

Think Twice Before Getting a Tattoo

Jon Burras

Your body is your canvas. Your skin is the medium to express your inner spirit, visions and personality. Your art is worn on your sleeve, ankle or backside. The wildest dreams you could imagine are imprinted on your dermis like a graffiti artist expressing himself on a wall in a back ally. Congratulations! You are one of the millions who have put tattoos on their bodies.

Body art has been around for a very long time. The oldest recorded tattoo came from the remains of the body of a Tyrolean Iceman found in the Austrian Alps. His remains are thought to be from at least 3250 B.C. People from all over the planet, from jungles to cities, perform this ancient ritual. It is estimated that at least 120 million people in the Western Hemisphere have at least one tattoo.

The last twenty years have seen a dramatic shift in tattoo culture. What once was reserved for sailors and bikers has now spread to soccer moms and executives. We see artists, yoga practitioners, celebrities, musicians and athletes all wearing the cloak of tattoo art. A once forbidden and scandalous act has now become as normal as applying for a driver's license when one turns sixteen.

Tattoo aficionados will proclaim that they have fulfilled a lifetime dream to adorn their bodies with one or many tattoos. They feel as if their life is complete now that they have taken their inner thoughts and feelings and emblazoned them on their outer shell. For many, one tattoo is not enough. It is common for some to become addicted to tattoo art and begin to spread their entire body with this cover art like a high tide taking over a beach.

Tattoos become a symbol of who you are and where you have been. You might tattoo the name of your significant other on your arm to show them your endearing love and devotion. You might encapsulate an event in your life like the birth of a child or your favorite football teams' Super Bowl victory. Some feel the sense of accomplishment and personal victory at having gone through the pain of tattoo application as if it were a right of passage like giving birth or joining the military.

Once you affix a tattoo to your skin you now belong to the tattoo culture. There are tattoo conventions, magazines, television shows, blogs, videos and art books all devoted to this body art. Like a smoker or a yoga practitioner, you now belong to a sub group in our society

where you have kindred spirits on every corner and in every walk of life.

Now the reality check. Maybe you might wish to think twice about getting a tattoo. There are many down sides and potentially harmful consequences to wearing tattoos that most people have not thought about or wish to completely ignore. First off, as a young person your skin is toned and tight. As you age and put on weight your skin might begin to sag and stretch. When you were twenty-five that golden locked goddess sitting on a crescent moon attached to your upper arm might look appealing. As you approach middle age and your skin has changed your tattoo now looks like a homeless woman straddling a broom. A once proud butterfly ready to take flight on your backside imprinted when you were eighteen will change in your forties to a dilapidated moth that couldn't fly anywhere. In your twenties a tattoo of a magnificent warship emblazoned on your arm at fifty begins to look like a life raft that cannot even float. A prestigious jaguar figure on your belly was something to be proud of at the age of twenty. At forty years old and after three pregnancies that jaguar has been stretched out to look like a worn out elephant.

Everything in life changes. It might have sounded like a good idea when you printed your wife's name on your arm as a sign of devotion when you were thirty. Most people do not realize that there is a fifty percent divorce rate in America. After you get divorced you have only a few options left with your wife's tattoo left on your arm. You can keep it and be painfully reminded every day of her. You can have it removed only to be left with ugly scars. Many people choose to cover it up with a new tattoo layered on top. Through your divorce you can divide up your property but you alone will be stuck with your wife's name frozen to your skin.

Ink will tend to fade over time. What was once a brilliant cartoon character will quickly fade to a shadow of itself. A Daffy Duck character might fade to a sad looking puddle of mush over time. Your bright colors might look like a rash or shingles after twenty or thirty years in the sun. Something you were once proud of becomes a hindrance and something you are ashamed of while spending your time trying to cover it up.

Not all tattoo artists are the same. There are some very talented artists and there are some who are just in business to collect a pay check and might as well be bartending someplace. You might have a Chinese symbol tattooed to your arm and you believe it means "love and peace." Since your artist is not a Chinese symbol expert what your tattoo really says is "*man with fat face.*" There have been many occasions where a tattoo has been misspelled. You thought you were getting "*No Regrets*" and instead end up with "*No Regerts*". A tattoo saying "*With every heart beat*" never materializes. Instead you are forever left with "*With every hart beat.*" Before getting a tattoo make sure the artist has graduated from high school and knows how to

spell. You might think that you are getting a picture of John Lennon (the famous Beatle) on your arm but you end up with the likeness of Vladimir Lenin (the Russian revolutionary) instead. You should have been more clear with your tattoo artist. You just said you wanted a picture of "Lennon". You were thinking Beatles and he was thinking communist.

We mistakenly believe that we live in an era of equality and freedom. This is a mistaken way of seeing the world. The reality is that there exists an enormous amount of inequality and prejudice against us. There exists prejudice in the form of religion, race, age and gender. We also have tattoo prejudice. If you have tattoos, especially on your face or neck, unless you are an MMA (mixed martial arts) fighter or professional athlete, you will have a difficult time getting a job in the corporate world. Most corporate executives do not want their employees to be "tatted up", especially in the head and neck region.

The public image of a company is important. An employee with tattoos on his or her neck or face will be less likely to represent the image of the company. Most people who are tattooed above the shoulders will work as self-employed (like an auto mechanic or hair dresser) or a small company. Your chances of working for a large corporation will be limited. While wearing tattoos might be mainstream, being employed at a large company with facial tattoos is not.

There are many potential health risks associated with tattoos. There is a potential to catch Hepatitis C from an unsterile environment of the tattoo parlor. A person with a tattoo is considered four times more likely to acquire Hepatitis C than a person who does not have a tattoo. This according to a Fox News Health Report. About five percent of people getting a tattoo will also get a bacterial infection as a side effect. Some people have allergic reactions to the ink while others develop rashes or flu-like symptoms. Some people have short-term bleeding and others are in pain for a short time.

There may be long-term consequences that very few people will ever talk about. Most tattoo ink is unregulated and filled with many toxic ingredients that include nickel, lead, mercury, arsenic, cobalt, cadmium, chromium, albuminate, ferrous oxide and titanium oxide. Any one of these chemicals would be enough to cause harmful consequences yet tattoo ink contains most or all of them depending on the color and batch of ink. Many health problems in our modern day society are attributed to heavy metal poisoning. Tattoo ink can make this problem even worse or it might be the primary instigator in your health condition.

Most people have an ignorant belief that states that once tattoo ink is injected into the skin it will stay in place forever. Not true. Titanium dioxide, aluminum, chromium, nickel, copper and iron (all elements in tattoo ink), have been found in the lymph nodes of people who have

had tattoos. Lymphomas (cancers of the immune system) have been found in toxic lymph glands filled with heavy metals thought to derive from tattoo ink. Could we be having a rash of lymphoma cancers develop in the next few years from the leaching of metals into the immune systems of so many people?

Dr. Robert J. Marshall has conducted some telling research indicating that tattoos (along with piercings, surgeries, epidurals and other procedures) create "Interference Fields." These Interference Fields will help to damage or destroy a target organ, often some distance away. The "Quantum Energy Biofield" or pathway of energy through the body that coincides with the acupuncture meridian system, will be blocked or imbalanced by a tattoo. For instance, a small butterfly tattoo on one's ankle might affect the digestion system causing constipation or create migraine headaches in the brain. As these pathways are blocked many people will suffer health conditions as a result. Unknowingly, one's dermal work of art might be the source of chronic fatigue or panic attacks.

Many people assume that if they are not happy with their skin art they can just have it removed with a laser. While most present day lasers do a better job than in the past with little to no visible signs of scarring there is still underlying dermal damage to the tissues. Energy blockages still exist and damage to the underlying cells has occurred even if the surface skin feels smooth. The fascia tissue remains blocked and permanently scarred.

While some might call me a "hater" or the old man who yells at kids to get off his yard, I beg to differ. While I can appreciate fine art I would prefer it to be done on a linen canvas and not on the human body. There are so many possible consequences to a tattoo that most people are not informed of. There is still so much that we do not know about how the tattoo is affecting the body. I always suggest to err on the side of caution. I am alarmed that as over-zealous folks show up at tattoo parlors to fulfill their fantasies, they receive very little information about the possible consequences. Before you get a tattoo, think twice (or three or four times). The consequences might be life-threatening.

Resources

Fox News Health Report: Tattoos and Hepatitis C

<http://www.foxnews.com/health/2013/01/24/hepatitis-c-linked-to-tattoo-ink.html>

Huffington Post: Everyone Has A Tattoo...

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/everybody-has-a-tattoo-but-nobody-talks-about-the-side-effects_us_55c3ad03e4b0d9b743db4f7c

Tattoo Risks:

<http://www.beautyepic.com/side-effects-of-tattoo/>

Global News: Lymph nodes

<https://globalnews.ca/news/3746925/tattoo-ink-safety-lymph-nodes/>

Lymph node cancer:

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20171004/Tattoo-ink-from-15-years-ago-mimics-lymph-node-cancer-Case-study.aspx>

Tom's Good Files: Dr. Robert Marshall and Biofields

<http://www.tomsgoodfiles.com/faq-for-qrq.php>