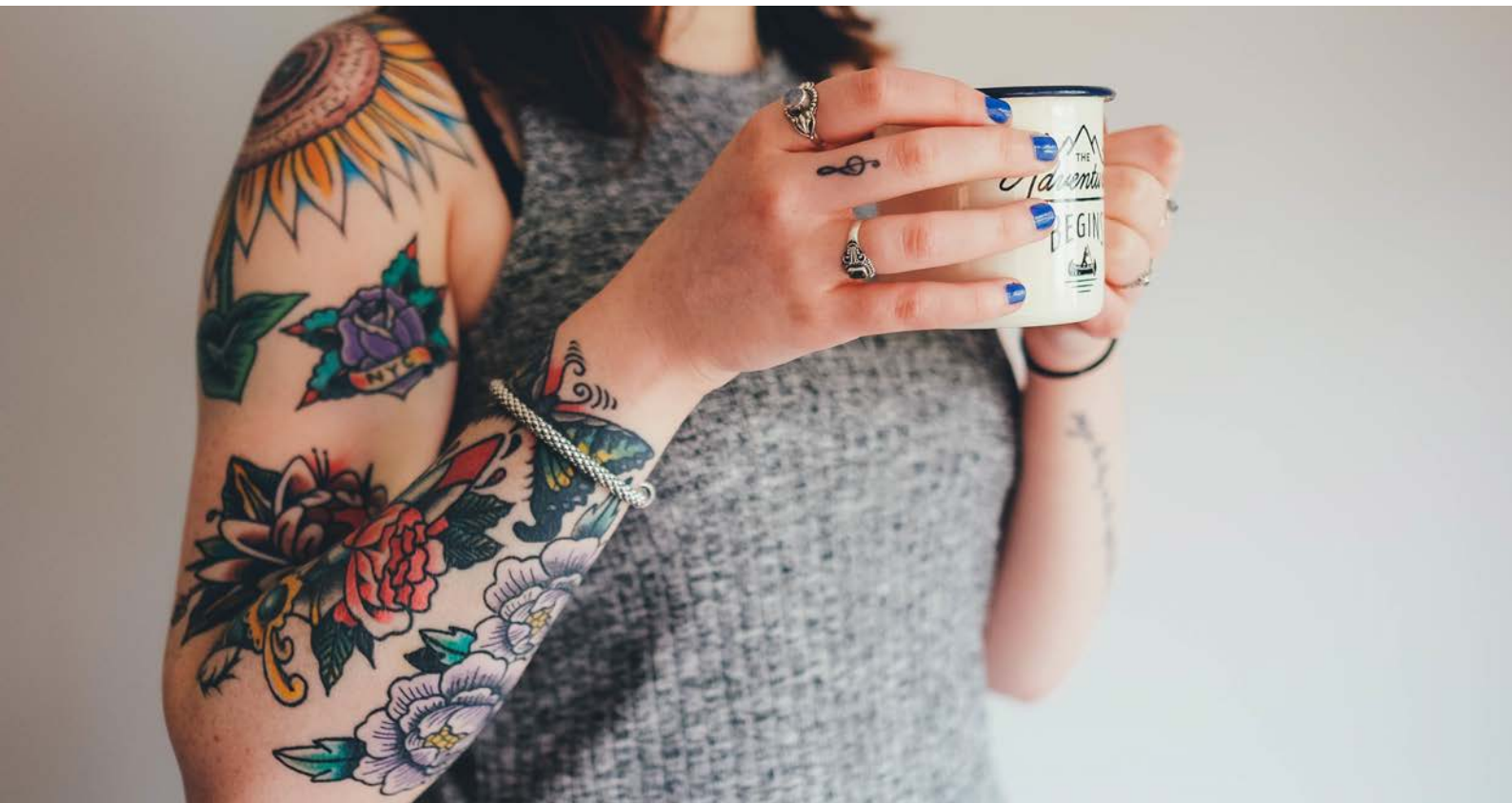


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Tattoo Colour Theory



When a client is investing in a tattoo, there are many factors to consider: the design, the placement and size, the style of tattoo art. But one crucial, yet often overlooked, factor is the color of your tattoo. First and foremost is the question, 'Do they want a colored design?' They might have assumed, going into the tattoo shop, that they would get a pink floral design, only to discover that pink doesn't show well on your skin.

Alternatively, they might have wanted a large yellow tattoo, only to realize that yellow is one of the hardest pigments to get laser removed. Each shade reacts uniquely on different kinds of skin, and it's important to weigh all the components involved in the mix.

Here, we'll explore the best pigments depending on your skin color, the versatility and longevity of the pigment, sun exposure, and your skin's unique take to the ink. Read on, and learn about the best pigments for your skin!



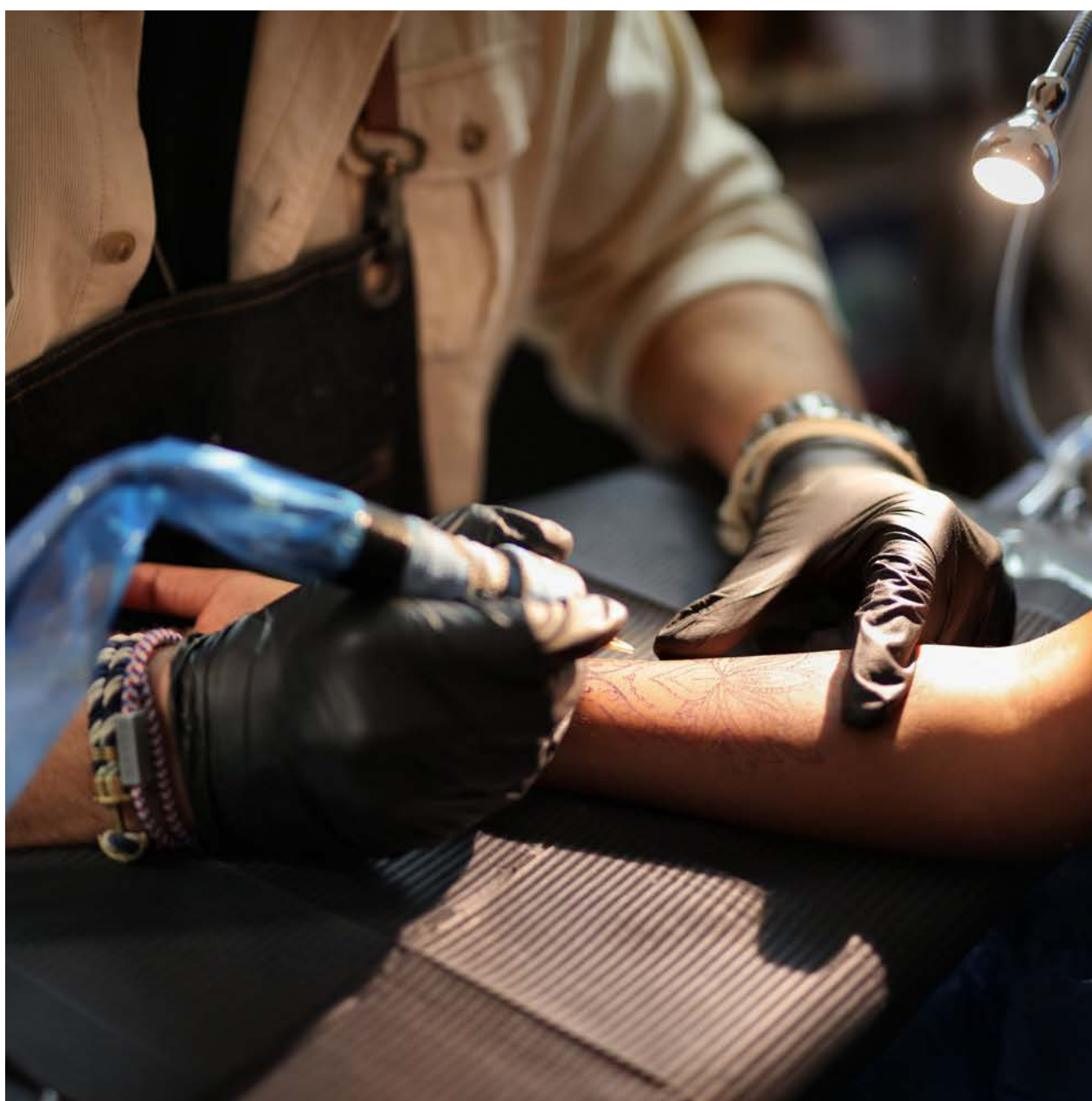
THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE SKIN

Although the two terms are easily conflated, skin tone (overtone) and undertone describe separate things. Your skin tone is the actual color of your skin. Examples of skin tone might include porcelain, olive, or caramel. Undertones, on the other hand, are warm, cool, or neutral. When you're looking for a pigment to suit your skin, you want to match the ink color with your skin's undertone.

There are 3 kinds of skin undertones: warm, cool, and neutral. Cool undertones describe those people with a blueish, pink, or ruddy complexion. These people tend to show blue colored veins. Warm undertones describe yellow, peachy, or golden complexions. Those with warm undertones typically have green colored veins. Neutral undertones show an even complexion, so the undertone aligns with your surface skin tone. These people have no distinguishable vein color. Your skin is very complex, and there are many different factors that contribute to your unique color. Three biological chemicals determine your color: Hemoglobin, which is red; melanin, which is your skin's sun protection agent and is brown or red-yellow; and carotene, which is orange-yellow. It turns out that the amount of melanin in your main skin layer determines your undertone. The less melanin you have, the more your veins will show as blue, and the cooler complexion you'll have. The more melanin you have, the more your veins will show as green, and the warmer complexion you'll have. The amount of hemoglobin and carotene you have determines the variation in your undertone.

So why should you match your tattoo ink with your skin undertone? It turns out that, just like your hemoglobin, your tattoo ink is covered by a layer of melanin. Your skin is made up of 3 layers, including the epidermis (top layer), the dermis (middle layer), and the subcutaneous fat layer (technically below the skin).

The tattoo ink and the melanin sit in the dermis layer, but the melanin sits at the top of the layer, while the tattoo ink sits below it. This means that, if you only have small concentrations of melanin (a cool undertone), any ink pigment will show fairly well, but bold blues and reds will show especially well, since they match your natural skin undertone. If you have a higher concentration of melanin, the ink pigment will be affected by the color of the melanin—just as your veins are: recall that the blue color of your veins is turned green with the brown/red/yellow color of melanin. So, for an ink color that shows well, you'd want to stick to warmer pigments that match the amount of melanin in your skin complexion. It's important to remember that there's no difference in the way that darker skin receives color. Rather, it is the concentration of melanin which affects your skin's undertone.



OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER

When picking shades, a good rule to remember is that shades lighter than your skin tone or shades significantly darker than your skin tone show best.

For those with fair-skin, red and violet pigments complement the skin well. Fair skin also takes white ink the best, since darker skin tones don't allow white pigment to show as much.

For those with medium or tanned skin, oranges, greens, and bright blues work well.

For darker skin tones, the darkest colors, like royal blue, crimson red, and black, work best. Lighter shades, such as light blue and white, don't show up as well, whereas darker tattoo pigments bring out the color in the skin.

THE VERSATILITY OF THE PIGMENT

Another factor that should be considered is the versatility of the colors: which colors will match your overall look? Usually, black, grey, and dark blues are the most versatile. We discussed the benefits of black and grey tattoos versus color tattoos in a previous post. If your design calls for color, muted shades will match with more outfits, if that's your goal. If your tattoo is mostly hidden, this shouldn't be too much of a concern.

How Long-Lasting is the Pigment

Knowing the longevity of your pigment is important for two main reasons: so that you know which tattoos you can get laser removed, if ever necessary, and so that you know which pigments will maintain integrity as time passes. Yellow, green, and orange pigments are the most resistant to laser tattoo removal, so if you're ambivalent about your attitude toward your design 20 years from now, it might be safer to go with other colors. In general, vivid, non-organic colors are the hardest to have removed. White ink fades the fastest, so this pigment will require the most frequent touchups.

Sun Exposure

Tattoo ink resides in a place in your skin where special light-receptive skin cells are. These light-receptive skin cells are called melanocytes, and they secrete melanin when your skin is exposed to the sun. Melanin is what creates the bronze-brown color that appears on your skin after you've spent a few hours in the sun. When melanin mixes with ink pigment, your tattoo dulls. How much time you'll be spending in the sun is something to consider, because this may significantly change the tone of your tattoo.



How Well the Skin Takes the Ink

Black and blue pigments are generally tolerated the best in your skin: they're easily taken up, and they're removed with the least effort. People with fairer skin will show more tattoo pigment, whereas people with darker skin will require a higher concentration of pigment before anything shows. Depending on how bold you want your design to be, you should select a color that will accomplish that goal: if you want your tattoo to be subtle, opt for a white or grey pigment; if you want your tattoo to be eye-catching, opt for a dark black pigment.

All in all, color is a very important factor in the decision process of getting a tattoo, and it's not always a simple decision. Once you've considered all of the variables discussed throughout this article, you should consult with your tattoo artist to ensure that all of the colors are complementary within the design, and compatible with your overall look. Though you might not end up with the color scheme you set out to get, you'll be grateful when your ink withstands the weathering of the sun and time.



How to Blend Tattoo Ink and How to Mix Tattoo Ink

Sometimes tattoo artists face a problem when all the samples of tattoo inks in their collection are unable to procure the right shade. And doesn't seem to be really possible to have all the colors, nuances and undertones to satisfy real thirst of creativity. Luckily, tattoo inks can be mixed, diluted, blended, they can be made darker or lighter. A professional can create one's own tattoo ink combining some new colors. Mixing gives a great opportunity to turn few colors into many tints. The only thing one should remember about is using proper methods of blending in order to prevent ink ruining. The main rule of successful mixing is to stir with sterile tools only. Breaking this important rule can cause a big problem of cross contaminating colors. If you come to mixing very often, an investment in an ink mixer would be reasonable.

How To Make Tattoo Ink Darker

Do you find your red tone not quite dark enough to perform the dark blood you are going for? You can add some black ink to your red to get it to the desirable shade! Any color can be made darker just by adding some black. Be careful and add only one drop to mix at a time, try not to overdo it. Blend the black thoroughly to test the new color before adding more. Remember to use only sterilized tools for mixing. Though it seems to be a waste of one of your needles, but the knowledge that your ink is sterile is worth it.

How To Make Tattoo Ink Lighter

It is also easy to make your colors lighter using the same method as making them darker. The only distinction is that this time you will have to use white instead of black. There is one more variant – just add some distilled water, but first you should check if this method works with your ink. Once again, don't forget to do the process of blending slowly by adding only one drop at a time. Remember that you can always add more white (or water) but if you make the color too light you can ruin the ink altogether. In this case you will have to start the process over.

Mix Different Colors to Make New Variants of Tattoo Ink Colors

You can have your inks blended by putting two colors together in order to make a different color. For example, yellow and red will make together an orange color. If you add more red, the new color will become a more reddish tint, in case you blend in more yellow, it will become more yellow tint. Mix blue and red to get purple. Green comes out of blue and yellow. To get orange bring yellow to red. If you need brown just mix green and red.



Rules for Mixing and Blending Colors

- 1) White can be mixed with any color.
- 2) Except for white, leave the purple alone.
- 3) Red, orange and yellow can be intermixed and blended.
- 4) Browns mix well with orange, red, yellow and white
- 5) Make grey by mixing white with black or by adding distilled water to black.

Spectacular effects can be achieved by blending the colors in the skin letting one color flow into the next. This is a rainbow effect, and the ranges of color in a rainbow make a good guideline to remember the blending scheme.

Purple__

Red__

Rainbow colors orange

Yellow__

Green__

Blue

Any color can be blended with the color next to it on the rainbow. Different color values of the same color can be blended also. In between the two colors will be a zone with the two colors being mixed together. This is where the two colors meet and blend. For example, let's color in a leaf. The outline for the leaf is done and it has black shading by the stem. The darkest color is done (the black and black shading) and now some green must be added. It will go from black shading by the stem to a dark green, fading to a light green, and then a little yellow on the very edge- It's all right to color over shading as the black shading will show through.

Wash out the machine and needles very good (prescribed elsewhere) and tattoo in the dark green around the shading, right over the shading and feather it out toward the edge. Leave space for the other green. Wash out the machine and tattoo in the light green. Color in slightly over the dark green and color in the leaf almost to the edges, maybe slightly feathering it out on the edge. Wash out the machine and add in yellow or white, mixing it in with light green. Wipe with green soap spray and coat with Vaseline every color change. A super color blend is achieved. This way and must be practiced. It's best to do this blending in one sitting while the ink is still "wet" in the skin and the ink mixes a lot better this way.



WHITE IN THE MIX

White is the last color you put in a tattoo. White pigment is lighter than human skin and it won't stay pure white for long. It's a fickle color and it is highly subjective to the sun, tanning and turning a skin tone. Use it sparingly by itself. It is particularly good though for lightening other colors. It looks good in eyeballs. Some pretty results can be obtained by tattooing an area white, wait until it's entirely healed, and then put a tattoo over it in the regular fashion. It is also possible to do a more subtle work like using a dry shader, with no color in it (put a very light coat of Vaseline on the needles) and a very light coat of dry, powdered red (or other color) across the skin and then sweep across it with your shader for a pretty blush.

FINISHING TOUCHES

After having finished a tattoo, it should be washed off with green soap and sprayed with an alcohol solution. It would now be a good time to take a few photos for the portfolio and then carefully bandage the tattoo up. They look great when just finished. All glossy and sharp. Tattoos look their best when just finished and it's a great time to photograph them, at their peak condition. Before taking a photo, be sure to blot the tattoo perfectly dry and don't have any Vaseline on it or the results will be a poor photo.



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Choosing the Right Ink:

Some guidelines to consider when choosing to ensure you end up with consistent, reliable, and safe ink include:

- Consider sticking to the top brands. Many industry-leading manufacturers strictly vet their ingredients for effectiveness, efficiency, and safety while incorporating production processes that adhere to the strictest safety regulations.
- Ensure that the brand adheres to both S. and E.U. standards for quality, purity, and safety
- Check the product manufacturer's material safety data sheets (MSDS)
- Always check the ingredient list for any potential toxins or allergens.
- Only use products that you receive in a pre-sterilized and completely sealed state
- Check reviews to ensure that the ink maintains its consistency and vibrance at least past the first year.
- Consider paying a bit more for premium brands as the extra price is often worth it in terms of quality, colorfastness, and safety.

OUR TOP INK PICKS Intenze Tattoo Ink

Create any list of the best tattoo ink brands today, and Intenze Tattoo Ink is guaranteed to be one of the first names that appear. Established in 1978, Intenze Ink has one of the longest track records of producing some of the industry's highest quality inks.

One of the company's standout features is its dedication to providing organic products that adhere to all of the strictest industry standards.

Intenze inks are utterly devoid of animal products, 100% vegan, cruelty-free, and match the requirements for both American and E.U. safety standards. The company also offers all their inks in pre-sterilized and sealed bottles to ensure they arrive at your location in perfect condition and without any added safety risks.

World Famous Tattoo Ink

This company takes an entirely different approach to the art of tattoo ink production. At World Famous Tattoo Ink, the entire manufacturing process is built around a network of famous and rising tattoo artists worldwide that make up the World Famous family. One quick look at the brand's history, and it's not hard to see why they choose this unique path.

World Famous sits on the back of a tattooing family that has been in the business for over 50 years. The brand's founder, Lou Rubino, is a second-generation tattoo artist who started tattooing immediately after high school under his Dad, Lou Senior, a veteran tattoo artist.

Consequently, it is unsurprising that this brand builds its frameworks around connecting working tattooists around the world.



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Bloodline Tattoo Ink

Bloodline Tattoo Ink is a world-famous brand run by August Worchell, a one-time guitarist in Johnny Crash.

Major highlights of this company include featuring as the primary pigment supplier on Miami Ink (the first tattoo reality show to air on live T.V.) and one-time being responsible for manufacturing around a third of all tattoo inks used in the United States.

However, for a brand celebrated this much, Bloodline Tattoo Ink has relatively humble beginnings. August started the company by learning how to make ink the old-fashioned way from O.G. tattooists of the 70s and 80s and created hand-made ink by himself from his headquarters in California.

Today, in addition to running one of the most successful tattoo ink brands for 25+ years, August has also served as a cook for several other brands, and he has worked as the brain behind the kickstarting of several well-known companies.

Kuro Sumi Tattoo Ink

Ask any seasoned tattooist for ink recommendation for blackwork, and Kuro Sumi is guaranteed to be one of the first few names you hear. Kuro Sumi produces a line of rich inks initially formulated in Japan to work with the traditional Japanese tattoo style.

A defining characteristic of Japanese tattoos is the presence of deep, vibrant colors that pop and immediately catch the eyes wherever they appear. With this brand, you get inks that wholly embrace this aesthetic.

With Kuro Sumi, you get the deepest blacks, saturated grays, and some of the most vibrant color schemes you will find anywhere. Any option from this brand is sure to impress.

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Mom's Millennium Ink

Contrary to what the cheeky brand name would have you believe, Mom's Millennium Ink is one of the most reputable names in the tattoo industry. From their launch in 1998, the company made a name for itself in the market, thanks to its rich inks portfolio, famed for its vibrant colors and unrivaled consistency.

For expert tattooists, the ink's consistency is one of the top factors to consider when choosing the right product for any job. With consistent ink, you don't have to worry about shade mismatches, and you can rest assured that your art will maintain normal levels of vibrancy at all points. Here, Mom's Millennium Inks deliver.

The company placed intense emphasis on multiple checks of their products for color consistency, regular flow rate, and pigment durability.

Consequently, the brand holds the admiration of many artists and other industry participants for producing inks that you can always trust to act right.

Restock your arsenal with Mom's Millennium Ink 70 bottle superset for a supply of all the high-end tattoo inks you need. Alternatively, you can coup their Nuclear Colors UV-reactive ink set for unique (only visible under a blacklight) and fashionable tattoo highlights that are sure to impress.

Starbrite Colors

tarbrite Colors offers the closest thing to a quality budget brand you will find in this market. The tattoo ink market is rife with an abundance of attractive, low-priced offerings that end up being subpar in quality and are often a significant safety risk. Here, Starbrite Colors offers a much-needed breath of fresh air.

From their manufacturing plant in Connecticut, this brand produces a line of high-quality inks at a fraction of the price you get with more expensive options. With Starbrite, there are no cutting corners, and what you get is quality that is on par with the offerings of most major brands. Starbrite runs its production efforts from a Class A ISO-certified Cleanroom, ensuring that your ink is free from any pollutants or irritants. The brand also incorporates state-of-the-art gamma radiation to ensure complete sterilization of the end product.

Even in terms of the quality of the resultant art, Starbrite inks are no pushovers. Their inks pack a smooth texture and consistent flow that make them easy to work with and ensures they enter the skin evenly and heal quickly.

Starbrite Tattoo Ink provides a decently priced option that is excellent for both starters and established artists. With 170+ shades to choose from, the brand also does an excellent job of covering all the bases that require covering.

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Understanding Tattoo Ink Safety

A 2019 review of 20 tattoo and permanent make-up inks by the Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency found that 8 of the tested inks contained excessive levels of specific chemicals like heavy metals, aromatic amines, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons that may be toxic, cause skin sensitization, or even cancer. This issue is a severe cause for concern.

When manufacturing tattoo inks, manufacturers are simultaneously optimizing for both safety and color consistency, and vibrancy. These two properties are not always in agreement.

The product manufacturers also have to factor in the right ink carrier to use in the mixture. A carrier acts as the solvent that carries the colored pigment from the point of needle insertion to the surrounding skin. The carrier also helps keep the ink from drying out too quickly, ensures the ink mixes evenly, aids hitch-free application, and helps keep the mixture pathogen-free.

Hence, tattoo ink makers typically have a tough time finding a balance of ingredients that ensures safety, minimizes the risk of irritation and provides decent color results.

However, perfecting your tattoo ink recipe is no excuse for incorporating known harmful substances like heavy metals, phthalates, benzo(a)pyrene, and other carcinogens. You are better off opting for options that feature primarily organic pigments and carrier liquid (many top products today are leaning towards organic manufacturing processes.)

Nevertheless, “organic” does not mean 100% safe.

Many organic tattoo inks contain azo pigments originally developed for coloring textiles and painting cars. Some of the available preliminary research suggests that these pigments may be carcinogenic.

While there is currently no 100% guarantee with any tattoo ink, your best bet for maximizing safety is to adhere to the following recommendation by the Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency:

- Check the tattoo inks for certification that indicate they have been tested and considered safe by relevant E.U. and U.S. authorities.
- Adhere to strict hygiene rules during tattooing sessions, including sterilizing all equipment and ink, keeping the environment pristine, and mitigating possible exposure to bacterial, fungal, or viral infections.
- Ensure you (or your tattooist) has the relevant knowledge and competence required to create tattoos safely.
- Avoid creating or getting tattoos from private individuals at home.
- Consult your healthcare practitioner if you experience any unusual symptoms after getting new tattoos.

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Tiny Tattoo Precare

Nobody in their right mind would turn up for a medical procedure without having followed the doctor's recommendations of pre-care. And they certainly would follow all further aftercare instructions to ensure the wound will heal well and not require any further medical intervention.

PRECARE ADVICE

- prepare yourself and your body for your tattoo—the more comfortable and prepared you are, is the longer you will be able to sit.
- look after your tattoo once you've had it done; help avoid infections so you'll heal without any damage.
- invest in aftercare lotions and an anti-bacterial wash.

Proper pre-care and aftercare will help with the entire tattoo healing process and help prevent fading and loss of ink.

Arrange a pre-tattoo consultation with the client. This meeting should be at the studio.

One of the main reasons for the pre-tattoo consultation is to discuss the design of the tattoo and its positioning on the body. You should draw a quick outline of the shape and pick placement to agree on the design and style. This also can be done the day of but make sure you add an additional 30 mins for this to give yourself time for discussion and room set up.

Once you have discussed the design, make sure you and your client agree on the following:

1. Approximately how much will this tattoo cost?
2. How long do you estimate it will take to complete?
3. How long will each session last?

What to Eat and Drink Before and After Your Tattoo Appointment

When a tattoo is being inked, many tiny needles pierce the skin many times. This can create unwanted bleeding. To avoid excessive bleeding and potential damage...

- **do not drink alcohol** 24 to 48 hours before your session,
- **do not consume coffee**, and
- **do not take aspirin** for pain relief.

Alcohol, coffee, and aspirin are commonly known blood thinners and could result in additional unwanted bleeding.

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Post Care For Tiny Tattoo

Short-Term Aftercare Tips

Touch It With Clean Hands Only

Most tattoo artists have their own set of aftercare instructions. But one piece of advice they all have in common is to touch your tattoo with clean hands only. “The most important step would be to clean your hands before you clean your tattoos. Also, take into consideration that washing your hands shouldn’t be a quick three-second rinse. With soap, rub your palms together for as long as it takes to recite the alphabet (or for whatever jingle lasts 20 seconds or more).

Remove the Bandage and Wash with Antibacterial Soap Only

The original bandage your tattoo artist employs to wrap you up post-ink session can be removed within two to three hours after completion, or however long your tattoo artist recommends. Do not re-bandage. The plasma from the original tattoo may surface after the first couple of hours,¹ and then it’s time to clean the art and allow it to breathe.

To cleanse the tattoo, use antibacterial soap, such as Dr. Bronner’s Pure Castile Liquid Soap (\$17) or any unscented antibacterial liquid. Avoid using any type of cloth to cleanse the tattoo because it will exfoliate the area—which, remember, is a wound. Next, rinse with warm-to-mild temperature water and pat the area dry with a towel. Allow it to sit for at least 10 minutes before proceeding.

Apply Ointment

Always use an ointment . Usually we suggest Vitamin A & D Ointment is a great option. Aquaphor (\$4) for the first two to three days of healing - It delivers the right amount of moisture without feeling heavy or suffocating, and it also minimizes peeling and flaking. One thing to note: Aquaphor does contain petroleum, so if you're looking for vegan alternatives, she recommends Hustle Butter Deluxe Luxury Tattoo Care & Maintenance Cream(\$20).

Once your tattoo starts healing switching to unscented lotions, such as Eucerin Original Healing Lotion (\$9), or dabble in natural shea body butter to moisturize until your masterpiece is fully healed.

Allow It to Breathe

During the first three to four days post-tattoo, you'll repeat the process of washing your tattoo about two to five times a day, then following with a light layer of ointment. Carter explains that a good amount of air is great for the ink during the healing process, so it’s critical to make sure the skin can breathe. On the first night, it’s normal to wrap the area in plastic wrap, so it doesn’t stick to your bedding, but after that, make sure the design is free from coverage and getting ventilation.

Tight-fitted clothing can rub up against your new tattoo. Instead, opt for loose cotton fabrics to let the area breathe.

What to Wear and Bring to Your Tattoo Session

- Wear comfortable clothing that offers easy access to the body part getting the tattoo.
- Take an extra pair of clean socks to wear. Make sure they're washed and not full of holes.
- Have an extra jacket or sweater for when you start to feel the cold. Sometimes, especially when you're having a long tattoo session, your body will begin to shiver. This is an indication that your body is going into shock. Keeping warm will help minimise your discomfort.

Some other items to consider putting in your bag:

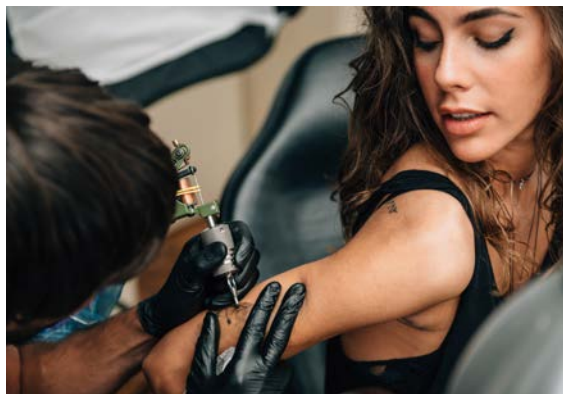
- music and earphones
- tic-tacs or breath mints
- water bottle
- snacks and nibbles
- change of clothes
- tattoo aftercare cream
- a support person (if your studio allows one)
- camera

How to Prepare Your Body for a Tattoo

During your session, you and your artist are going to be getting right up in each other's personal space for quite a few hours. This includes getting your naked bits out and breathing each other's air.

Make the effort to be a considerate and hygienic client. Don't be the funky-smelling customer of your tattooist's nightmares. So before you leave home, make sure you...

- brush your teeth.
- shower with soap.
- wear fresh, clean clothes.
- bring Tic-Tacs or breath mints.
- don't overdo deodorants, perfumes, or colognes.
- tie your hair up in a ponytail.
- if your feet smell like death, don't take your shoes off.



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Contraindications for Tattooing

Tattooing is getting increasingly popular among the young. However, not everyone is suited to getting tattooed. Indeed, it is not rare for patients with a chronic skin disease or another systemic condition to be eager to get a tattoo.

Here is the list of **DO NOT TREAT CLIENTS**

chronic skin disorders
pigmented lesions of the skin,
(congenital) heart disease,
immunosuppressive diseases and treatments,
blood clotting disorders,
pregnancy/breastfeeding.psoriasis
atopic dermatitis,
eczema
Diabetes
granuloma annulare
necrobiosis lipoidica
hemophilia
von Willebrand disease
Active Cancer
HIV/ AIDS
Clients on Accutane
Client Steroids - Legal or Illegal
Clients with recent laser or chemical peel (4-6) in the area of the tattoo
Clients prone to Keloid scarring

