



Fact Sheet

Tattoos

How does laser treatment remove tattoos?

The laser energy breaks up the Indian ink particles into very tiny fragments. These fragments are taken up by the scavenger cells in the skin (the macrophages), and carried away from the tattoo site, resulting in less tattoo pigment and a gradual disappearance of the tattoo. Indian ink tattoos may respond to as few as two treatments but usually require between six to ten treatments for them to resolve. Occasionally however, the tattoo will not resolve completely even with the best laser technology, and a little 'ghosting' of pigment remains. The reason for this resistance to laser treatment is not known but it may be that the ink is lying too deeply for the laser light to reach.

Whilst the Indian ink and red areas in a tattoo may disappear after six to ten treatments, the other colours may need considerably more treatments. Indeed, sometimes the green pigment will not disappear at all, despite the use of the most advanced laser technology. The scientific reason for this failure to respond is not known, but fortunately it is not common. However, the green pigment in the tattoo may need treating up to twenty times even with the latest and most modern laser systems.

Is the Treatment painful?

Most patients find laser treatment of tattoos not too uncomfortable and experience a pricking sensation in the skin. If this becomes too severe, either a local anaesthetic cream (EMLA or Ametop) or a local anaesthetic injected into the area can be used. If a local anaesthetic cream is used, it needs to be applied liberally under an occlusive dressing one to two hours before treatment to produce maximum results.

Once the whitening of the treated area disappears, it is not unusual for the skin to become quite red and look inflamed and this may last for several hours. There is not usually sufficient discomfort to inconvenience patients, but if significant discomfort is experienced, two Paracetamol tablets should be taken and the area treated with an ice pack. Aloe Vera gel, which can be purchased at the clinic, is beneficial in reducing inflammation caused by the laser treatment.

What will I see after the treatment?

It is unusual to develop any bleeding in the treated area at the power levels used by Lasercare medical staff. However, occasionally higher levels may have to be used on certain tattoos, which may result in a little pinpoint bleeding. Usually all this requires as far as management is concerned, is a simple dry dressing following the procedure. This bleeding does not have any other harmful consequences and does not, for instance, lead to scarring.

It is important however, to make sure that the areas of your tattoo that have been treated are not exposed unduly to strong ultraviolet light or sunshine after the procedure. We recommend the use of Lasercare SPF 30 sunblock, available at Lasercare clinics.

Initial Consultation & Test	£35.00
Minor Treatment	£55.00
Intermediate Treatment	£100.00
Major Treatment	£155.00