



VanishMD

MEDICAL TATTOO REMOVAL & LIGHTENING

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Key Points to know about laser tattoo removal

1. Set your expectations.

Before you start the process, it's important to realize that no tattoo removal is guaranteed. Set expectations by speaking with a laser treatment expert. Some tattoos only partially fade after several treatments and may leave a ghost image of your tattoo, and permanent raised scarring. So the big question is: Would you rather do a cover up, or be left with a ghost image or partial tattoo?

2. One treatment isn't going to do it.

You probably realize this by now, but multiple treatments will be required. Unfortunately, the number of sessions isn't something that can be predetermined during your initial consultation. Be cautious of your technician giving you a standard six to 10 treatments answer. That number could be much higher.

Downtime between treatments is a key factor. Applying a laser treatment again too soon can increase the risk of side effects like skin irritation and open wounds. The average time between sessions is six to eight weeks, but everybody is different. It can be even longer for patients experiencing textural changes and other side effects.

3. Location of your tattoo.

In most cases, location does matter. Fading is generally slower for tattoos located further down the arms or legs as they are further from the heart. The closer the tattoo is to the heart the better circulation, therefore better results.

4. Professional vs. amateur tattoos.

The success of removal depends largely on the tattoo itself. The colors used and how deep the ink is embedded are two major considerations. Professional tattoos penetrate deeper into the skin at uniform levels, which can make it easier to treat. However, professional tattoos are also more saturated with ink, which is a significant challenge. Amateur tattoos are often applied with an uneven hand, which can make the removal challenging, but overall they are easier to remove.

5. Educate yourself on the different lasers.

There are several options for tattoo removal with different laser wavelengths treating different colors. Laser tattoo technology has significantly improved in recent years, headlined by the Pico technology. The process still takes multiple treatments, but the results of modern laser removal treatments are much improved. Depending on your tattoo's colors, a mix of laser treatments might be the right solution.

6. What to expect after a treatment.

There are a handful of symptoms you might see post treatment including blisters, swelling raising of the tattoo pinpoint bleeding, redness, and temporary darkening. These are common and usually subside within a couple weeks. As always, consult your doctor with concerns.

7. Be aware of potential side effects.

The most common side effect is a darkening or lightening of the skin, known as either hyper-pigmentation or hypo-pigmentation. This usually corrects itself in 6 to 12 months after treatment. Scars (including keloid scarring) are also a potential risk, as well as infection, burns, and textural changes of the skin.

8. The darkening effect is real.

Some of the ink used in cosmetic tattoos, including colors containing white ink, may darken (oxidize) immediately after treatment because of titanium dioxide. This can usually be corrected with further treatments.

9. There's a higher risk of hypo-pigmentation with removal on darker skin tones.

People with darker skin can remove a tattoo with lasers, however, there is a higher risk of hypo-pigmentation because the laser may remove pigment from your skin along with pigment from your tattoo. Your doctor should proceed with caution and always do a test spot to minimize risk.

10. Ask questions and to see before and after photos.

Laser tattoo removal is generally safe when performed by a medical expert. During your consultation, don't be afraid to ask about all the potential side effects and risks based on your situation. You should always ask to see before and after pictures from other clients with similar skin types and tattoos. These steps will help you set realistic expectations.