

# INKED & WAXED

By Michele Hetherington

*In the past Tattoos in Australia were just for the young and the rebellious. These days you'd have to live under a rock not to notice an increasing number of 'inked' Australians and a vibrant growing community of tattoo artists (and tattoo removal clinics).*

Australia is experiencing a growth in the proportion of the nation becoming 'inked', with 20% of Australians in 2018 admitting they have a tattoo. This growth has been particularly evident among women, with the proportion of Australian women with a tattoo now exceeding that of men (21% of women have a tattoo compared to 19% of men).

The global tattoo industry revenue is estimated at over 50 billion dollars annually and growing with double digits. In many cultures, the practice of tattooing the skin is an extension of ancient rituals or traditional aesthetics. People get tattoos for different reasons, it could be to express individuality, a cultural or tribal tattoo that shows as a mark of affiliation, a memory of a loved one, or simply an artwork adorned on the body.

Making the choice to wax your tattooed skin may seem like a bad idea at first, but honestly it isn't. Waxing occurs by removing hair from the root, and exfoliating (or removing) the top layer of the skin known as the epidermis. As tattoos exist in our second layer of skin, the dermis, waxing doesn't really affect the look of your ink, if that tattoo is completely healed.

## WAXING PRE-TATTOO

The skin is the canvas for the tattoo artist and waxing the area a few days prior in preparation for your tattoo will make it easier for the tattoo artist to work. Including this service to your salon menu is a great way to get new clients, you may have a local tattoo studio that is interested in cross promoting.

## WAXING POST TATTOO

Tattoo application uses a mechanised needle to puncture the skin and inject ink into the dermis or second layer of skin just below the epidermis, it is important that the skin is fully healed before you resume waxing over the tattoo. The top layers of the epidermis will heal within 2 to 3 weeks after a tattoo, though it can take up to 3 months for the final stage of wound healing to be complete in the dermis.

Waxing involves the removal of hair at different stages of growth, in the anagen stage the root of each hair extends down into the dermis and sometimes a short distance into the hypodermis. It is therefore recommended to wait approximately 3 months for the healing process to be complete before waxing over a tattoo.

## TATTOO REJUVENATION WAXING

Most of our skin is covered in hair and although it may be short, fine and lightly pigmented it can still hide the vibrant colours or intricate detail of a tattoo. Tattoo artists recommend light exfoliation and hydration to keep the skin healthy and the tattoo vibrant. This is what waxing offers. Ensure you choose a high quality wax and after wax products to ensure the perfect combination. Because of the gentle exfoliation and hydration, the tattoo will have brighter colour definition. Andrew Hopgood, who specialises in body modification and tattoo removal from New Zealand's Award Winning Sinatra's Custom Tattoo's said, "I wax my legs, as do a lot of others (I know with tattoos) in summer or before a show and sometimes might do my arms. My legs are all dot work, so it stands out a hell of a lot better (and) makes them more vibrant."

## WAXING OVER A TATTOO

Waxing over a tattoo is no different to a regular waxing treatment. Some clients want to wax the hair to show off their tattoo, while others want to wax the actual tattoo. Be sure to check for contraindications, select a hot/hard for sensitive and delicate areas, or strip/soft wax for larger areas. Advise your client on correct aftercare and recommend the appropriate Jax Wax Australia After Wax Body Lotion to be used at home to maintain skin hydration and barrier protection. Consider a lotion enriched with organic ingredients for extra hydration and skin protection.

## PROTECTING THE TATTOO

UV exposure will damage the look of any tattoo. A physical broad-spectrum sunscreen SPF 30 is recommended to protect the tattoo against fading, ingredients such as zinc oxide and titanium dioxide are natural compounds that sit on the surface of the skin. They absorb and deflect sunlight so that UV radiation doesn't penetrate the epidermis, this protection will ensure that your tattoo remains bright and intact.

**Special thank you to Andrew Hopgood.**  
[www.jaxwaxaustralia.com](http://www.jaxwaxaustralia.com)

