

TATTOO AFTERCARE

The aftercare will greatly determine the way your tattoo will look like once it has fully healed.

If you are reading this, we are glad because, it means you're a responsible client and take a serious approach to your aftercare. Now let us explain how to properly take care of your new piece of art. Below are the steps to follow once you get home:

Step 1. If your tattoo is covered with a breathable medical grade bandage (also called the second skin that looks like a transparent sticker covering your fresh tattoo) keep it on for 48 hours. In case your tattoo releases a lot of fluids that make the bandage slip off then remove it and proceed to the next step.

Step 2. Once you removed the bandage or plastic wash your hands first with lukewarm water and soap. Then gently wash the tattoo with fragrance-free soap and water. Pat your skin dry with a clean soft cloth or paper towel.

Step 3. Apply a small amount of unscented moisturizer/ointment. Otherwise, you can use another proven tattoo moisturiser. You can keep the bandage off at this point to let your skin breathe. Some examples are:

- Lubriderm
- Tat Wax
- Dove
- Delab Tattoo Balm

While your tattoo heals, you should:

- wear sun-protective clothing whenever you go outside
- call your tattoo artist or doctor if you have any signs of infection or other problems

You shouldn't:

- cover your tattoo with sunblock until it's fully healed (you will know when it's fully healed when there is no more redness and no scabs)
- scratch or pick at the tattoo
- wear tight clothing over the tattoo
- go swimming or bathing (showers are fine, just don't submerge in water for prolonged period of time)
- go to the gym/sauna
- go to the beach
- expose to direct sunlight

Long-term tattoo aftercare tips

Once your tattoo has healed, you move into maintenance mode. Though you don't have to specifically care for it after three or four months, there are things you can do to prevent the ink from degrading.

You should:

- Keep it clean. Wash your skin daily with a gentle, unscented soap.
- Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water to keep your skin moisturized.
- Watch what you wear. Wear SPF clothing so the sun won't fade your tattoo. Avoid scratchy fabrics, such as wool, which can damage the art.
- Avoid excess weight gain or loss. You could stretch out or distort the tattoo.

TATTOO AFTERCARE BY DAY

How quickly you heal depends on the size of your tattoo and how intricate it is. Bigger tattoos will stay red and swollen longer, because they cause more trauma to your skin.

Day 1: You'll come home from the artist with a bandage over your tattoo. After a few hours, you can remove it. You should ask your artist for specifics about how long to wait.

Once the bandage comes off, you'll probably notice fluid oozing from the tattoo. This is blood, plasma (the clear part of blood), and some extra ink. It's normal. Your skin will also be red and sore. It might feel slightly warm to the touch.

With clean hands, wash the tattoo with warm water and a fragrance-free soap. Apply an ointment. Leave the bandage off so the tattoo can heal.

Days 2 to 3: Your tattoo will have a duller, cloudy appearance by now. This happens as your skin heals. Scabs will start to form.

Wash your tattoo once or twice a day and apply a fragrance- and alcohol-free moisturizer. When you wash, you might notice some ink running into the sink. This is just excess ink that's come up through your skin.

Days 4 to 6: The redness should start to fade. You'll probably notice some light scabbing over the tattoo. The scabs shouldn't be as thick as scabs you get when you cut yourself, but they will be raised. Don't pick at the scabs — this can cause scarring.

Keep washing your tattoo once or twice a day. Apply moisturizer.

Days 6 to 14: The scabs have hardened and will begin to flake off. Don't pick at them or try to pull them off, let them come off naturally. Otherwise, you could pull out the ink and leave scars.

At this point your skin may feel very itchy. Gently rub on a moisturizer several times a day to relieve the itch.

If your tattoo is still red and swollen at this point, you might have an infection. Go back to your artist or see a doctor.

Days 15 to 30: In this last stage of healing, most of the big flakes will be gone and the scabs should be going away. You might still see some dead skin, but it should eventually clear up too. The tattooed area might still look dry and dull. Keep moisturizing until the skin looks hydrated again.

By the second or third week, the outer layers of skin should have healed. It may take three to four months for the lower layers to completely heal. By the end of your third month, the tattoo should look as bright and vivid as the artist intended.