

TATTOO AFTERCARE INSTRUCTIONS

Your artist covered the tattoo. The rest is on you.

Your artist will let you know which aftercare method was applied. Follow your path — ignore the rest.

PATH 1

Standard Bandage

PATH 2

Second Skin Film

PATH 3

Headrush Healing Gel

PATH 1 — STANDARD BANDAGE

Your artist bandaged your tattoo for the trip home. This first bandage protects it from bacteria and clothing friction.

RECOMMENDED AFTERCARE PRODUCTS

Hustle Butter Deluxe • Redemption Tattoo Butter • Tattoo Goo • Headrush Healing Gel

Headrush Healing Gel is available directly at our studio.

An aftercare ointment or balm should be applied to help prevent infection and keep the skin protected. All products listed above are suitable for this purpose.

Phase 1 — First 48 Hours (3× daily)

Repeat 3 times a day — morning, afternoon, and before bed. You sleep in the bandage.

- 1 Wash your hands before touching the tattoo. Every time.
- 2 Remove the bandage and discard it. Never reuse.
- 3 Wash the tattoo under lukewarm running water using an unscented antibacterial liquid soap (Dial, Neutrogena, or similar). Wash with your fingertips only — no cloth, no sponge. Keep washing until the skin looks matte and is no longer shiny with lymph fluid or ink. The first wash is critical. If you skip it or rush it, the tattoo will crust over and heal poorly.
- 4 Pat dry with a clean paper towel only. No fabric towels — they leave fibres behind and cause inflammation.
- 5 Apply a thin layer of aftercare product (see box above). A thin layer. More is not better.
- 6 Cover with a fresh non-woven gauze pad secured with medical tape or paper tape. New bandage every time — no exceptions.

No bar soap, scented soap, loofahs, washcloths, or sponges on a fresh tattoo.

Phase 2 — Day 3–4 Onward

By days 3–4, if you've kept up the routine, your tattoo should start drying out and peeling. Normal. Don't panic, don't pick.

- Remove the bandage for good. Done with covering.
- Continue applying aftercare product 3–4 times a day. Keep the skin consistently moisturized — never let it dry out and tighten.
- After 10–14 days, transition to a regular unscented moisturizer.

NOTE: For line work and outline-only tattoos the intensive 3× routine may only be needed for the first day. Your artist will tell you.

Frequently Asked Questions

My tattoo formed a thick crust. Is that bad?

Light peeling and flaking is completely normal. Thick hard crusting usually means the early washes weren't thorough enough. Do not pick, scratch, or scrub off any crust — let it shed on its own time.

Can I shower normally?

Yes. Keep it short and avoid soaking the tattoo. No baths, pools, lakes, or hot tubs until fully healed.

Which product should I use?

Hustle Butter Deluxe, Redemption Tattoo Butter, or Tattoo Goo are all solid options. We also carry and personally recommend Headrush Healing Gel — available at the studio.

PATH 2 — SECOND SKIN FILM

Second Skin is a transparent, breathable, waterproof film applied over your fresh tattoo in-studio. It acts as a full physical barrier for several days while your skin starts to heal underneath.

Application (Done In-Studio)

- 1 Tattoo rests 5–10 minutes post-session until surface weeping stops and the skin is clean and dry.
- 2 Tattoo is washed with unscented antibacterial soap, rinsed, and thoroughly patted dry.
- 3 Second Skin is applied extending 2–3 cm beyond the tattoo edge on all sides for full adhesion.
- 4 Skin around the tattoo is kept clean and dry — especially important in warm weather for proper adhesion.

Wearing the Film

Leave Second Skin on for 3–5 days, or exactly as recommended by your artist.

NORMAL: Blood, plasma, and ink fluid collecting under the film is completely expected. That is the healing process doing exactly what it should. Do not remove the film because of this.

Removing Second Skin

- 1 Wash your hands first.
- 2 Find an edge and peel slowly in the direction of hair growth.
- 3 Best method: remove it during a warm shower. Steam loosens the adhesive and makes the whole thing much easier.
- 4 After removal, wash the area gently with unscented antibacterial soap, pat dry with a paper towel.
- 5 Apply a thin layer of aftercare product and continue moisturizing until fully healed.

No washcloths, loofahs, or sponges — they irritate fresh skin and harbour bacteria.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I shower with it on?

Yes. Second Skin is 100% waterproof. Normal showers are fine. Avoid prolonged submersion: no baths, pools, lakes, or hot tubs.

Can I sunbathe with it on?

No. Second Skin has zero UV protection. Never expose an unhealed tattoo to direct sunlight — with or without film. Even after healing, use SPF to preserve colour and sharpness long-term.

The edges are lifting early. What do I do?

Trim loose edges carefully with clean scissors. If the film is lifting significantly before day 5, contact your artist before removing it.

What aftercare product after removing the film?

Hustle Butter, Redemption, Tattoo Goo, or Headrush Healing Gel (available at the studio).

PATH 3 — HEADRUSH HEALING GEL

Headrush Healing Gel is our in-house aftercare product — a 100% natural, all-organic alternative to adhesive film. No latex, no adhesives, no polyurethane. Ingredients: Shea Butter, Aloe, Coconut Oil.

The gel dries within minutes, forming a breathable protective layer that seals bacteria out while keeping the tattoo moisturized. Peels or washes off with warm water.

Why We Use This Instead of Traditional Second Skin

Over the years a number of clients developed allergic reactions to adhesive film — rashes, irritation, and occasional light scarring. The gel eliminates that risk entirely. Since introducing it in-studio, we have had zero adverse reactions reported.

Application Protocol

- 1 Wait 5–10 minutes after your session. Let the tattoo clot naturally and stop weeping. The gel needs a clean, dry surface to adhere.
- 2 Apply a thin, even layer directly over the tattoo.
- 3 Leave on for 2–24 hours. Most clients apply before bed and wash off in the morning shower.
- 4 Reapply for 3–4 days.
- 5 Continue moisturizing with Hustle Butter, Redemption, or Tattoo Goo after the gel phase is done.

Removal

Warm water is easiest — wet the gel, let it loosen, peel or wipe away. You can also peel it dry if you prefer. (It is admittedly satisfying. We understand.)

Frequently Asked Questions

Where does blood and plasma go under the gel?

Normal amounts are absorbed into the gel barrier. Completely expected.

What if there's a lot of bleeding post-session?

Wait until the tattoo has naturally clotted before applying. If heavy bleeding continues beyond the first hour, contact your artist directly.

Does it contain latex or adhesives?

No. Latex-free and adhesive-free.

Is it vegan?

Yes.

Can it cause a reaction?

Very unlikely — all ingredients are natural and fully disclosed. If you notice unusual irritation, stop using and contact us immediately.

ALL PATHS — GENERAL HEALING RULES

These rules apply regardless of which method you used. A tattoo is a wound. Treat it accordingly.

What's Normal in the First Few Days

- Redness, mild swelling, and soreness around the tattoo.
- Ink, lymph fluid, or blood on the surface — especially in the first 24 hours.
- Itching as the surface heals. Do not scratch.
- Peeling and flaking on days 3–5. Normal. Do not pick.

How to deal with redness, pain, or swelling: These are normal for the first 2–3 days. Keep the area clean and moisturized. Elevate a tattooed limb if swelling is pronounced. Tylenol (acetaminophen) can be taken for pain relief. Avoid ibuprofen and aspirin — they thin the blood. A clean, cool damp paper towel held gently over the area can help relieve irritation. If redness, pain, or swelling is increasing after day 3 — consult a physician.

During Healing (10–21 days) — Do NOT:

- Scratch, pick at, or traumatize the tattoo in any way.
- Apply sunblock on an unhealed tattoo.
- Wear tight clothing over the tattooed area.
- Go swimming — pool, lake, ocean, or hot tub.
- Sit in a sauna, steam room, or take a bath (showers are fine).
- Do intense physical activity causing heavy sweating around the tattoo.
- Expose the tattoo to direct sunlight or UV rays (including tanning beds).

The larger and more detailed the piece, the longer the surface takes to heal — up to 3 weeks for initial healing is normal. Full skin-layer healing continues for several months underneath.

Signs of Infection — See a Doctor Within 24 Hours If:

- Skin is red, warm, and increasingly painful past day 3.
- You notice pus or unusual discharge. Note: clear or light yellow lymph fluid in the first 24–48 hours is completely normal.
- Swelling is getting worse, not better.

A properly cared-for tattoo rarely gets infected. When in doubt — contact your artist before doing anything.

QUESTIONS?

Contact your artist or our studio before doing anything you're unsure about.
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