



Tattoos

Tattoos have been a part of society for thousands of years. Ancient people used tattoos to mark their religious affiliations; Native Americans and 19th century sailors, among others, believed tattoos would protect them from peril. Today, an estimated 10 million people in the United States alone have at least one tattoo — and half of those people will eventually regret their decision. If you're one of those people, we can help. At Advanced Dermatology, P.C. and our Center for Laser and Cosmetic Surgery, we understand that the permanent tattoo you have just may not be something you want anymore as it may interfere with your present life or cause you unnecessary anxiety or stress.

Facilities

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For directions to our offices or for more information on lasers, cosmetic procedures and medical conditions visit us at

www.AdvancedD.com

ADVANCED DERMATOLOGY P.C.

CENTER FOR LASER & COSMETIC SURGERY

Joshua L. Fox, MD, Medical Director

Tattoo Removal

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What is tattoo removal?

The term tattoo removal encompasses a variety of procedures that will remove unwanted tattoos. Recall that a tattoo is a permanent mark or design made on the skin by inserting pigment under the skin. Tattoo removal is a laser or surgical procedure, and like most procedures there may be some discomfort associated. Local or topical anesthetics and oral or topical pain medications as well as other techniques may be used to lessen any discomfort.

What can I expect from tattoo removal?

During the initial consultation with one of our expert dermatologic laser surgeons, we will discuss the method of tattoo removal that best suits your particular needs and comfort level. You will be asked to give a complete medical history, including the use of any medications or medical conditions that may affect how your skin will heal after the procedure. Your tattoo may be examined for size, color and location, the results of which together with your skin type and other factors will factor into the type of treatment you choose and the number of treatments required. Any questions you may have about treatment of your tattoo will be fully answered.

Can all tattoos be removed?

Removing your tattoo is possible, but because tattoos are created with permanent pigments, removal is difficult, and at most times 100% complete removal is not possible. Black tattoos are more easily removable compared to colored ink tattoos. The removal of tattoos by a professional artist may call for five to eight treatments or more, while one created by an amateur artist may often be removed in less treatments. In either case, there are effective removal methods. We may combine several lasers to optimize results.

Alternative methods to treatment with laser include excision (cutting out the tattoo) and chemical abrasion or dermabrasion, tattooing over the tattoo, concealer, and cosmetics. With the exception of small tattoos most patients find the scar's pulling sensation from

closing the scar to be too objectionable. There are lasers that can remove tattoos in 1 or 2 treatments but the scar would be too objectionable.

Laser removal is considered one of the best tattoo removal methods today because of its efficiency and precision. Lasers vary in their wavelengths and pulse durations, and different colors absorb different beams. Depending on the color of the tattoo, specific lasers, or a combination of lasers, will be used. Your physician will direct the short, intense pulses of light toward the tattoo. The tattoo pigments will absorb the light causing it to heat up and break into smaller fragments of color, which are then absorbed by the body's natural immune system usually within several weeks. Depending on the size of the tattoo, the procedure can last from 5 to 45 minutes. Sessions are spaced four to eight weeks apart (fading of your tattoo will continue between sessions as your body absorbs more ink). Tattoos in certain areas like eyebrow although having special problems do usually respond faster to treatment.

Depending on which laser is utilized and other factors the treated area may turn white and swelling or pinpoint bleeding may occur, but after the skin heals, usually within seven to ten days, the skin appears more natural though some permanent changes in texture (ie: scarring) or color are possible. It is unusual to remove a tattoo without some skin changes.

Since different colors of tattoos are best absorbed by different types (ie: wavelengths) of light. We utilize various high energy Q-switched lasers, Ruby 694, Nd: YAG 53, 1064, Versapulse, Alexandrite, and other lasers.

Before



After



Before and After photos courtesy of cynosure