

Top 7 Tips for Getting a Tattoo You'll Love Forever

So you've decided to invest in the ultimate form of art, and you've decided to provide the artist the gift of your personal canvas. Big decision! Now what? Getting a tattoo can be a fun and profound experience with the proper due diligence. Based on feedback from clients, many people seem to want a tattoo removed not because of the artist or the quality of the piece, but rather because something has changed personally for them, or they simply want to make room for something new and interesting. So here are some important tips for getting a tattoo you'll love forever.

1. Ask yourself **"Why do I want a Tattoo?"** This is not a judgment statement; it is a challenge for you to understand what the piece will represent to you, and how you want others to perceive it when they see it. Is it to honour someone? Is it a statement about who you are? Is it to remember something that has shaped you as a person? Whatever the reason, make sure you know and understand the answer to this question so you can properly express it to the artist you choose. After all, tattoo artists are not mind readers, they are incredibly creative professionals; and the better you are able to express your wishes, the better the chance of them creating something you will love forever
2. So you know why you want the tattoo, but have you chosen what the tattoo will be? There are well-known industry magazines that are good resources for seeing showcased work, and ads for famous artists. WestCoast Ink is a great BC based magazine that will give you a peek at some of the many talented artists in the area. You can look at this and other publications to spark some ideas, and come up with a concept you think you'll like. You can also look at what artists refer to as flash art for common designs ideas. The question to ask at this stage is, **"do I want this to be a common piece worn by many people, or do I want my art to be personal and unique?"** Your answer will guide you in what direction to take.
3. So you've decided whether you want a common piece or a unique piece. At this point just sit on the idea for a couple weeks. Purchase some temporary tattoos similar to what you want, and wear it for a few weeks (replacing it when necessary). This will help you figure out if it was an impulsive desire or if it is something you really want and will not become bored with. It's a good way to experiment with how it makes you feel, how people in your life respond, how strangers respond, how it looks in certain clothing, will it raise eyebrows at work? This is a terrific way for you to make sure you can live with the decision once you've done it.
4. Next step is to research who you will choose to do the honours. The best way to make this decision is to first **ask someone you know for a referral**. If this isn't an option, then you can usually find the portfolios of artists online or in their studios. It is important to **meet the artist or speak to them by phone** so you can make sure their personalities and interests are a good match for the style piece you want, and the experience you imagine. This will give you an idea of:
 - Their work habits (talking on phone while treating clients?)
 - How their studio operates (respectful, fun, on time)
 - Infection control practices (gloves, sharps containers)
 - How they will interact with you
 - Cleanliness (blood spatters on floor or table?)
 - Are there protective films on equipment,
 - Are they double dipping in bulk supplies of ointments etc.,
 - Are they licensed, and
 - Basically what kind of experience you might have.



It's important to keep in mind that you'll be spending one-on-one time with this person, and allowing them to ink your holy grail so to speak. Make sure you actually like the artist, feel they operate in a safe, and cleanly way, and think they'll be pleasant to spend time with alone.

5. Once you've found a tattoo artist you are considering, this is where you should **ask them some important questions**. Like what? Well, things you should ask are: A) do you use single-use ink packages, or bulk ink? B) What type of dyes are in the inks you use? (Azo? Organic? Non-metallic? Etc.) C) How do you sterilize your equipment? D) Do you enjoy what you do?

The reason for asking these questions is not to be defensive, but rather to allow you to make an informed decision about what you will be doing. The more you understand the process, the easier it will be for you to communicate with the artist to get what you really want without hindsight awakenings. It's an opportunity to speak with your artist about what they do, and how they do it so you can participate intelligently in the choices and types of colours you get. By asking them questions, you will discover what your options are.

If you are not sure about something, ask! Professional artists are eager to make their clients comfortable, and want their clients to be happy with the work they do, so communicate.

6. Provided all your questions have been answered and you feel comfortable with the process, be sure to **communicate HONESTLY** with your artist when they draw up your custom design and present it to you. If you are looking at the piece and thinking "it's okay, but I wish it were _____" then **DON'T** tell them it's great because you don't want to offend.

Getting a tattoo can be a collaborative process if that is what you want it to be. Your artists can't read minds. They can only try their best to make you happy if you tell them what you really want. **If you are indecisive, or unsure about a design, then it is not a good idea to proceed** until you are sure the design matches what you envisioned or exceeds your expectations.

7. Once you have a design that works for you 100%, it's time to make your decision. Think of it as a lifelong commitment. If you've gone through all the steps in this article, it won't matter if you get it done spur of the moment, or book an appointment, because your decision hopefully was well thought out, researched, and well communicated. As long as you land in the chair of the artist you did your due diligence on, hopefully you will end up with a piece of art that brings you a lot of pleasure for a lifetime. If not, contact Shrinking Ink at www.ShrinkingInk.com 844-FADE INK and let us work with you and your artist to tweak your design.