

Tattoo aftercare

Tattoo aftercare – how to look after your new tattoo the right way

Your artist will take the time to offer expert guidance on tattoo aftercare during and after your sitting, but we realise that in the midst of the excitement you feel when you leave our studio with your new tattoo, you might forget a thing or two, so we thought we'd pull together a handy guide.

Immediate tattoo aftercare

Once your artist has added the final details, they'll wrap the tattoo in cling film to aid in the healing process and reduce the chances of scabbing. As soon as this final step is complete, it's over to you to look after the tattoo until it's fully healed. On average the complete healing process takes between two and four weeks but it can vary based on the size and placement of the tattoo, the person and even the season. The first week of the healing process is when you are at most at risk of infection, and before we get into the detailed guide, there are two crucial components worth keeping in mind:

Stay clean

You'll need to ensure that your tattoo is kept as clean as possible. There's no way around it, a fresh tattoo is an open wound and you need to bear that in mind when looking after it. Whilst we take responsibility for the piece of art, tattoo aftercare is 100% your responsibility and cleanliness matters. We recommend short showers until your skin has fully healed.

Look after yourself

Your immune system is going to be working overtime so remember to take good care of yourself, and it's the 'little decisions' you should consider wisely. For example, you may choose to decline that midweek pint and remain hydrated, whilst preventing your skin from drying up.

1-3 Days After

You'll need to keep your tattoo wrapped in cling film from one to three days. Depending on the size of your artwork this may be longer and your artist will let you know but a general rule of thumb is:

Small line-work pieces – one to two days.

Palm size pieces – two to three days.

Larger artwork – on artist's guidance.

Take off the existing cover.

Use an anti-bacterial, non-fragrant soap such as Dettol or Simple to clean the tattoo. If you don't have Dettol or Simple then warm water will also be fine – just be sure to clean away all the plasma and ink from the whole area.

If you notice a small rash appear surrounding the tattoo, it's usually from the cling film but feel free to contact the studio to ensure that everything is as it should be.

Top tip: Heading on holiday or somewhere warm? We advise to book holidays once the healing is completed, as tattoo aftercare is even more important in warmer climates. Should this be unavoidable, you should try to keep the tattoo out of direct sunlight and change the cling film more frequently to allow your skin to breathe.

Once the cover is off

If you're seeing good results, pulling off the cover can feel like a big step but the tattoo still needs some protection, with just the right amount of moisture to nourish the skin. Therefore, when you are ready to remove the cling film completely, (as recommended by your artist and once it has dried out) you will need to start applying cream to the area.

The cream works in a number of ways, ultimately helping your tattoo stay fresher for longer;

It speeds up the healing process by keeping infections at bay.

It keeps the tattoo moisturised meaning it'll stay healthier (and shinier too).

It will help soothe inflamed skin and prevent itchiness and irritation.

Top tip: When applying cream, don't smother it, we recommend a pea-sized amount of cream, just a light layer to cover the surface area.

Cream options

Here at Wgtattoos, we recommend a few cream options but it's important you find out what works for you, here are some good and readily available options:

Fade the itch -tattoo aftercare serum

Palmer's cocoa butter – ensure it is 100% natural with no additives, fragrances or perfumes

Coconut oil – 100% natural

E45 cream – lighter alternative, PH neutral moisturiser

Continue to apply cream a few times a day to prevent it from drying out.

The most frequently asked questions regarding tattoo aftercare

At the studio we receive lots of questions, so we thought we'd pull together a list of the most common queries that come our way.

What should I do if my tattoo scabs (or skin around it) starts flaking?

Try to touch your tattoo as little as possible and let any scabs or flaking skin fall off naturally.

Can I go swimming with my new tattoo?

During the healing process, it's important that you do not submerge your tattoo in water for any length of time as this can increase the risk of infection due to bacteria in the water and ink dropping out from the tattoo.

This means;

No hottubs

No pools

No swimming in the sea

Showering is absolutely fine and when you shower, this is a great opportunity to give the tattoo a good clean and remove any excess plasma or dry skin that is present in the area.

What if shampoo or shower gel gets in my tattoo?

Please do your best to avoid any shampoo or other scented products from coming in contact with your new tattoo.

Should I avoid the sun?

During the healing process, avoid direct sunlight and sunbeds as this will cause damage to your skin and increase the likelihood of the tattoo to fade.

Can I put sunscreen on my new tattoo?

Once healed, always apply high factor sunscreen to your tattoo on sunny days to ensure it stays as vibrant as possible.

Can I go on holiday with my new tattoo?

As we mentioned the climate could affect your new tattoo and tattoo aftercare so if you're planning to go on holiday somewhere tropical, your tattoo should be fully healed before you go. When booking your tattoo, let us know if you are intending to go on vacation so we can make sure your tattoo will have enough time to heal.

