

## Contents

<b>Samoan Tattooing.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Safety and Sanitation in the Tattoo Parlor .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Tattooing Rituals.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Removal.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Religious Objections to Tattooing.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Tattoo and Copyright Laws .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Tattooed Women .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Tattoo Placement.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Tattoo Jargon.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Tattoos: To Color or Not to Color?.....</b>	<b>30</b>

## ***Samoaan Tattooing***

**More than 2,000 years ago, according to *NBS* online, the first *Polynesian* tattoo was inked into skin. Early tattoos were done with crude instruments and caused tremendous pain. In some societies, the art of tattooing is much the same today as when it began. In particular, *Samoaan tatau*, which is the art of tattooing by hand, has remained unchanged.**

**Two of sisters named *Taema* and *Tilafaiga* are credited with first bringing the art *tatau* from *Fiji* to *Samoa*. In *Fiji*, the sisters were taught that only the women were to receive tattoos. This information “got reversed on their journey home,” and from this confusion emerged what became the *Samoaan* tradition—men were tattooed while women bore children.**

**The *Samoaan* master artist, or *tufuga*, are usually a male and apprentice for many years before his first tattoo. He spends years honing his skill, which is often passed down from father to son. The *tufuga* will spend hours, even days, practicing with his *au* in barkcloth or sand. The *au* is a comb-like tool, made of wood and a part of a turtle shell which has sharpened boar’s teeth attached to it. The artist uses a mallet to hammer the comb’s teeth in, marking his design.**

Rank and title are of utmost importance in Samoan society, and a person's tattoos reflect their standing in the social hierarchy. Because the *tatau* process is extremely painful, a finished tattoo represents not only a person's societal rank, but is a reminder of that person's strength and ability to endure. Both the pain and the risk of infection are great, but if a person refuses *tatau*, he is seen as a coward. A person who can't sit through an entire tattoo has to live with a mark of shame for the rest of his life.

In a Samoan's life, the first *tatau* session occurs at the onset of puberty. The traditional tattoo for men, the *pe'a*, is an intricate design which extends from the knees to the middle of the man's torso. Originally, this design represented a man's dedication and pledge of loyalty to his extended family, or *aiga*. The process of tattooing lasts all day, for weeks, even months, at a time. The usual *pe'a* is supposed to be able to be completed in ten days, five actual days of tattooing and five days of rest in between. Because the process takes such a long time, the *tufuga* is often housed and fed by the family of the person being tattooed for the duration of the tattooing.

The healing process, unlike the tattooing, is sure to last for months. To heal completely takes a year or more. Women's tattoos are done on the thighs, legs, or hands, and are usually of a smaller design. While men's tattoos are typically comprised of larger, solid sections of ink, the women's patterns are of a much more delicate, intricate design. The most honored tattoo that a

female can receive is the *lima*. *Lima* is a special tattoo inked into the hands which is required to serve *kava*, a narcotic drink served at ceremonies. The *malu*, a lacy web design, is done on the inside of women's thighs and is flashed during the dancing of the *siva*.

Geometric patterns, utilizing lines, triangles, circles, and other polygons, are commonly used in Samoan tattoo design, as are simple pictographs depicting mankind, animals and birds, or other, man-made, objects. The geometric designs had multiple meanings, depending on these three factors: where the tattoo is placed on the body, what other designs are tied into it, and who the person is who is being tattooed. Typically, the master determines what designs would be suitable for each subject individually, and then explains the story of the design to that person.

This tradition, strongly rooted in Samoan society, has lasted thousands of years and may likely last a thousand more. For a Samoan, a tattoo is not just a pretty design but a badge of honor.

### **Safety and Sanitation in the Tattoo Parlor**

You wouldn't eat in a dirty restaurant, or have surgery in a filthy operating room, so why in the world would you settle for a less than sanitary tattoo

studio? You wouldn't. When a tattoo parlor sets up shop in a city in which the practice is legal, (believe it or not, there are still places in the United States where it's not) it is licensed by the city in the same way any other business would be and is subject to the same rules.

However, there are, as of yet, no governmental bodies or laws geared specifically toward regulating the sanity of the body art industry. Over the years, there have been times when the government, at various levels, has threatened to stick its nose into the tattoo business. So far professional tattooists have prevented that by self regulation. Here are some things you should look for to make sure you have a happy, healthy tattoo experience.

- **Needles** – They should be sterile to start off with and disposed of every single time. Above all else, needles should never be used more than once. It's a good idea for tattooists to break and properly dispose of the used needle where the customer can see them. This gives the tattooist a little accountability and incentive to finish the job right while instilling confidence in the facility in the customer. At the very least it's good for business.
- **Gloves** – If the tattooist acts like he's about to touch your skin without gloves on, scream. It's a popularly know fact that we carry a lot of germs on our hands. Before your tattooist begins working on

you, he should wash his hands with antibacterial soap and put on a fresh pair of gloves. After the gloves go on, he should not touch anything but your skin and his already sterile equipment. If he steps away from the sterile environment for any reason: to talk to another customer, answer the phone, operate the cash register, anything, the process should be repeated with a new pair of gloves.

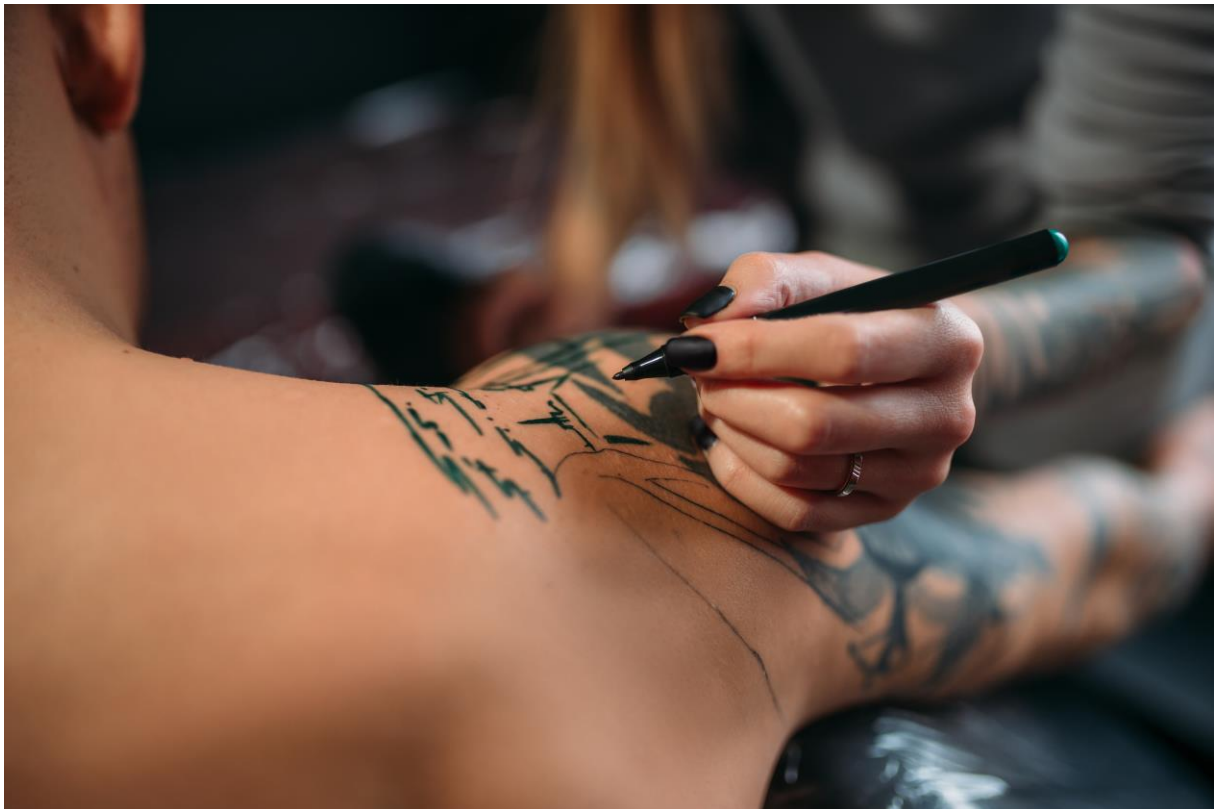
- **Autoclave** – When you are in the process of auditioning shops for your new tattoo, be sure to look around for an autoclave. This is a machine roughly the size of a microwave that is used to sterilize tattoo equipment. Dentists and doctors also use them. Smart tattooists keep their autoclaves in sight of the customers for all the same reasons they let them see the broken needles.
- **Ink** – The tattooist should always throw out left over ink after every project. All kinds of airborne contaminants can fly into open ink pots and stick there. Reusing

In a good shop, you should be able to observe most of these practices just while you are waiting in line. If not, don't hesitate to ask some questions. A tattooist with nothing to hide won't mind talking with you. If he acts nervous, or like you're bothering him, just turn around and walk out. There



are enough good, clean shops out there that there's no need for you to compromise your health or the quality of your experience.

*The Alliance of Professional Tattooists, Inc.* was founded in the summer of 1992 to educate and protect the interests of both the tattooer and the tattooee. Membership hopefuls must be able to prove at least three years of documented tattooing experience, use an autoclave and attend a nine hour seminar on microbiology and how diseases are contracted. The *APT* sets guidelines for sanitation practices and, with the help of *OSHA* (*Occupational Safety and Health Administration*) enforce hefty fines of up to \$7,500 a day to encourage members to operate safe, clean shops.





## ***Tattooing Rituals***

The explorer *William Dampier* brought the tattoo to the contemporary west when he brought the heavily tattooed *Polynesian Prince Giolo* to *London* in 1691 and put him on exhibition. He became the rage of *London*. The *British* public welcomed the novelty. *Europe* had not seen tattoos in 600 years. It would be another 100 years before tattoos would make their mark on the *West*.

The slow spread of tattoos in the *West* was due to their slow, painstaking procedure of application. Puncture of the skin by hand and subcutaneous injection of ink was unappealing. Tattooing was viewed so poorly that it went underground; becoming a secret society few were accepted into. This ritualistic approach to tattooing is prevalent throughout of its history.

It is believed that the tattoo originated in *Ancient Egypt*. Archaeologists at *Ashmolean Museum* in *Oxford* claim tattoos were first applied to female clay figurines and their human counterparts as early as 4000 *BC*. Such neo-pagan practices so eerily reminiscent of voodoo that pre-date *Christ* by nearly four millennia clarify why so many find tattoos mysterious and disturbing.

The migrant *Ainu* people of *Japan* adopted tattooing early and considered the tattoo divine. *Modern Japanese* dismissed such notions of the tattoo

and viewed it ornament. Japanese tattooists called the *Horis* refined tattooing to an art form. Their use of color, sheer intricacy of designs, and use of contrast made their tattoo marks appear almost three-dimensional. Even as art-historians appreciated tattoos as an aesthetic, the human suffering required to endure tattooing mystified many.

Sir Joseph Banks was the first European on record who speculated why. During his 1769 visit to Tahiti, Banks wrote: "What can be a sufficient inducement to suffer so much pain is difficult to say; not one Indian (though I have asked hundreds) would ever give me the least reason for it; possibly superstition may have something to do with it. Nothing else in my opinion could be a sufficient cause for so apparently absurd a custom."

Superstition may well be the reason so many early tattoo wearers endured the pain of tattooing but such notions are scorned or chided by their wearers today. Tattoos seem to be a fundamental area of common ground across cultures. From Africa to Europe, to North America and its thousands of native tribes, the acceptance of tattoo pain and permanence appear integral to very societal structure.

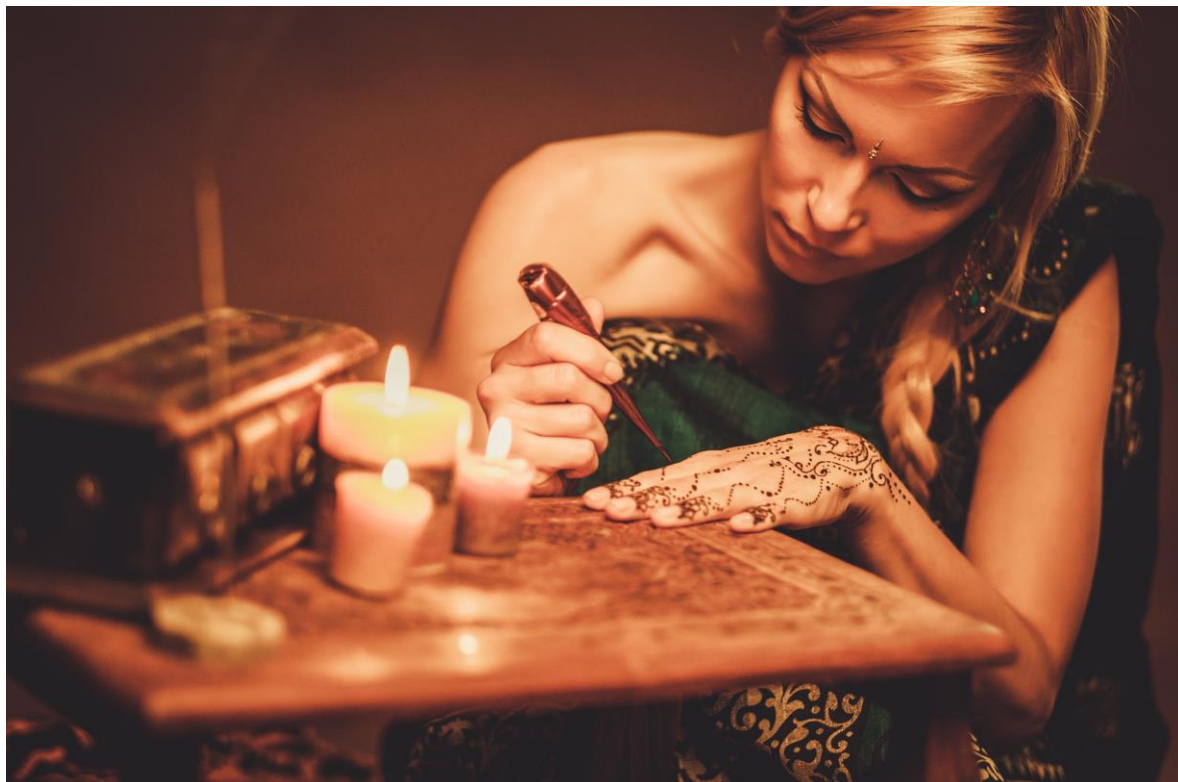
Regardless of the reasoning behind them, tattoos are a practice in symbolism as much as art and their ritualistic nature cannot be understated or ignored.

Some civilizations use tattoos for demarcation of degree of crime, others tattoo young girls as rite of passage to womanhood. Tribal Samoan women

are married based on the tattoos they wear. *Dayak warriors'* tattoos symbolize how many lives they have taken in battle. Such tattoos assure their wearers status for life.

The rewards of such tattoos in tribal life seem to justify the physical pain required to endure their application. Today's global village makes tattoos and the rites of passage they represent seem out of date.

Teenagers war with each other to fit in with the right crowd, and have the right clothes. Twenty-somethings fight each other harder for the entry-level job that's going to take them to the top, or to get into graduate school. Established businessmen will stop at nothing to preserve their balances. Humans seem to love status and will submit to whatever rituals assure them of it.



## **Removal**

**You should have listened to your friends when they said you'd regret getting your significant other's name tattooed on your arm, and you really should have known how your mother would react upon seeing "Momma" scrawled across your back. Tattoos are created by injecting colored pigment under the skin with a needle, and are relatively permanent.**

**Lucky for you, and your poor mother, there are several methods for tattoo removal. The success of the removal depends on several factors including; the location, size, the individual's ability to heal, how the tattoo was applied, and how old the tattoo is. A physician will review these factors while choosing the best method for you.**

**Dermabrasion is the method in which a small area of the tattoo is sprayed with a solution that freezes the skin. The physician then uses an instrument to "sand" the skin, peeling layers away. Some bleeding is likely to occur, and a dressing is immediately applied to the area.**

**The Salabrasion method has been performed for centuries, and is still occasionally used today. The tattoo and surrounding area are numbed by a local anesthetic and then rubbed vigorously with salt or a salt block until the**

layers of skin trapping the ink are literally rubbed off and the ink able to escape the skin.

Excision is a method used to remove small areas of the tattoo. The patient is given local anesthesia to the affected area and the tattoo is surgically cut from the skin. The edges of the remaining skin are sutured together. It is a simple procedure with a mild recovery time as long as there are no complications, such as infection. If that tattoo is too large it may be necessary to excise the areas in stages, removing the center of the tattoo first, then the perimeter at a later date. A skin graft may be taken from another part of the body to replace the portion of skin that was removed..

In recent years physicians have considered laser surgery one of the best methods of tattoo removal. Anesthesia is not required for laser removal, but depending on the patient's pain threshold a physician may decide to use a numbing cream or local painkillers. The patient is given protective eyewear and pulses of light are directed onto the tattoo, breaking up the pigments. Over the next few weeks the pigments are absorbed into the body. Black and blue pigments respond well to laser treatments, whereas greens can be resistant, and red pigments do not respond at all to Ruby laser light. Thanks to new laser technology scarring is not a significant risk for laser tattoo removal.

**Your skin is the largest organ on your body and your first line of defense against infection. Anything you do to damage or break the skin weakens your natural immune responses. Just as your tattooist did when you got your new tattoo, your doctor should give you precise instructions on how to care for your skin as it heals. Keeping the area clean is of the utmost importance. There is no complete method of tattoo removal. While the procedures and patient responses vary, you're essentially trading a tattoo for residual pigmentation and some degree of scarring. Before choosing to get a tattoo, make sure your motives are lasting and your tattooist is reputable. Stay away from fads and choose a design that is deeply meaningful to you.**

**Removal of your little mistake isn't going to be cheap. Depending on the size, type, and amount of treatments needed, the average cost can be from \$150 for the excision of a small tattoo, up to \$5,000 for larger pieces that may take several treatments.**

### **Religious Objections to Tattooing**

**Tattoos offend the religious of a variety of familiar denominations. The most dramatic example is found among Jewish believers, who deny a traditional Jewish burial to persons with tattoos, or even bodily piercing. Some Christian churches impose restrictions on bodily "modifications".**

**While 21<sup>st</sup> century enlightened individuals might take surprise or offence at religious objection to tattooing or body piercing, basis may be found in an Old Testament passage.**

**"Do not lacerate your bodies for the dead, and do not tattoo yourselves. I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:28). By this passage, lacerations and tattoos so described were part of non-Jewish mourning rituals, intended to disguise the living from the spirits of the dead. This curious mixture of neo-paganism with orthodox faith is as fascinating to some as disturbing to others. While cultural anthropologists and the religious may wage holy war over the subtext for a tattoo, religious motives seem to weigh very little on choices by those who adorn themselves with ink beneath the skin or piercing it with rings. Some might argue that they should.**

**Vatican II Council's declaration that human beings are called upon to view their bodies "As good and honorable since God created it and will raise it up on the last day" (*Gaudium et Spes*, #14) lends credence to opinions that some tattoo motifs seek to offend the more religious minded. At least, both secular and religious will agree that most tattoo designs seem less than "good and honorable" and so might seem "inappropriate" decoration for a body created by the divine.**



The very consideration of religious objection tattoos raises powerful questions of us as a society, and equally interestingly, the degree to which tattoo wearers and objectors view what precisely makes them "human".

If we judge body modification to be appropriate, do we need to acknowledge the reasons why others may not share our views?

Whether we like it or not our decisions affect our futures. Potential employers look at people differently because of holes in their noses and tattoos on their calves. Forget life-careers for a moment. How we look affects our ability to get a part-time job nowadays. And, if we have a job, it might be wise to check to our employer's unspoken policy on tattoos and body piercing. While "prejudice" is unfair – it is often inevitable. Is it consistent with the values espoused by any civilized religion? Moral arguments won't pay your bills. Staring at our navels won't pay for dinner any more than piercing it will. Choosing between right to self-expression and self-sustenance might seem unfair but it may well be a reality.

My friend Lucian got his ear pierced for his 21st birthday. Friends gently ribbed him and his parents accepted it. Yet the law firm he interned at did not. His employer informed him he'd have to remove it during working hours. Since he'd just had the piercing he couldn't take the earring out immediately or the hole would close. He was faced with walking around with a band-aid on his ear for a month and a chip on his shoulder for a lot longer.

**Some argue tattoos have religious significance and artistic merit. Do they deserve standalone appreciation rather than criticism?**

**No reasonable person openly says that tattoos or body piercing are “bad” or that people who have them avoided. Our love of art or religious significance is valid reason for self-expression.**

**It remains up to the individual to weigh the risks and issues they enjoin. Some gangs choose tattoos with a religious theme and such a tattoo may be misinterpreted. As with all forms of expression, tattoos are no different – they are open to interpretation.**

**Perhaps the tried but true forms remain most valid. After all, you could always demonstrate your faith by wearing a medal or a cross.**

### **Tattoo and Copyright Laws**

**Creativity is an extremely personal thing. All true artists are protective of their work. It's a part of them, an extension of their soul. Tattooists are no exception. Copyright laws are intended to protect artists and inventors from having their ideas stolen, their profits suffer and their art abused. However, the idea of copyrighting tattoo designs is not something tattooists are ready to jump on board for. No one is ever anxious to bring lawyers into the mix,**

**and it's very questionable whether or not copyrighting would even effectively protect custom work.**

**Even flash, the sheets of tattoo designs that paper the walls of just about every tattoo shop on the planet started its existence as someone's original work. Tattooists buy the sheets from a dealer, probably the same supplier they get the rest of their stuff from. When that deal goes down, it's not art in the sense of wall décor they are paying for; they could go to any discount store for that. It's the right to reproduce the design to a stencil and tattoo it on to a customer. The legal principal behind flash is the same as selling a book that you brought at a bookstore. You paid for the right to own that copy of the book and you have the right to sell it.**



Theoretically, custom work is an original design intended for only for one person. The vast majority of the time, all custom designs start out as drawings on actual paper before being applied to someone's skin. So for the purposes of copyright law, the tattoo itself is actually a reproduction. Since it's typically the same artist who both draws and applies the tattoo it's not that big of a deal.

The law is not super clear on what constitutes an infringement of copyright when it comes to tattoo reproduction. It's impossible to make any body art the exact same way twice. Bodies are shaped differently, ink takes to differently to various skin types, the colored pigments with mix up a little bit differently each time, etc. So in that sense, tattoos can't be replicated. Even if another tattooist copies your original work, it's still just that, a copy. That's like a professional band covering another's song. It's just their version of it.

On the other hand, the law used the following phrase: "substantially similar." That means the reproduction in question doesn't have to be exactly perfect, it just has to be similar. Under that logic, the design can be colored entirely differently, and embellished upon, but still be considered "substantially" the same enough to support a law suit. To the layman, it sounds like the viability of such a suit depends on who is interpreting what constitutes as substantial.

*Under copyright law, a work can technically be very much the same as another and still be considered original. For example, innumerable musicians have recorded Beatles songs over the years, and even though it's been done so many times, one version of "All You Need is Love" is legally just as good as another (no accounting for taste, of course).*

*So, to the average person it seems that copyright laws would be much more user friendly for tattooists, and the rest of the creative community for that matter, if it were the spirit of the law and not the letter of the law that mattered. For the most part, the tattoo industry regulates itself and seems to try and keep it that way by not raising much of a fuss. Law suits involving tattoos are not terribly common and professions who make up the industry don't seem to be bothered enough by others appreciating their work to start filling up the court system. It may be in part because they think doing so would be just like inviting the government in to regulate them.*

## ***Tattooed Women***

*"Well behaved women rarely make history."*

*- Laurel Thatchel Ulrich*

**It used to be that the only place you would find a lady with even a single tattoo was in a carnival freak show. Even after such displays were, for the most part, things of the past, the realm of permanent body art remained somewhat of a boys' club. Today, tattoos are far more popular and socially accepted by the general public than they used to be, and though men still tend to be more heavily tattooed than women, the gap is quickly filling in.**

**So pervasive is the trend that tattooed women have developed their own sub-subculture, hosting Web sites, clubs and even entire conventions tailored especially to ladies with body art. There are also books and magazines devoted to the subject. If you belong in those ranks, wish you did, or think you might someday, here are some media you may want to check out.**

- ♦ ***A Tattooed Women's Collective* – This site has links to resources of interest to ladies with ink, and allows them to have their own personal Webpage to show off their art and blog about anything they want to.** –

**<http://www.angelfire.com/grrl/destroymachine/paintedladies.html>**

- ♦ ***The Illustrated Woman* – This book by photographer William Demichele showcases pictures of all kinds of ladies and their permanent body art. They range in age from 20s to 60s and have various degrees of ink, from small, discrete tats to full bodysuits.**

- ♦ Bodies of Subversion 2 Ed: A Secret History of Women and Tattoo – by Margot Mifflin, is written by a woman, about women and even published by a woman-owned and operated press, Juno Books. It features information about tattooed women of influence and female tattoo artists.
- ♦ Stewed, Screwed and Tattooed – by Madame Chinchilla and photographed by Jan Hinson chronicles the author's 12 years of life as a tattooed woman and comments on the social stigma surrounding the subject.

Of course, tattoos know no gender or social class, but a little celebrity endorsement never fails to boost a trend. Several famous women have gotten inked, probably more than we know. One of the most documented in the last century was Betty Broadbent. She was born in 1909 and got her first tattoo in 1927 at the age of 18. Her tattooist was Charlie Wagner of New York. He was one of the few at the time using the new electric machine. Her body was almost solidly covered with more than 300 tattoos. Broadbent became a tattoo artist herself to supplement the income she had from touring. She retired to Florida in 1967 and passed away in 1983.



Are any woman's tattoos more famous than Janis Joplin's? Her ink was an outward manifestation of the free spirit she was. A pioneer in the realm of female rock stars, she inspired many people before she died in 1970 at the age of only 28. The coroner's report itemizes her body art: a bracelet on her left wrist, a flower on her right heel and a heart just above her left breast. Janice's tattooist, Lyle Tuttle, told the *New York Times* in 1971 that he tattooed more than 100 copies of that heart on mourning fans since her death.

Thanks to women like these, ladies everywhere are making a place for themselves in the tattooed community. Women are no longer just the canvas. Now they're the artist too. Female owned and operated tattoo studios are popping up everywhere, and may be a contributing factor in the rise of tattooed women. Modesty may have prevented some from getting the design and placement they really wanted in the past, but they may feel more at ease in an all girl shop.

### ***Tattoo Placement***

The type of tattoo you want may dictate its placement. For example, the back, chest and upper leg are great canvases for large designs, such as portraits and scenery. The arms, especially the bicep, is a traditionally popular location, and gives you the option of an ever trendy arm band design,

**a small, easily hidden tat, or a huge, domineering statement that goes great with a tank top.**

**The hands and feet are painful spots for permanent tattooing; as a result, most people opt for smaller designs in these places. However, the hands especially are highly popular in traditional henna tattooing, so if you have next to no pain tolerance but still want your digits extensively decorated, henna is a pain free option that's strong cultural tradition will keep you respectable in the tattoo world. Just don't tell people you got henna because you're afraid of a little pain.**



The genitals and butt, it not the most common and is extremely painful, but people do it. You know what they say: different strokes for different folks. There really is a tattoo out there for everybody.

If you've already got ink, you know that the first thing everyone wants to know is "Did that hurt?" If you've been considering whether or not to get a tattoo, the mystery surrounding the pain factor is most likely what's holding you back. Some have described the sensation as more of a burning or feeling. Some say it feels more like a bee sting or a burn. Many wouldn't call it pain at all, but more of an irritation. How much discomfort you experience depends on where you choose to put your new tattoo.

Bone and nerve endings should be main considerations in tattoo placement. Areas with a lot of nerve endings close to the surface of the skin, like the spine, nipples, hands, feet and genitals are going to be more uncomfortable than others. Places with shallow bones like the sternum, ribs, shin, knees, elbows, the head and behind the ears will also be more sensitive.

The size of the design you chose also plays a part in the amount of pain involved. Of course larger tattoos take longer to complete, prolonging the irritation of the skin and making it more raw and sensitive. That's why most tattooists will suggest you break big projects up into several sittings.

There's a common misconception that having a few drinks before going under the gun will keep you relaxed and help make you more comfortable. This is not the case. In fact, tattooists won't work on you and don't even really want you in their shops because, unless you are so drunk that you passed out cold, you will have a harder time following directions and sitting still.

While there is always some blood during the process, drunks tend to bleed more, making the process slow and messy. The excess blood makes it harder for the skin to absorb the ink and your tattoo may not take at all, which means you've wasted the artist's time, bled all over his shop and got poked repeatedly with nothing to show for it.

The same is true for any drugs, legal or otherwise, you may be thinking of taking. That goes double for amphetamines, or anything that makes you jittery, even caffeine. The best thing you can ingest to help with the pain is a good meal. A good night's sleep wouldn't hurt either. Fatigue is known to have a negative effect on pain tolerance.

Another very important thing to consider when choosing where to put your tattoo is how it will affect your employment options. Even in the twenty-first century, there is still a lot of stigma attached to tattoos. If you are a white collar professional or work in a very public, customer-service type atmosphere, you may want to think about putting your tattoo someplace where

**you can show it off if you want to, but can easily cover it up for work without looking silly.**



## ***Tattoo Jargon***

***It may not seem like it at the time, but getting a tattoo is a huge decision. That ink really is permanent and will be there for the rest of your life. Even if you opt to have it removed, you will still have a scar or traces of ink at the very least. It's very important that you put a lot of thought into the design you want and the placement of your new tattoo. You should do a lot of***

research into the process of tattooing and choosing your tattoo artist. As with any specialized trade, there's a certain amount of jargon, or terms specific to the practice, used. Study up on this; you can't make informed decisions if you have no idea what the experts are talking about. Here's a short, and by no means complete glossary to help you get started.

- **Autoclave** – a machine that uses pressure and hot water to sterilize tattoo equipment. The autoclave is also used for medical and dental tools. A lot of shops keep the autoclave in plain sight so potential clients know they are using clean supplies. If you don't see one ask. If you aren't satisfied with the answer, look for another shop.
- **Body Suit** – a full body tattoo. It typically starts at the neck and covers the rest of the body down to the ankles. Hands and feet are usually excluded. Japanese tattooists are known for their artful applied body suits.
- **Cockamamie** – one of those cheap temporary tattoos applied by wetting the paper backing and pressing against the skin. Cockamamies were popular in the 1940s and 50s and were often found as prizes in Cracker Jack and cereal boxes.

- **Devotion tattoo** – a tat that symbolizes its owner's love for a significant other, parent, pet, favorite band, favorite food, etc. The possibilities are endless.
- **Cover-up Work** – What happens when you change your mind about that devotion tattoo. Cover-up work involves either incorporating an old tat into an new design or covering it up totally. Good cover-up work is hard to spot and is a prized talent among tattoo artists.
- **Flash** – The sheets of designs that hang on the walls of tattoo parlors. These designs aren't necessarily original to that particular artist and are probably fairly common. A shop purchases the flash from the vendor and the rights to legally reproduce it into a stencil so that no copy write laws are broken.
- **Jailhouse Tattoo** – a homemade tattoo usually characterized by fine, black or blue lines.
- **Scratcher** – a bad tattooist
- **Stencil** – a template of the tattoo you're about to get, usually drawn or traced on your skin so that you have a good idea of what the tat will look like on you and the tattooist has something to go by.



- **Lady Luck** – this tattoo is traditionally popular at war time. The central figure in the design is always a beautiful woman surrounded by other signs of good fortune like a four leaf clover, a rabbit's foot, etc. The tattoo was thought to bring luck to the owner.
- **Men's Ruin Tattoo** – pretty much the opposite of **Lady Luck**, this design also features a woman, but depicted as the source of men's troubles. She's often accompanied by representations of vices that can bring a man down such as liquor, drugs and gambling.

Now that you have a decent foundation to at least ask intelligent questions, you're one step closer to a tattoo experience that will produce a design you will love for a lifetime and preventing the regret that often comes with a tattoo that wasn't particularly thought out.

### **Tattoos: To Color or Not to Color?**

More than 50 different pigments, shades and diluents are currently used in tattooing and while some are approved for use as cosmetics, none are approved for subcutaneous injection. Many tattoo inks are not approved for

skin contact at all. Some unconscionable tattooist have been known to used automobile paint or printers' ink.

Nevertheless, many tattoo wearers choose color as a time saver or due to physical difficulty applying temporary makeup. Others find color tattooing an alternative to reconstructive surgery, to simulate natural pigmentation, and combat alopecia by having "eyebrows" tattooed on. Whatever their reason, color-tattoo wearers should be aware of risks.

The primary complications that can result from color tattooing are infection leading to hepatitis. Some tattooing equipment cannot be sterilized because of design and dimensions. The American Association of Blood Banks requires a one-year wait between a tattoo and donating blood. All color tattoos require some sort of medical post-care. Removing color tattoos is a painstaking and expensive process. Complete removal without scarring may be impossible. Allergic reaction to color tattooing is rare but problematic if it occurs because pigments used are hard to remove. Sometimes allergic reactions are observed to tattoos worn for years with impunity.

Granulomas or nodules may form around color pigments your immune system detects as foreign. If you are prone to keloids –excessive scarring – color tattoos will traumatize your skin. Office of Cosmetics and Colors dermatologist Ella Toombs, MD defines color tattooing as skin trauma while Charles Zwerling, M.D., Annette Walker, R.N., and Norman Goldstein, M.D., warn scarring occurs as a consequence of tattoo removal.

Color tattoos have been known to cause complications in patients undergoing magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). Mascara produces similar effects but mascara is removable. Why it happens is unclear but some suggest tattoo-color and MRI pigment interaction as likely. Color tattoos wearers should inform the MRI technician to take appropriate precautions and avoid complications.

A common problem with color tattoos is desire and difficulty to remove them. The main complication with eyelid tattooing is pigment-placement. You should consider the consequences of permanently wearing an artist's mistake.

Remember that all tattoos fade in sun and if tattoo-artists inject pigments too deeply possibility of migration from original sites may occur. Changes in the human body and seasonal styles may cause flattering color tattoos too later clash with changing tones and contours. Any permanent facial makeup may become distorted with time. A once stylish tattoo may become dated and embarrassing. Changing color tattoos is not as easy as changing your mind.

Knowing what pigments are in your tattoo is difficult due to tattoo inks variety. Because inks are sold by brand and not by chemical composition directly to tattoo parlors rather than retail basis to consumers, manufacturers are not legally bound to list their ingredients. If a manufacturer considers identity and grade of their pigments "proprietary," neither tattooist nor wearer may be able to know exactly "what" is in the tattoo.

Any kind of abrasion to remove a color tattoo invariably leaves a scar in its place. Discomfort is inevitable. Camouflaging your color tattoo with another pigment may not look natural as pigments lack skins translucence.

Temporary tattoos are a viable option for the cautious tattoo-wearer but even these have a caveat. Color tattoos use foreign pigments not allowed into the United States due to FDA reports of allergic reactions. As such, even Henna treatments carry alert. In the US, Henna is approved only for use as hair dye – not for direct application to the skin. What specifically causes the typical reddish brown Henna tint is a mystery making what exactly is in "black" and "blue" henna even more curious. "Black henna" may contain the "coal tar" color p-phenylenediamine, which stimulates allergic response in some individuals. The only legal use of PPD in cosmetics is as a hair dye.

Ultimately your choice of a colored tattoo rests on your shoulders. Product availability render legality of ingredients a moot point – If you want a colored tattoo you can easily find a tattooist who will sell you one. The questions to ask yourself are: Do you trust the ingredients in them sufficiently to risk later allergic response, or other medical complications or social second thoughts? The permanence of color tattoos has far-reaching life-long implications.