



## TATTOO AFTERCARE

**Caring for your tattoo while it heals is just as important as your artist doing good work.  
Ignoring your artist's care instructions can and will ruin a good tattoo.**

Your tattoo will take about 2 weeks to fully heal. The first four days will require the most attention. The goal is to keep it clean, moisturized, and free of irritation. A tattoo is an open wound. Beyond these instructions, take care of your body so it can heal faster.

### **RIGHT AFTER YOUR TATTOO IS DONE:**

- Within an hour of finishing your tattoo, take a hot shower and gently clean the tattoo using just your clean hands and a mild non-fancy antibacterial soap, making sure to clean all the ointment and plasma off. Liquid hand soap works well.
- Let the hot water run over your tattoo for 1-2 minutes. Then let the cold water hit it for about a minute. This process may be uncomfortable but it will help your skin heal and reduce the "ooze."
- Dry your tattoo by dabbing it with a clean towel or paper towel. (Do not rub it!) Apply a thin layer of AQUAPHOR or other ointment recommended by your artist. This is important to keep your tattoo hydrated and protected without suffocating it. (Use a clean new container of ointment, not the same tub you've had for years.)
- Pet dander causes infections. If you have a pet, especially if it sleeps in your bed with you, be careful not to allow your tattoo to contact your pet or areas where your pet hangs out. Sorry, but you'll have to keep him/her out of your bed for about 4-7 days.

### **\*\*\*REMEMBER!!!\*\*\***

**Your tattoo is an open wound. It may be red/swollen/oozy for a couple days, but this is normal. Keep it clean and moisturized, washing it if it comes in contact with anything unsanitary such as sweat, dogs/cats, saliva, a dirty tabletop, unwashed hands, the floor, etc. Keep it away from bacteria and chemicals. Pool and lake water are especially full of these things, so NO SWIMMING until it is healed. Make sure any laundry that touches it is clean, and DON'T TOUCH IT UNLESS YOU JUST WASHED YOUR HANDS!**

**An infected tattoo looks red and irritated around some edges. This looks different than the normal "1-2 days old" redness and swelling, and gets worse instead of better. If this happens, don't wait until it gets bad, use Neosporin as your ointment for 2 days. Otherwise, avoid antibiotic ointment if you can help it.**

### **DAY 1-4**

- Apply ointment when needed. When you get up, after washing it, go to sleep, and throughout the day when it feels dry. This could be anywhere between 3-8 times a day. **It is imperative that you do not let it dry out during the ointment phase.**
- Wash it 1-4 times a day, depending on how easily that part of your body gets dirty.
- If it gets oozy, dab it gently with a clean paper towel and reapply ointment if needed. (You may notice a little bit of ink in the ooze. That's okay.) If it's oozing, be careful not to let it get stuck to your clothes or sheets. If this happens, soak it in water before gently peeling it off so you don't pull any ink out with it.
- Avoid sun exposure until it is fully healed. After 2 weeks you can use sunscreen.

### **DAY 5-14**

- Start using a basic UNSCENTED moisturizing lotion instead of ointment. Lubriderm and Aveeno are good. Apply throughout the day with clean hands whenever it feels dry.
- During this time your tattoo will start to peel. Dead skin will begin to flake off with the top layer of ink in it. This is gross and weird but totally normal! Keep moisturizing and allow it to fall off naturally. **DO NOT PICK AT IT.** It will probably also itch like hell, but **DON'T SCRATCH!** Slap it if you get desperate. I don't care if you look crazy.

### **DAY 14-FOREVER**

Your tattoo is now ready to enjoy without being an OCD freak. The better you take care of your skin, however, the better your tattoo will look when you're old. Sun damage is now your biggest concern. (This includes tanning!) Blurring and fading is normal with all tattoos, but repeated UV damage will cause your tattoo to age prematurely (with the rest of you.) **WEAR SUNSCREEN!!!**

**Don't hesitate to contact your artist for questions!**