

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – LASER TATTOO REMOVAL

How does a tattoo removal laser work?

Q-Switched Lasers that generate a high-powered beam of laser light in an extremely short pulse are the most suitable lasers for tattoo removal treatments. The very short pulse of high-powered laser light is absorbed by the tattoo ink particles, breaking them down into smaller pieces, enabling your natural immune defences to absorb and disperse the ink. A gradual fading of the tattoo occurs over a series of treatments.

How is the treatment carried out?

The skin will be cleaned and then the laser applicator is passed over the tattoo releasing quick pulses of light. An audible 'clicking' noise is often heard as the ink particles shatter. After treatment, a soothing lotion and a light dressing may be applied. During treatment protective eye wear will be provided.

How does the treatment feel?

Most patients describe the sensation as similar to a hot pin prick or the flick of an elastic band. Whilst mildly uncomfortable, most people tolerate treatment well. A skin cooling device may be utilised to reduce any discomfort.

How does the skin look after treatment?

An instant whitening of the skin is seen after treatment, but this generally fades quickly. The area is likely to feel tender for a few hours and can be red and swollen for up to 48 hours. Some tattoos will form a graze which must be left to heal naturally. Initially the tattoo is unlikely to look any different but will fade over the next 4 to 8 weeks as the body disperses it.

Are there any side effects?

Very rarely the skin may become lighter or darker, or a small blister may form. Change to skin texture and scarring is possible, though uncommon, and is more likely if any grazes are not allowed to heal naturally. There may be loss of the natural tanning ability in the area treated, which usually improves with time.

How many treatments are necessary?

This depends on several factors, including the density and colour of inks and the age of the tattoo. Amateur tattoos can be quick to remove, taking 1 to 6 treatments, whereas professional tattoos vary considerably and some can take up to 15 treatments. Treatment sessions are spaced 6 to 10 weeks apart.

How long does each treatment take?

Treatment time varies depending upon the size of the tattoo but generally is between 10 – 30 minutes.

What is the consultation procedure?

Prior to treatment you must first undergo a consultation where details about your medical history are obtained in order to confirm suitability. Before proceeding you will be asked to sign a consent form and undergo a test patch.

Is there any reason I might not be able to have my tattoo removed?

Are there any area's that you will NOT be able to treat?

Yes – the following area's will not be able to be treated at our clinic

- Inside ear canal
- Inside the nostril/nose
- The eyelids
- Inside the mouth (medical only)
- Palms of hands (medical only)
- Soles of feet (medical only)
- Area's where the skin is broken, affected by skin infection or inflammatory skin disorders, is sun burnt or recently tanned (4 weeks)

What should I be aware of before my treatment?

- Stay out of the sun
- Drink lots of water
- Stay healthy (e.g. reduce alcohol intake)
- Take some antioxidants
- Don't smoke or reduce smoking
- Pre-shave the area of hair if there is hair over the area that needs lasering.

