

## Is this right for me?

It is not unusual for people to fall out of love with tattoos because we all change with time. Occasionally tattoos cause considerable distress to their owners or loved ones perhaps because of associations to past events or relationships.

If you no longer want to have the tattoo and are prepared to exchange it for a surgical scar then surgery is guaranteed to remove the tattoo. Maybe you have already had laser treatment but are still left with a mark that is unsatisfactory.

If the tattoo is only a few centimetres in width and you can squeeze the skin around it so that it disappears it may be amenable for surgical excision with one or 2 operations. Because surgery is usually planned as an oval (ellipse), long, thin shapes of tattoo may be particularly suitable for this treatment. The tattoo would definitely be gone once the surgery is completed.

## Single operation for Tattoo Removal

Depending on the size and position of your tattoo, it is possible to remove the tattoo in a single operation. If there is enough flexibility in the skin surrounding a tattoo, it may be possible to cut around the tattoo and draw the cut skin edges together with stitches. Typically an oval shaped cut is designed as this allows a neat, straight or slightly curved surgical scar to be made. It is a matter of surgical experience and judgement to decide if this is technically possible. Typically the tattoo must be only a few centimeters wide, in an area with elastic skin, situated away from a joint.

## Staged Tattoo Removal Surgery

Where removal of the whole tattoo would leave a gap in the skin which could not be drawn together easily with stitches, staged surgery can be used. A comfortable amount of the tattoo is removed to allow stitching of the wound. A few months later, the surgical wound will be well healed and the skin will have stretched enough to allow a further portion of the tattoo to be removed.

A further variant to this could be the use of a tissue expander, a surgical balloon designed to stretch an area of skin in preparation to fill a gap left by the removal of a tattoo. This requires a simple operation to insert the expander, and several follow up visits to fill and stretch the expander by injecting saline water into the expander through the skin and then a second operation to remove the tattoo and use the stretched skin to fill the gap.

## Tattoo Removal using Skin Grafting

Skin Grafting an alternative to staged surgery where skin, taken from another area of your body, can be used to fill a gap which cannot be drawn together with stitches. This is a single operation however it leaves a second mark or scar on the body where the skin graft is taken from. More importantly, grafted skin will in many cases be different in texture and appearance to the adjacent skin.

## Tattoo Removal Cost

The cost of your tattoo removal can vary depending on the type of tattoo removal surgery you require and the size of your tattoo. The cost of Tattoo Removal Surgery typically starts at £500. At Bella Vou we provide a variety of payment and finance options meaning you can remove your tattoo without worrying about the cost.