

STEPS TO HELP YOU GET INKED

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It seems like people nowadays are getting tattoos more often than they get haircuts. Especially young people, it appears to be the new trend. Some people, like me, get tattoos that have a lot of significance and a story behind them. Others get tattoos because they like the look. There are certain steps you must take if you're considering getting a tattoo.

1. Have a specific image in mind.

You should know how you want the tattoo to look for the most part. You don't necessarily have to know every single detail as long as you know the general. Try sketching your own design or look up several designs to find just the right one. Some people suggest waiting several months after you come up with the design to make sure it's something you want, since it is permanent.

2. Know where you'll get it on your body.

You need to know where it's going to be on your body so you can figure out size and placement, but also if it's going to conflict with work or other affiliations. It might also be important to consider the pain involved. Certain areas of the body, like the places with a bone protruding, hurt more than others. A rib tattoo may look nice, but if you can't handle the pain you should consider a different location.

3. Find a quality tattoo shop.

I was fortunate enough to have an older brother who took me to a great shop where we now have a good relationship with one of the artists. If you don't have friends or family who can introduce you to someone/someplace, you need to do some research. There are a few places you go where you really need to be able to trust the person and the tattoo shop is one of them. The last thing you want is a bad experience inked on your body for the rest of your life. Keep in mind tattoos are fairly expensive. A standard rate is around \$100 an hour depending on size and detail. This is not the type of purchase you want to go cheap on.

4. Set up an appointment.

Once you know what you're getting, where it's going on your body and what shop you're going to get it done at, you need to make an appointment. If you

found a quality shop, chances are you won't be able to just walk in whenever you feel like it. Try to set it up so you have enough time to save money. Once you get to your appointment you should be absolutely confident about the tattoo.

5. Prepare for the pain.

If you think a shot at the doctor's hurts, you got another thing coming with a tattoo. Even on the "easy" areas, like the chest or the arm, it still hurts. People have different thresholds of pain, but no matter what you should expect to feel something. It's not too bad, you do get somewhat used to it after a while but a needle jabbing into your skin for hours is not pleasant. Some things you could do to help with the pain are listening to music, biting down on something or holding someone's hand.

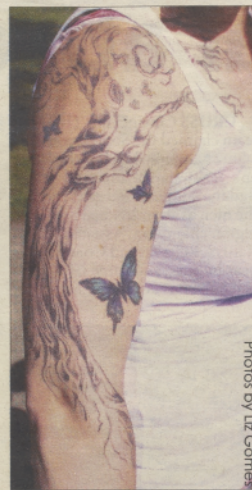
6. Check the progress.

For the most part a tattoo is traced, but that doesn't mean there can't be mistakes or accidents. I'm sure you've seen or heard of misspelled or awkward tattoos (just look at The Print's horror stories!). I suggest taking one or more breaks depending on the size and detail of your tattoo to see how it's coming along. If you found a good shop you probably won't have anything to worry about, but just in case, it's better to catch a mistake early in the process.

7. Take care of your tattoo.

Congratulations you're done! Sort of. New tattoos require a good amount of care. After the artist finishes the tattoo they should put some lotion on they tattoo and cover it up, typically with saran wrap. You'll receive instructions at the shop on care. You should leave the saran wrap on your tattoo for at least 30-45 minutes so your skin can recover. After you remove the wrap you should shower to wash the tattoo, but you should not submerge the tattoo in water for at least two weeks.

Pat dry the tattoo after washing, don't want to rub it. During those weeks you should be applying lotion daily on your tattoo to keep it from drying out. Only do it a few times in the first 48 hours, but after that you can apply lotion up to three times daily for the first week. Typically you apply lotion just once or twice daily in the second week. You should use a fragrance free, hydrating lotion preferably with vitamin E. After the second week you are all set to rock that ink!



Photos by Liz Gaines



Blake Thomason

HAVE YOU SEEN ME?

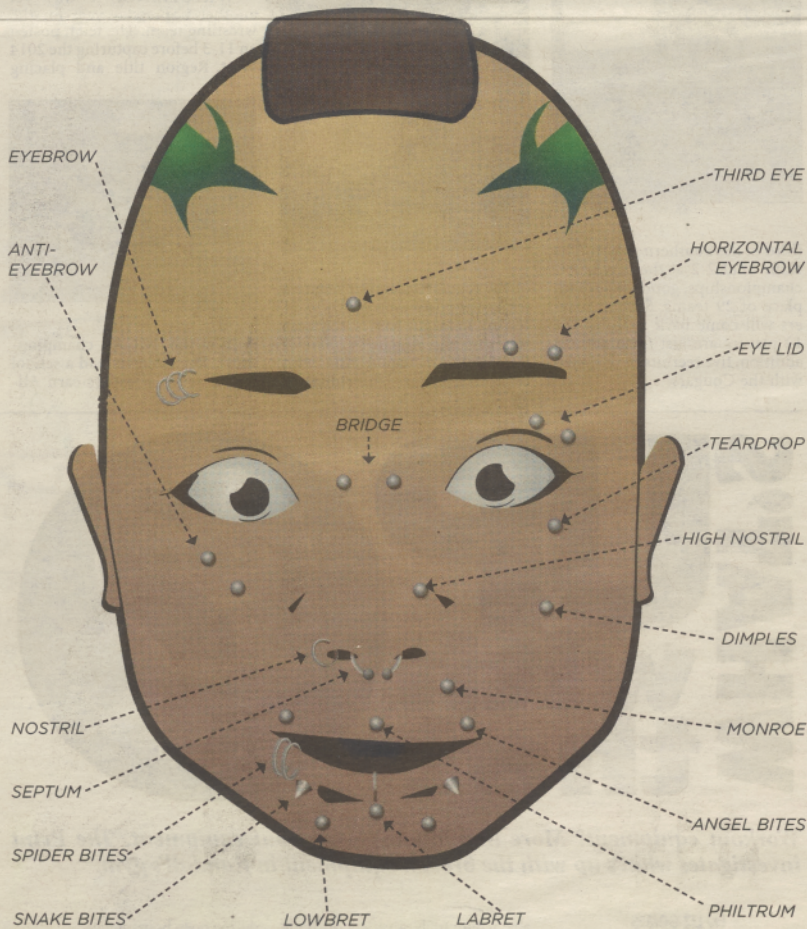
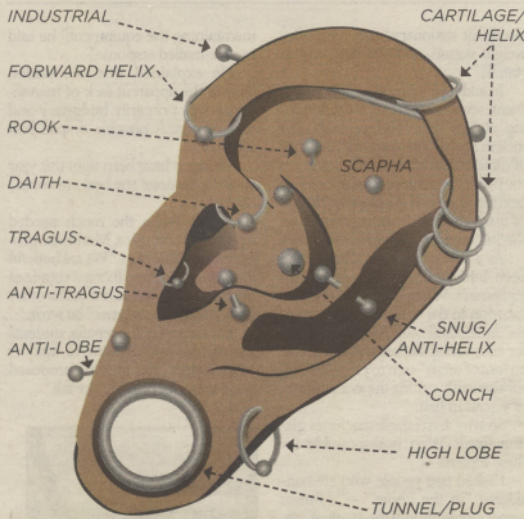
Snake, top left: Victoria Munsey's in-progress cobra sleeve tattoo. The design was chosen because she's "really into snakes." By Saad at Pussycat Tattoos.

Tree, top right: Coral Chumas' sleeve tattoo of a tree and butterflies symbolizes that "the old is still beautiful." Artwork done by a friend.

Turtle, bottom left: Shainna Jones shows a tarot card inspired design of a turtle on her thigh. Tattoo done by Joe at Skin City in Tigard.

Destined, bottom right: Colby Thomason shows off some of his tattoos. His first tattoo was at 16, when he got "destined" written on his side in a friend's kitchen. Currently 22, he estimates he now has 18 to 20 tattoos.

NAME THAT PIERCING!



TATTOO ARTISTS TO FOLLOW ON INSTAGRAM

- @KatVonD
- @highvoltagetat
- @hannahpixiesnow
- @alymayne
- @romeolacoste