

The Tattoo Secrets

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Hello, and thank you for your purchase of **The Tattoo Secrets – The Ultimate Tattoo Guide**. This report should get your head buzzing with tons of great, free designs for your tattoos and how to be completely safe when getting a tattoo.

Let's start with **the basics...**

The word tattoo is derived from the Tahitian word "tatu", meaning to mark something. Tattoos' historical significance, dating back to eras BC, was to indicate a person's skill or position in society. Some superstitious cultures believed that they warded off evils. More commonly today, a tattoo may signify association with a group or subculture in society. Increasingly, tattoos are being used as 'permanent jewelry' of sorts. A cosmetic use is something referred to as permanent make-up. Ladies may have eyebrows and other facial highlights permanently applied via tattooing techniques.

The design of the tattooing tool has seen relatively little change since its invention in the late 1800s. Samuel O'Reilly, its creator, patterned the tool after Thomas Edison's autographic printer, an engraving machine for hard surfaces. A tattoo machine is made up of a few basic parts; a sterilized needle, a system of tubes for drawing the ink through the machine, an electric motor and a foot pedal which controls the up and down movement of the needle.

The physical process of applying a tattoo is accomplished by injecting ink into a person's skin. An electrically powered tattooing tool, with a small needle on the end, moves up and down at a rate of 50 to 3,000 times per minute to puncture the skin. On each puncture, a drop of ink is injected into the dermal layer of the skin. This is about a millimeter below the skin surface.

As you look at a tattoo, you're seeing past the epidermis, or the outer layer of skin, and into the dermis, the second layer. Dermal cells are more stable allowing the tattoo ink to stay intact, with only minor fading and/or dispersion, throughout a lifetime.

What do you need to consider when getting a tattoo? First and foremost, do you really want a permanent marking on your skin? This won't 'grow back over', as a piercing location would. This will be a lifelong alteration to the look of your body. While tattoos can be surgically removed, there is a great deal of scarring

and potentially, skin grafting to remove the remnants of a tattoo.

At the moment, tattoos have gained a kind of fad status. It seems as everyone wants one, or at least knows someone who has one. It is important to know as much as you can before you commit to getting one – as we said, even removal techniques can leave scars worse than the original ink. So do your research. Wait a while, and if you still want one, read on...

Why do you want a tattoo? Is it to be one of the popular crowd? Think of how a dolphin on your breast today will look after you've had children, and body parts aren't what they used to be. A sprawling tribal design across your shoulders won't look so attractive at the local high school reunions, 15 years later. Or, maybe that's what you want. In any case, a tattoo is not something to rush out and get just to keep up with the rest of your peers.

Secondly, where is the tattoo to be located? Is it to be a location that will be visible, no matter what type of clothing you are wearing, or will it be in a location that is often concealed. Is it a private or a public thing?

Sometimes tattoos have significance to the bearer. Mothers who have lost children sometimes get a tattoo to remember them by. Lovers have their partner's name (or names!); even children have

tattoos of parents' names. People with specific ancestries get tattoos to reflect their heritage. If you are choosing a design for its significance, make sure it moves you. If you want to get a tattoo simply because you like a particular design, great. Just make sure you'll be happy with it after it's done.

Remember, trendy sayings or images go out of style as quickly as fashions or any other pop culture item. In a highly visible spot, a tattoo may go from cool to embarrassing in a very short period of time. Also, if working in a high visibility occupation, will a tattoo help or hurt your image? This may determine how readily visible you would like your body art.

A Third consideration is who to have apply the tattoo. Pictures may look great on the wall, but how is something going to look on you, on your skin color, and is this artist truly capable of replicating the design that you choose? Ask to see some pictures of the tattoos already applied or, if possible, someone who has had a tattoo from this artist.

As for the tattoo parlor, make sure they're safe and sterile. Above all, make sure that the artist has proper sanitation techniques; disposable needles and ink cups, proper cleaning of the tattoo area and some credentials to back it up. Needles are to be single use; anything else must be sterilized in an autoclave (uses steam to sterilize). The artist must be licensed, and they must adhere to a strict code of ethics. If you feel unsure about anything, it's best to find somewhere

you are completely comfortable.

Tattoos are basically made by a tiny needle, or several of them, inserting ink into the layer under the top layer of skin. Because this involves two factors – blood, and the breaking of skin – health is of prime importance.

Quick Tips: Caring For Your Tattoo

Getting the tattoo is uncomfortable. It can be downright painful. But one thing is certain, everyone will feel something different. Afterwards, it is imperative that you look after your new tattoo.

Take the bandage off after an hour or so, and wash with an antibacterial soap. Dab dry with a clean towel. Otherwise try not to get it wet. Keep it out of the sun until it's healed. Ice packs can help with swelling, and over the counter medication should be enough to deal with any slight pain you might feel. Don't use peroxide or alcohol as they will dry out the tattoo, and don't use petroleum jelly as it can fade the ink.

Tattoo Problems and Pitfalls

While the popularity of tattoos, with a vast variety of messages, seems to be on a steady increase, there are

still some very important safety considerations which cannot be ignored.

Especially in the warmer months of the year, many experience and have questions about raised and itchy tattoos. Most people who suffer with this condition typically describe the discomfort being occasional rather than consistent, or sometimes either. There may actually be one of several different causes and it is important for proper treatment to find the precise cause..

Let's consider some of the most common causes and then examine possible courses of treatment.

The tattoo ink being the source of an allergic reaction comes to mind immediately, but is not a likely causative factor. While there are occasions where allergic reactions to ink occur, the reaction could be immediate, a week later, or years from the original tattoo application. *Red and yellow inks seem to be the most likely colors to cause an allergic reaction.*

Changes in the body chemistry due to illness and/or aging may adversely affect areas that once were originally benign. Ink allergies will be itchy and raised only in spots of the particular color. With the ink allergies, the irritation is more common, not peaking and waning. For mild irritations, topical ointments may help to relieve symptoms, but a prescription drug or even tattoo removal is recommended for more severe cases.

Weather is most often the cause of the consistent, yet possibly mild, irritation. It may only be noticeable during the summer months. Seasonal increases in temperature and humidity may cause swelling of a tattoo, and thus, some itching and irritation.

As the swelling proceeds, there's a slight stretching of the skin, causing an itchy sensation. If your tattoo has had a long time to heal, it won't likely be damaged by scratching, but best to avoid any mechanical irritation. For relief of itching and irritating symptoms, use topical creams, ice packs or cool water for relief.

The overall health of your body can affect your tattoo site, as well. Increases in blood pressure, adrenaline, or changes in body temperature – will render some affect on the tattoo site. Always try to pay attention to any irritations or skin injuries at or near the tattoo site. Many folks who suffer with eczema may have irritation problems with their tattoo, as well.

Some skin conditions are so minor that symptoms are not apparent until a reaction forms at the more sensitive skin, the tattoo site.

Of course, also be careful about the placement and design compatibility. I often joke about seeing a tattooed on dragon turn into a green zebra over time. Ink can smudge and stretch as your body changes.

If your tattoo ever gets smudged or you decide that you no longer want it, it's important to know your options for tattoo removal. Unfortunately, removal methods are harsh, painful, and usually result in scarring. You can avoid this by following the pointers we outline shortly, when we talk about trust.

Research, research, research! You can't do enough. It's like thinking about your first mortgage. Buying a house is a big thing, but it is not exactly permanently modifying your body. But you looked at every loan facility under the sun to find the perfect one for you. Same for the parlor you will be going to for your tattoo.

Most importantly...

The worst possible negative side effects include those derived by poor hygiene practices of the tattoo artist. Make sure you see them throw away previous needles and ink cups. Certainly it can be a concern, if you are interested in an extensive tattoo. Serious health complications can occur if proper sanitary techniques are not used.

Concerns over hepatitis can be valid if the artist is reusing equipment that touches the skin. While tattooing seems as fashionable as costume jewelry, it brings with it many more possibilities for illness.

You must see needles come out of an unopened packet. Similarly, ink pots must be new, unopened, and unused. Cross contamination can occur when needles and inks are not new. Any reputable parlor will open fresh packets, and don't be shy about asking! *Decent, ethical artists won't mind you checking, and if they do, walk out.*

Instruments also must be fresh – everything that is reusable must be sterilized in an autoclave. You need to be able to see it, and make sure it works. An autoclave that doesn't function properly is as pointless as not even washing the equipment between clients. Some parlors clean the instruments with ultrasound (it jiggles the contaminants free) before sterilizing them. This is obviously even better.

Check the general cleanliness of the parlor. Being able to answer these questions is **very important**:

Are the benches and work areas clean?

Is there hot running water?

Do the workers wash their hands regularly (check their toilet, is there soap and hot water available)?

Do they have sharps disposable containers?

Are the artists licensed?

Is the parlor registered?

If you cannot honestly answer all of these questions, do not get your tattoo at the parlor. You're asking for a world of trouble and possible infections.

This leads us to the next thing to talk about – the issue

of trust. How do you know they're a good artist? This can only be addressed through your own research. Watch them work, see how they operate – make sure you check that it's okay first! Don't just waltz in and peer over their shoulder! See how they treat their clientele. Are they polite and courteous, or rude and condescending?

Don't just look through the folder sitting forlorn on the table at the front of the parlor. Ask to see the artist's portfolio – it will contain work they have actually done, not pictures they've gathered. Ask locals (who have tattoos) for recommendations of parlors in the area.

The Best Books About Getting Tattoos

These are books you should definitely consider taking a look at before getting your first tattoo...

The Craft of Tattooing by Eric Alayon. Touted as a beginners guide, Mr. Alayon is a well-known author of multiple books on tattooing. This 126-page edition is easy to use and guides you through a comprehensive list of what you need to know to get started as a Tattoo Artist. Learn how to set up and maintain your tattooing equipment, what equipment you'll need to start your own tattooing business, the steps to getting started and design tips for outlining shading and coloring. While there might not be much new information for an experienced tattoo artist, the tips

and hints may hone your skills.

Advanced Tattoo Art (How-To Secrets from the Masters) by Doug Mitchel. This work not only covers elements of tattoo designs, but gets into the cultures that exist within tattooing. In this book, Doug Mitchel talks about the new-found popularity of tattoos.

Advanced Tattoo Art presents a detailed look at both the art and artists who create some of the most striking designs.

As you read, you'll find yourself taken inside the parlors of ten well-known and experienced artists from around the country. View the step-by-step processes of some very elaborate designs and feel as if you are there watching the artist himself. Photo sequences follow each artist through a project, from the beginning customer idea to the finished and colorful design. Not only does this book look at what the artists do and how they do it. Interview sections with the individual artists explore why they do what they do.

Pushing Ink: The Fine Art of Tattooing by Spider Webb. Spider Webb, the author, pushed tattoos as art back in the 1970's and, in 1979, wrote this book. Webb having many 'canvases', has displayed paintings and photographs in galleries and museums as well as on bodies, worldwide. Ideas from this book would vary greatly from one's classic view of

tattoo design.

500 Tattoo Designs by Henry Ferguson. Tattoos have become commonplace and now draw attention across all segments of society. Once a sign of membership to a gang or organization, they are now in the mainstream as fashionable. Because they are both expensive and permanent, the selection process is examined carefully. This book is a virtual reference library of today's most liked tattoos. The book is well-organized by design them and gives suggestions on best body locations for specific designs. **500 Tattoo Designs** also discusses color dynamics, and cautions for your safety and continued health. This book takes into account the diverse needs and wants of the readers and covers a little bit of everything.

Tattoo Encyclopedia by Terisa Green. This is a book about the meaning behind tattoos, their origin and the 'why' of people acquiring them. There's much writing about the way the tattoo is applied. This **Tattoo Encyclopedia** delves into reasons people seek out tattoos. Enjoy the extensive list of designs and a discussion of their meaning.

Ink: The Not-Just-Skin-Deep Guide to Getting a Tattoo is also by Terisa Green, and one quite flattering reviewer stated they'd like to be able to carry the book with them, and give it to anyone wanting to ask questions about their own tattoos. It is extensive

in the information it gives, and you can rest assured when the writer has her own tattoo - she knows what she is talking about. She researched it at university, of all places!

Tattoo History: A Source Book by Steve Gilbert covers historical aspects of tattoos and tattooing. It is a collection of writings, essays and articles from people through the ages, not necessarily a book on tattoo designs. It contains rich illustrations and, pleasantly, they are not deliberately titillating. More reading for interests' sake than finding your ideal tattoo, it is still a valuable book to have in your collection – even if you don't (yet!) have any tattoos.

Tattoo by Dale Durfee is a great book containing fantastic shots – color and black and white – of tattoos. It also contains advice on getting your first tattoo, and there are plenty to choose from. Durfee has worked as a photographer for over 25 years, and it really shows in the way the tattoos are depicted on the page. Not a lot of text, but you don't really need it with photos as good as these!

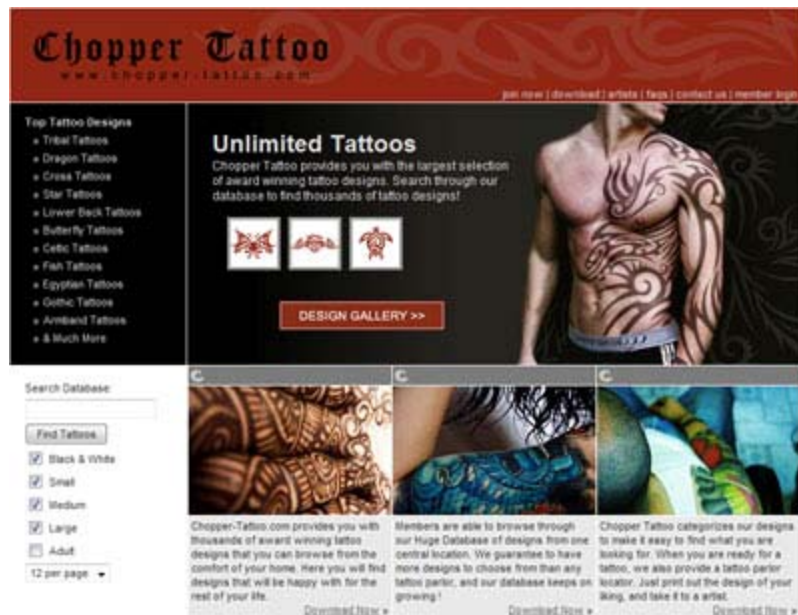
Last but not least, a little treasure if you are a tattooed woman with children - **Mommy Has A Tattoo** by Phil Padwe is a delightful book about a boy, James, who is scared of the tattooed neighbor. Then he learns his mummy has a tattoo too! It is a great book for introducing children to tattoos, especially if there are

tattooed people in the family or circle of friends. Tattoos are not something to be scared of, as James finds out. And neither should new parents be worried about how they will be perceived if they have tattoos – they haven't suddenly changed just because their family has grown by one!

Getting Tattoo Designs Online

<http://www.chopper-tattoo.com>

Boasting over 6,000 free tattoo designs, you can search the site by size of the tattoo, color or category. There is also a design gallery to showcase some of the more extensive designs and how they appear on an individual skin type. You can print out the downloadable design for your own use. By far, this is the most exhaustive listing of free designs.



<http://www.tattoofever.net>

The database consists of over 14,700 high quality Tattoo Designs. You can also download them to your hard-drive, print them out and show them to your local tattoo artist.



<http://www.tattoomenow.com>

Tattoo-Me-Now currently offers about 3,600 designs (and growing) in 40 categories. You can print out the design you wish and bring it to your favorite artist. You can also combine two or more tattoos into one.



<http://www.tattoomybrain.com>

Tattoo-My-Brain has many great tattoo designs to choose from. In the end, the quality of the collection

can actually make you tossing up between about half a dozen top-notch tats.

Top 20 Tips For Getting Tattoos

If you're considering a tattoo, here are some helpful hints and important considerations before you head to the parlor.

1. Understand that it's permanent. Take your time in choosing a design and an artist. If it's simply an impulse that is causing you to be interested in getting a tattoo, resist the urge and slow down your decision.

2. If you are a first-timer, don't go with an extravagant and large design. Your artist should be able to do a small design that could be expanded. Tattooing is not a necessarily pleasant sensation and it may be a bit overwhelming if you are starting with a huge tattoo. Also, once you actually see it on your skin you may have a change of heart as to how extensively you want to do this.

3. Should you be too young for a permanent tattoo, or not convinced that you want it to be permanent, try a temporary tattoo. Henna and some tea extracts may be used to give you something that could last for a month or two while you 'try it on.' There are many websites with info and designs for the temporary tattoos. Simply search on temporary tattoos for information, and if you want actual designs, add 'free' and 'designs' to your search.

4. Talk to someone you know that has tattoos and ask them all your questions. Did it hurt? Have you had any reactions? Are you still glad you did it? What would you do differently? Do you recommend the artist that you used? As with anything in which you don't have a background, better to trust the people your friends trust.

5. Consider other effects of tattooing. In most states, you cannot donate blood for at least a year after any tattooing procedure, due to the fear of hepatitis. The exception to this is a state that regulates tattooing establishments for their hygiene practices. Do some homework, especially if you plan on donating blood within the next year.

6. There may be some slight bleeding, so if you are weak at heart, this could be stressful. Also, if you are on significant blood thinners for any other problem, you may want to consult your physician before getting the tattoo.

7. Is the tattoo going to become an obstacle of your faith? For Jewish individuals, having a tattoo is taboo. In fact, should someone with a tattoo convert to Judaism, they could not be buried in a Jewish cemetery unless the tattoo was removed. Christians, for the most part, believe that God calls us to honor our bodies and that tattooing would not be in keeping with that admonition. Again, since tattoos are

permanent, think about ALL considerations before diving in.

8. Be cautious about putting someone's name in a tattoo. Human relationships are very fragile, and putting a girlfriend or boyfriend's name on a tattoo may be another source of heartache later if the relationship doesn't work out.

9. Hand, foot, and/or face tattoos may be taboo with the artist him or herself. The artist realizes the possible negative reaction people may have to you with a tattoo and placing them in a highly visible spot only exacerbates the possibility. It may affect job opportunities and other places where you are trying to make a great first impression. The other concern with the hand and foot areas is the physical wear and tear that these locations endure.

If you are a person that works with your hands heavily, don't choose that area. The tattoo will get distorted and be highly visible, as well. For your feet, make sure you are ready to do what it takes to heal them properly, a 3 month process of being barefoot as much as possible and truly pampering your skin.

10. Know how to take care of your skin after the tattoo. Leave the bandage on the wound overnight. Wash it gently the next day. Do not scratch or rub it. Once healed, keep it out of the sun as much as

possible to keep the colors from fading. This is another important consideration when determining the location of your tattoo.

11. Relax. Worrying about your design, the prospect of pain, how long it is going to take or whether it will look any good won't make the experience a positive one. If you have done your research, left the kids with a sitter, and you know what to expect, then your tattoo encounter will be one to remember – for all the good reasons.

12. Take a book, magazine or MP3 player, some lollypops and a drink. It might take a while, and you want to be able to sit and enjoy it (well, as much as you can!). Reading might take your mind off being uncomfortable, or the music will take you away all together. The lollypops and drink mean you don't have to leave to eat, and they'll keep your blood sugar levels up. If you need to take someone with you, make it someone who will support your decision to get a tattoo. For example, your mom might not be such a good idea... Unless she has tattoos herself!

13. If your potential artist cannot answer any questions, find another. A good tattooist will be able to answer anything you ask of them. They should also be polite and well mannered.

14. If the bandage is too sticky to remove afterwards,

soak it off in warm water. Don't try and peel off a stuck bandage – it might damage the skin, and it'll be extra painful!

15. New, new and new. New pots of ink and new needles – and make sure you see them open the packet. New (well, sterile) instruments, straight from the autoclave.

16. Clean, clean and clean. You, the artist, the parlor – everything. Make sure you're in good health, and shower beforehand. The artist will be working closely, and you don't want to put them off by a pong! Make sure the artist washes his hands, and the area to be tattooed, and wears gloves. Make sure also that the parlor has running hot water, you can see the autoclave (and that it's working) and it looks clean. Afterwards, wash your hands before you touch your new tattoo.

17. Watch the artist to see how they operate. Visit a few parlors and compare, then go with what you feel is best. If you are not sure, don't. It's not a hair style that can grow out in a few weeks to look okay.

18. Wear comfortable clothes. You might need to sit down, in the one spot, for several hours. Donning your prized jeans and tight top might be great for the club (after your tattoo has healed properly), but it won't be comfortable sitting in for long periods. If you

are getting a tattoo somewhere you'll need to partially undress, make sure you can expose the site easily. If you are uncomfortable with undressing, try lifting a top, or pulling it down, or lowering a pair of pants. Remember, though, the artist won't be worried, and you shouldn't either.

19. Don't drink beforehand. Drinking thins the blood, which means you'll bleed more, making the artist's job harder. Also, it will be more difficult to heal, running the risk of a dodgy finished tattoo.

20. Think. Think about the design, the colors, the artist, the location (of the tattoo), the time you'll need to put aside to get it done. Be 100% sure before you decide. Try a temporary tattoo (henna, vegetable die or decal), to see if you really like the design and/or location. And make sure you know what the tattoo means, especially if you are going for something like a Chinese character or similar. Nothing more embarrassing, or potentially offensive, than not knowing for certain what a tattoo actually says!

Final Words

Thank you very much for reading! I hope you enjoyed The Tattoo Secrets.

Remember...

- 1.) Do your research. Is this what you really want?
- 2.) Ensure the parlor is sanitary.
- 3.) Remember the long-term effects.
- 4.) Remember that removal is difficult and painful.
- 5.) Be in good health when you go to get your tattoo.
- 6.) Enjoy it!

Hope to see you with some ink!

The Tattoo Secrets - The Ultimate Tattoo Guide

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