



Aftercare Instructions

Proper aftercare in the first 2 to 3 weeks after getting a tattoo can help prevent an infection and keep the tattoo looking great.

The Initial Bandage

Tattoo aftercare starts in the tattoo studio. Once the tattoo is done, the artist will clean the tattoo then cover the area completely with a bandage.

The bandage should stay on for a minimum of 8 hours after the process. The length of time will depend on the size and location of the tattoo. This covering protects the open skin from bacteria, sunlight, and from abrasion.

The First Wash

No less than 8 hours, no more than 24 hours after the tattoo process, it is safe to remove the bandage and wash the tattoo.

After thorough hand-washing, gently wash the tattoo with hypoallergenic soap and warm water using the tips of your fingers.

The tattoo may appear as if it is oozing ink or a thick, sticky substance. This reaction is not usually a cause for concern, as it is just the excess fluid and ink from the tattoo process.

After washing, pat the skin with a clean paper towel and allow it to air-dry 10 minutes. When the area is completely dry, if provided, a second bandage may be applied. The second bandage may stay in place for up to 72 hours.

Week One

For the first couple of days, the tattooed skin may feel warm to the touch and have a reddish appearance. The colors may also appear very bright against the rest of the skin. The tattoo will become less vibrant as the healing process continues.

Avoid submerging the tattoo in water or bathing (Swimming, Hot-tub, Sauna, Bath tub) during the first 3–6 weeks, except for when washing it.

Continue using the washing technique above throughout the first 3 weeks when needed. How often washing is necessary will vary depending on a person's activity levels and environment.

It is best to wash the tattoo with clean fingers only and not a cloth or towel, which may harbor bacteria, irritate the skin and prematurely remove any scabs that may have formed.

Scabs will often form in the first few days after removing the bandage, and fluid may still come up through the skin and need to be washed away. It is important not to pick the scabs or scratch the skin.

Any redness or mild swelling usually goes away near the end of the first week.

Week two

Around the beginning of the second week, the scabs will start to flake off. It is important to be especially gentle with washing and moisturizing during this week, as it is easy to tear away scabs and damage the tattoo.

The skin is likely to feel very itchy during this week. However, it must not be scratched. Unscented moisturizer may help relieve the itch. Using a moisturizer that is kept in the refrigerator may also soothe itchy or irritated skin.

Week Three and Beyond

Most of the larger scabs will have flaked and fallen away by now. Small scabs and bits of dead skin may appear. However, these will also clear up as the healing process continues.

Scabs and flaking skin can cause the area to look dry and dull. Applying moisturizer and protecting the tattoo from the sun will help with these issues.

The outer layers of skin should completely heal by the end of week three. The chance of infection is reduced once the outer layers of skin have healed, as there is no open wound for bacteria to infect.

Moisturizing regularly in the months following will help keep the tattoo looking bright and clear. Protecting the tattoo from the sun with clothing while it is healing, and applying sunscreen after it has healed, is especially important in the first 9 months.

Ink Rejection or Allergy

At any stage in the healing process, the body may reject an ink color. If the body is allergic to an ink, a raised and painful rash may form on the skin.

To avoid ink rejection, if there is a history of sensitivity, the tattoo artists will apply a small amount of the ink in question on the skin as a test.

Anyone experiencing a rash on or around a tattoo should visit a doctor, who can identify and treat the rash. The person may also wish to contact their tattoo artist.

Lotions for Tattoo Aftercare

We recommend:

- 13 Black Cats Tattoo Lotion
- Unscented, hypo-allergenic moisturizer such as Everybody Lotion, Aveeno or Lubriderm
- Organic, Cold-Pressed Coconut Oil

It is important not to use any scented creams or lotions. Harsh chemicals can irritate the wound and damage the tattooed skin.

A person should also avoid using sunscreen on a tattoo until it is fully healed, as this can clog the pores and trap bacteria.

What to do

- Listen to the advice of your tattoo artist or Doctor.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before touching the site of the tattoo.
- Always use fragrance-free, hypoallergenic soap and moisturizer when caring for a tattoo, as harsh chemicals and fragrances can irritate and even damage freshly tattooed skin.
- Use a moisturizer that allows the skin to breathe, as clogged pores can cause an infection.
- Make sure the area is completely dry before applying aftercare moisturizer, as trapping excess moisture under the skin can lead to irritation and heat rash.
- Wash the tattoo regularly but gently, especially after dirty or sweaty activities.
- Drink plenty of water to help keep the skin moist and supple.
- While healing, cover the tattoo with clothing or a bandage whenever it might be exposed to the sun.

What not to do

- Take advice from friends or Google.
- Soaps and moisturizers with any fragrances or harsh chemicals.
- Picking at scabs, as this can cause scar tissue to form.
- Scratching the tattoo even if it becomes itchy.
- Non-cosmetic grade petroleum moisturizers, which will clog the pores.
- Using sunscreen on the tattoo before it has fully healed.
- Swimming before the tattoo has healed.

When to see a doctor

Tattoo care is simple once the process is understood. However, there are still times when a doctor may be needed.

Infection is the most common reason to see a doctor after a tattoo. If a person does not care for it properly, a tattoo can become infected with bacteria.

An [infected tattoo](#) will be warm, inflamed, and painful to the touch. The skin may also ooze [pus](#) or have a rash.

A person should contact a doctor if any signs of infection occur.

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