

When love fades but the tattoo doesn't

Tattoos are currently very fashionable and many think they are the height of attractiveness, but once done they are much harder to change than your hairdo. This is where the laser can come in

How does laser tattoo removal work?

The pigment is selectively destroyed in tattoos by using a wavelength of laser light that is specific for the pigment colour. A high amount of energy is absorbed by the tattoo in a very short duration of time causing micro-explosion of pigment in the skin. The exploded pigment is then removed naturally by the body. Laser tattoo removal is most effective for dark black, blue and red tattoo's because we have lasers that can specifically target these colours. Yellow, orange and green pigment is far more difficult to remove.

How many treatments will be required?

This depends on the size of the tattoo, depth of the pigment, type of pigment, and your skin type. Most tattoos require 6-8 treatments for a 80-95 per cent clearance. Treatments are spaced 3-4 weeks apart. Sometimes, just 3-4 sessions are required. Treatment can never guarantee complete clearance.

Is laser tattoo removal painful?

The tattoo removal laser emits light in very short flashes of light called pulses. The impact of the energy from the powerful pulses of light is similar to the snap of a thin rubber band or speck of hot bacon grease on the skin. The large majority of patients do not require any topical anaesthetic cream application. It is recommended to take paracetamol an hour before the treatment session to reduce any discomfort.

What are the side-effects of laser tattoo removal?

Laser tattoo removal will cause quite intense tissue reactions because it is necessary to explode the tattoo pigment to make the treatment effective. Treated areas may blister, bruise and can bleed. It is very normal to experience crusting of the skin following treatment.

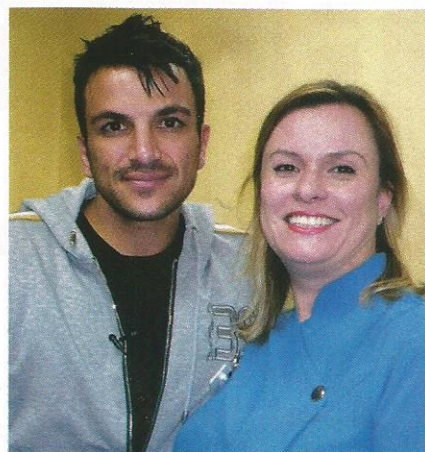
These reactions typically last 5-10 days and heal without any problems. Operators try to use laser settings that will maximise clearance without causing long-term scarring. Compared to other laser treatments, the risk of permanent scarring with this treatment is relatively high, with up to 5 per cent of patients developing loss of skin colour, loss of the skin volume or raised red scars following treatment.

Longer term some of these can recover over time, but patients should be aware that in some cases permanent damage to the skin can occur, so it is important to choose a reputable clinic.

How expensive is laser tattoo removal?

These prices are indicative. Actual charges may be different.

Small Tattoos
(less than 25cm surface area)
£60-£80 per session
Medium Tattoos
(26cm-100cm surface area)
£80-£100 per session
Large Tattoos
(26cm-100cm surface area)
£120-£160 per session



CASE STUDY

Singer Peter Andre wanted his tattoo of "Katie" removed from his ring finger. He went to Sarah Williams – pictured above – based at the Hove Skin Clinic and Brighton Laser Clinic.

What did Peter's treatment involve?

After an explanation of the treatment, Peter was asked to give written consent and to wear protective eye goggles. Sarah then fired the laser at the tattoo area, in a procedure that lasted just a few minutes.

Peter was advised that the tattoo would fade over the next 2-3 weeks before another session was due.

Will Katie be gone forever?

After several sessions the tattoo should fade significantly and hopefully it will be possible to remove all visible traces of "Katie" longer-term.

What does laser tattoo treatment cost?

Small tattoos typically cost around £80 to remove per session of treatment. It is important to remember that several treatments may be necessary.

Where does Sarah Williams work?

Sarah works out of Hove Skin Clinic and Brighton Laser Clinic. Bookings can be made on 01273 719834 or 01273 686869 respectively.