

# Beneath The Surface

## Tattoo Aftercare

1. With clean hands, remove the bandage and wash gently with warm water and a mild anti-bacterial soap. Make sure you remove all traces of blood. Do not use a washcloth to wash your tattoo. This will be too abrasive to a new tattoo. Pat the tattoo dry with a soft clean cloth. Do not rub it dry. Do not use alcohol or hydrogen peroxide to clean your tattoo. It needs to stay moist in order to heal, and these products will dry it out.
2. Cover the tattoo with a very thin layer of an anti-bacterial ointment, such as Neosporin or Bacitracin. Tattoo Goo, Tattoo Lube and other tattoo-specific ointments are also good to use. Do not use Vaseline or petroleum jelly. It will fade the color of your tattoo.
3. Once the tattoo's initial covering is removed, do not cover it again during the healing process. The tattoo will need to be exposed to the air in order to heal.
4. Wash the tattoo at least twice a day for the first week. Apply ointment 3 or 4 times a day for the first 2-3 days, especially when you feel the tattoo is dry. Keeping it moisturized will ensure the least amount of scabbing and peeling, thereby reducing the fading of the color. Make sure your hands are clean each time you rub lotion on it. The introduction of bacteria or dirt will cause the tattoo to become infected.
5. After 2 or 3 days of using ointment, switch to a moisturizing lotion. Use a fragrance-free lotion to prevent irritation. Lubriderm and curel are two good lotions to use.
6. Do not swim, soak in a hot tub or take a bath for two weeks after getting your tattoo. Chemicals like chlorine and the bacteria found in most lakes will cause the tattoo to fade and/or an infection. Soaking the tattoo will also cause the scab to come off faster, and along with it, some of the ink.
7. Do not tan for at least two weeks after tattooing to allow it to heal. After two weeks has passed, you can lie in the sun or go to the tanner as long as you put a light layer of SPF 25 or higher sun block over the tattoo. Sunlight will fade the ink, especially in bright colors or black. If you expose it to too much sun, you might end up having to get it redone in a few years to brighten up the color.
8. Like any other wound to the skin, your tattoo will itch during the healing process. **DO NOT SCRATCH IT.** Scratching or picking will remove the scab and possibly some of the color from the tattoo. Rub lotion into tattoo to relieve itching.

Follow these easy steps.. and your tattoo will heal good.