

Title:

Your First Tattoo - Five Things To Consider

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Summary:

So you're thinking about getting your first tattoo. What do you do next? Well, it's best not to rush off to the nearest tattoo parlour, point at a random design and wait to see your new masterpiece.

Here are five vital decisions that you must make before you proceed any further.

1) Do You Really Want A Tattoo?

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1) Do You Really Want A Tattoo?

A tattoo is a lifetime commitment, so you must be absolutely 100% certain that you want one. You might think that it's the greatest thing in the world today, but will you feel the same about it in 10 years, 20 years or even 50 years?

Okay, tattoo removal technology is improving all the time, but it's still time consuming, expensive and painful. So for now it's best to assume that your tattoo will be for life.

2) The Tattoo Design

Once you've decided that you definitely want a tattoo, the next step is to

choose the design that you want. There are hundreds of categories of tattoo design to choose from, including dragon, flower, butterfly, angel, sun, etc. The choice is endless.

Most tattoos are done from predesigned templates. It's just a case of choosing the one that you want (some are free, but the better ones cost up to \$20) and taking it to your choosen tattoo artist.

So visit a number of tattoo related websites, take a look at tattoo design books and decide on the general type of design that you want. Once you've done that, narrow it down to the actual design that you want.

Alternatively, if you can't find exactly what you're looking for, or you want your tattoo to be unique, you could consider getting an artist to design a custom tattoo exclusively for you.

This option is more expensive (perhaps \$200-300 and upwards for the design, depending on size and level of detail), although more mainstream designs will work out cheaper as most tattoo artists will have experience of designing them. However, you'll have complete control over how your tattoo looks, nobody else will have the same and it will last you for the rest of your life.

Always remember, a good tattoo is not cheap, and a cheap tattoo is no good.

And a word of warning, unless you intend to place your tattoo on a part of your body that you can't see (such as your back), choose something that you don't think you'll get tired of looking at. The worst situation is to get a new tattoo on a highly visible part of your body that you grow to hate within a few months.

It's also important to choose a design that will be as relevant to you in the future as it is today. This is particularly relevant when it comes to designs that include names.

Many people get their names of their children added to their tattoo. This is a safe option because they'll always be your children. But think carefully before you get the name of your spouse or partner tattooed over your body. What if you seperate in the future? Will a new partner be happy to see the name of your ex emblazoned across your neck?

3) Color Or Black?

Another consideration that's closely linked to your choice of design is whether it will be in color or just black. This choice largely depends on the type of

design that you like.

But bear in mind that black tattoos tend to have more definition. Due to the contrast with your skin they're more noticeable than the smoothing effect achieved by color tattoos. In comparison, color tattoos are much richer and help to add more character to your chosen design, but they do cost more.

4) Which Part Of Your Body?

Before you decide which part of your body to get tattooed, there are three minor issues to consider. First, bear in mind the size of your chosen design. If you've set your heart on a large design, there won't likely be enough space on your hands or ankles etc. Back, shoulders, chest and stomach are better areas for large designs.

Second, how visible do you want your tattoo to be? Do you want it to be on public display most of the time, or do you want it to be more discreet? If so, it's important to bear in mind your normal style of dress.

It's also important to remember that certain professions such as the police have strict rules about no tattoos on the lower arms etc. So if that will be an issue, check with your employers first.

Third, certain areas are more painful than others. As a general rule, areas of your body where the flesh is thinner and more bony, such as your ankles, head and lower back, tend to be more painful. Less painful areas to tattoo include your shoulders, chest, upper arm and upper back. And due to the number of nerve endings involved, it goes without saying that more intimate areas of your body could be extremely sensitive.

5) Size

The size of your tattoo will to a large extent (dreadful pun!) be determined by the location where it appears on your body. After all, a design that measures twelve inches square won't fit on the back of your hand. Large tattoos will also take longer to complete (and therefore cost more), and will be more noticeable.

But don't let all that lead you to believe that a small tattoo is something that can be undertaken on a whim. A small tattoo is just as big a commitment as a larger design and will last just as long.

Getting any tattoo done is a major decision, so don't rush into it, and make sure that you're absolutely certain about all of the decisions above before you

go any further.