

Good ink. Great aftercare.

Give your new tattoo time to heal. Keep this guide handy and follow the dressing instructions your artist gives you.

01 Know your dressing

Ordinary dressing or cling film: remove at the time your artist advises. Do not treat it like long-wear adhesive film or keep rewrapping without a specific plan.

Adhesive healing film ("second skin"): follow your artist's instructions and the product's wear time. If it leaks, loosens enough to expose the tattoo, or causes irritation, contact the studio for advice. Do not trap a leaking dressing under another layer.

02 Clean gently

After removing the dressing, wash your hands. Gently wash the tattoo with lukewarm water and mild, fragrance-free soap. Rinse and pat dry with clean disposable paper towel. Do not scrub. Once uncovered, wash gently once or twice a day and after it gets dirty.

03 Moisturise lightly

Once clean and dry, apply a very thin layer of the fragrance-free aftercare product recommended by your artist, as directed. The skin should not stay greasy or soggy. Do not put cream under adhesive film. Avoid perfumed products; use antibiotic creams only if prescribed.

YOUR DRESSING PLAN

Dressing: _____ Remove / change: _____

HEALING / WHAT TO EXPECT

Protect the work.

Healing varies with the tattoo, its placement and your skin. The surface often takes 2-4 weeks to heal; deeper healing takes longer.

HELP IT HEAL

Wear clean, loose clothing and use clean bedding. Short showers are fine; avoid a direct, strong spray. Let flakes and light scabs come away naturally.

GIVE IT A BREAK

Until healed, avoid soaking, swimming, hot tubs, saunas, sunbeds and spray tans. Avoid friction, heavy sweating, shaving over it, picking and scratching.

What can be normal

Mild redness, tenderness and a little clear or ink-stained fluid can occur at first. Light flaking and itching may follow. These should gradually settle, rather than get worse.

When to get medical help

Seek an urgent GP appointment or NHS 111 advice for spreading redness, increasing warmth or swelling, worsening pain, pus, an unpleasant smell, fever or feeling unwell. Redness can be harder to see on darker skin; pay attention to heat, swelling and pain too. Do not wait for a studio reply if infection is suspected.

Call 999 for difficulty breathing or swelling of the lips, tongue or throat.

Stay in touch

For dressing or product questions, call 01539 722900. If you have colour concerns, contact us within the first two weeks so we can record them and advise about photographs. Any touch-up assessment or work should wait until the skin has healed.

Once fully healed, protect your tattoo with clothing and high-factor sunscreen (SPF 30 or above).

Guidance checked 20 October 2026. References: CIEH tattoo aftercare toolkit (2013); NHS Norfolk: Piercings & Tattoos; NHS: Cuts and grazes. Dressing wear times depend on the product used.