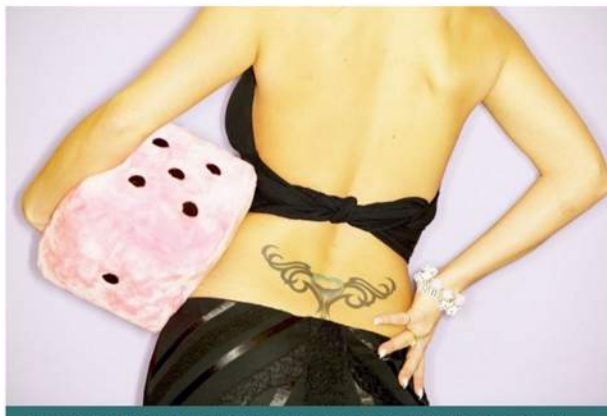


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The Latest in Tattoo Removal Techniques: Because No One Should be Branded with Their Tramp Stamp for Eternity, (unless they want to be)

By [Melissa Chapman](#) | August 22, 2016

The Latest in Tattoo Removal Techniques: Because No One Should be Branded with Their Tramp Stamp for Eternity, (unless they want to be)

I subscribe to a certain theory in regards to the monumental decision to brand oneself with a tattoo. Namely, before one gets a tattoo they should imagine themselves looking at that tattoo in twenty years, or, at the very least, after the tequila wears off. Case-in-point: I'll never forget a guy I dated who showed me his Hebrew-worded tattoo and very matter-of-factly told me that it meant "strength" when, (unbeknownst to him and because I am fluent in Hebrew,) I knew that it actually meant "cow." This date's misguided tattoo is a story I relay to anyone I know who is about to get inked. I tell them my funny anecdote and then I get very serious and look them square in the jaw and say, "Just remember, a tattoo is a permanent marker on your body and you should think long and hard before you get it so that you don't wind up with the word cow on your forearm."

Yet, despite the fact that getting a tattoo is pretty much one of the most permanent commitments one could make, (you can't divorce or sell a tattoo), a [Harris Poll](#) of 2,016 adults surveyed online between January 16th and 23rd in 2012 by Harris Interactive © found that one-in-five U.S. adults has at least one tattoo (21%) which is up from the 16% and 14% who reported having a tattoo when this question was asked in 2003 and 2008, respectively. Among those with a tattoo, most have never regretted getting their ink (86%).

In fact, according to board-certified plastic surgeon, [Dr. Marc J. Salzman](#), housewives, business executives, MD's, and lawyers, (among other professions), may now all have tattoos. Ages also seem to be just about everywhere, from teens to those in their 70s. And, while getting inked is on the rise, according to The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery's (ASAPS) [statistical data for the 2015 calendar year](#), tattoo removal procedures increased by 37% from the previous year.

"Of course it makes sense that if more people have tattoos the need for tattoo removals will increase," explains board-certified plastic surgeon [Dr. Marc Dupere](#) "I used to perhaps see one patient per month for the surgical removal now I will see up to 5 clients per month. Without a doubt, the numbers of people getting tattoos are increasing, with tattoo 'parlors' and tattoo artists at every second corner."

So just what are some of the most sought after laser tattoo removal techniques?

When it comes to state-of-the-art tattoo removal techniques, according to Dr. Salzman, laser treatments have gained the reputation as being the go-to technology over the last 10 years.

"Each laser is useful for the different colors of pigment in a tattoo," notes Dr. Salzman. "Short pulsed lasers (nanosecond and picosecond) at 755 nm have been useful for the darker colors. The mainstay laser is a Q switched 532/1064 nm that is useful for the darker colors of green and black as well as the reds and dark oranges. Today's modern tattoos also have some bright greens, blues and yellow pigments. These lighter colors are best treated with Ruby lasers at 694nm."

Dr. Salzman further explains that lasers work on the tattoos in two different manners. The most common is a photo-thermal reaction. Here, the interaction of the laser, which is attracted to a certain color pigment based on its wavelength, causes heat to be rapidly dissipated which breaks up the pigment into smaller particle sizes, macrophages in blood are then able to engulf it thereby removing it from the area. The other reaction of lasers with pigment is of a photo-acoustic nature. The interaction of some lasers with tissue can cause a sound wave, which is of sufficient energy to break up the tattoo pigment.

However despite all this new technology, there are some colors that are difficult to remove," says Dr. Salzman. Most notably the white and bright yellows fall into that category. Laser light is not well absorbed by these colors. Another type of laser that removes a small microscopic tunnel of skin at a controllable depth, are the fractional ablative lasers. These have been useful in removing tattoos with hard-to-remove colors.

There's a new PATCH in town when it comes to tattoo removal

According to Dr. Salzman, for those who are looking for another alternative to laser tattoo removal, there is a new innovation called the "Describe PFD Patch." This is a silicone-based patch that is transparent to the laser, along with a liquid perfluorodecalin (PFD).

"The interesting thing about this is that while tattoo removal using lasers in the past had to be done one treatment at a time, with the PFD patch multiple treatments of the tattoo with different wavelengths can be done all in the same appointment," says Dr. Salzman. "The Describe PFD patch also reduces the amount of scattering of light hitting the skin allowing for deeper penetration of the energy."

In fact, a recent clinical trial of the PFD Describe Patch concluded that there was less pain, earlier healing and a shorter interval between treatments using the patch. In patients offered a choice, after having tattoo removal with or without the patch, 100% chose the PFD Describe Patch.

Tattoos can also be removed with surgical procedures

Of course, when laser treatments are not effective there are surgical techniques. Dr. Dupere who doesn't do laser tattoo removal, will often see patients for surgical removal of their tattoos when the lasers were not able to remove enough of the dyes.

"Unfortunately, there are no surgical techniques without a scar," says Dr. Dupere. "That being said, plastic surgeons tend to make better scars, finer and better camouflaged, localizing them in folds and wrinkles."

If the tattoo is relatively large and located in an area without "convenient" excess skin such as the deltoids, ankles, forearm, etc., Dr. Dupere's surgical tattoo removal technique is as follows: "In many situations, I have to perform "serial" excisions that are two or three excisions of the tattoo, each three months apart, to allow the skin to stretch and to permit another excision and closure. In doing so, each time I perform an excision, I remove the previous scar with more of the tattoo, says Dr. Dupere. "Rarely, when the tattoo is very large and the skin very tight in the anatomical area, a skin graft might be required. Covering a tattoo with a skin graft is not optimal, so I save this as my last resort."

Having performed tattoo removals, Dr. Dupere offers this advice to someone who is considering getting a tattoo.

- First and foremost, seriously consider having versus not having it.
- Keep in mind that muscular pectorals, calves or deltoids may not stay so muscular forever.
- Keep in mind the anatomical location of the tattoo you're considering, as it might be advisable to have it on body parts where the tattoo can be hidden if need-be; for example, when looking for a new job.
- Choose a reputable tattoo artist who will advise well and use the proper tool and colors, avoiding the fading of colors over time.
- Consider a tattoo that will be timeless, and for sure not the name of a girlfriend/boyfriend or significant other.
- Err towards smaller tattoos.
- Try to choose a body part that is more easily amenable to excision should it be required over time.

Dr. Salzman also adds that having removed thousands of tattoos, he recommends that strong consideration be given to the content, color and location of a planned tattoo.

Of course the good news is that as the number of tattooed patients' increases, the technology for their removal continues to improve. In other words there are options for people who regret getting their tattoo.

Tattoo removal has a 90% patient satisfaction rating based on Real Patient Ratings. To see patient reviews and find out what to expect when undergoing this procedure, visit the [procedure page](#).

About the Author



[Melissa Chapman](#)

Melissa Chapman blogs about her marriage and everything in between at [Married My Sugar Daddy](#) and is determined to never be caught dead wearing mom jeans. When she is not busy scheduling her life around her two Shih Tzus and kids and uncovering the secret ingredient to happily ever after with her husband of 15 years, at age 41 she has found herself on a permanent quest to uncover the best tips and tricks to attaining a youthful, un-marionette-like appearance.

Her work has appeared in Ladies Home Journal, Care.com, [The Staten Island Family](#), ABC News, BlogHer, Baby Center, Montourage, Babbie, The Washington Post, Time Out NY Kid Village and Lifetime Moms.

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