1. **Listen to your tattoo artist.**
* Think of your tattoo as having a warranty; if you don't follow the artist's instructions, you might void the warranty and he or she won't give you free touch-ups.Remember: tattoo artists want your tattoo to heal perfectly and look good.
1. **Leave the bandage on untill you are within a safe and hygienic environment.**
* Remember that plastic wrap will need to be changed and the tattoo cleaned much more frequently than with other bandaging, to prevent the build-up of bacteria.
1. **Carefully remove the bandage.**
* You should keep your tattoo covered for a minimum of two hours before removing, but the recommended maximum amount of time varies between 4 and 24 hours. Tattoos covered in plastic wrap are the exception, plastic wrap should never be left on a new tattoo for longer than two hours.
* To remove the bandage, soak it with warm water to prevent it from sticking to your skin. It should come off easily once wet. Discard the used bandage.
1. **Gently wash the tattoo.**
* Recommended warm water and mild, unscented liquid antibacterial or antimicrobial soap. Use your hands to gently rub the tattoo, removing all traces of blood, plasma, or leaked ink. This will help to prevent the tattoo from scabbing too soon. Do not use a wash cloth, loofah or any type of sponge to clean the tattoo, as these may harbor bacteria. If your new tattoo is covering a large area of skin, it may be easiest to wash the tattoo in the shower.
1. **Let the tattoo air dry.**
* Once you have thoroughly washed the tattoo, you should gently pat it dry with a little towel. Do not rub the tattoo, as this may cause irritation. Once the excess moisture has been removed, you should leave the tattoo uncovered for 20 minutes to an hour. This will allow the tattoo to breath and any excess moisture to evaporate.You should allow your tattoo to breathe like this after each time you wash it or get it wet.
1. **Apply ointment.**
* Once your tattoo is fully dry and the skin begins to feel tight you can apply a little ointment, such as Bepanthen to the tattoo. Make sure to apply only a very thin layer that's just enough to make the tattoo shine and rub it in gently until it's absorbed by the skin. It's very important that you don't apply too much ointment or else you'll suffocate the tattoo and encourage the growth of bacteria.
* You should continue applying the ointment after each time you wash the tattoo for about 3 to 5 days, or until the tattoo starts to peel. At that point, you can switch to a regular, fragrance-free non alcoholic or petroleum based lotion. If you do use a lotion like these it will draw the ink from the tattoo to the surface of the skin, causing the tattoo to fade before it's even fully healed.
1. **Continue to moisturize your tattoo 3 to 5 times a day.**
* The initial healing of the tattoo will take up to two weeks. During this time, you can expect the tattoo to start peeling or flaking, in a similar way to sunburn. Some colored skin may come away as the tattoo peels, but this is completely normal.If you have taken proper care of your new tattoo, you can expect your tattoo to be healed and your skin to have fully regenerated in about 4 to 6 weeks.
1. **What to Avoid**
* Avoid soaking the tattoo. Until your tattoo is fully healed, you should avoid swimming in a pool, in the sea, or even soaking in the bathtub. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, exposing your tattoo to too much water may draw ink out of your skin and damage the tattoos appearance. Secondly, the water in swimming pools, the sea and the bathtub may be carrying dirt, bacteria, chemicals and other impurities that could cause your tattoo to become infected.
* Do not expose your new tattoo to direct sunlight. Sunlight is the worst enemy of new tattoos. The harsh rays of the sun may cause your skin to blister and bleach some of the color from your tattoo. For this reason, it is best to keep your tattoo covered and away from the sun for at least 3 to 4 weeks, until the initial healing is complete.
* After that, you will still need to protect your tattoo by wearing a suncream. This will prevent your tattoo from fading in the sun, keeping the colors true for longer.
* Do not scratch or pick at your tattoo. As it heals, your tattoo will begin to scab. This is normal, and the scabs should be allowed to dry out and fall off by themselves. Do not try to help the process along by picking at the scabs. This may cause the scabs to fall off prematurely, leaving holes or light spots on your tattoo.
* If your hands or nails are unclean, you may also cause the tattoo to become infected. You should always wash your hands with anti-bacterial soap before touching your tattoo and you should never allow anyone else to touch it while it heals.You can relive itching by slapping the tattoo with the flat of your hand, or by rubbing in a little lotion.
1. **Avoid tight-fitting clothes.**
* Avoid wearing tight or restrictive clothing on the area with your new tattoo, especially at first. As your tattoo heals, it will seep plasma and excess ink, which may cause the clothing to stick to the tattoo.Aim to wear clean, loose-fitting clothing, day and night, while your tattoo is healing.
1. **Avoid working out.**
* Tattoos covering large surface areas, or those that are near joints (such as elbows and knees), may take longer to heal if the skin is forced to move around too much during intense workouts or other physical activity. The movement will cause the skin to crack and become irritated, prolonging the tattoos healing process.Swelling may also occur with new tattoos on your feet, ankles or calves, especially if you have been standing for long periods of time. If this happens, you can reduce swelling by taking on Ibuprofen, applying an ice pack to the swollen area, and elevating your feet and legs.