

# PREPARING FOR YOUR TATTOO

## THE NIGHT BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT:

Get to bed on time and make sure to get plenty of sleep. Getting plenty of rest tends to make it easier to sit calmly the following day.

Drink lots of water! Please avoid drinking alcohol the night before your tattoo appointment. Even if it's not enough to make you hung-over, it could still thin your blood the next day. Also avoid coffee.

Check to make sure you have enough money to cover the cost of the tattoo and, if you choose, a tip.

If you're getting sick, or are outright sick, please call the studio ahead of time to reschedule your appointment. Don't come in to get tattooed when you are sick! Not only is it unfair to expose the artist, employees, and other clients to your sickness; it may very well hinder your tattoos healing process. If the artist notices you're sick, they have the right to not tattoo you at the moment, which could result in you losing your deposit.

If you are coming in to continue a piece, be sure you are fully healed from the last session. If you are not, you will be rescheduled.

## THE DAY OF YOUR APPOINTMENT:

Check to ensure you have your ID, driver's license, or passport. A valid government-issued photo ID is required each time.

You may bring one person with you but be advised:

Your guest must be over 18 to sit in the tattooing area.

They must remain seated and cannot touch you or the tattoo chair.

They WILL GET BORED! It is recommended they bring along something to entertain themselves. If they are distracting or fidgeting, they will be asked to leave the tattooing area.

Please leave children at home, we cannot babysit your child and a crying child can make the process more stressful for your fellow clients.

Pack a small bag with: a fully charged cell phone (with headphones if you want to listen to your own music or to play games), snacks (particularly ones high in carbohydrates and protein like granola bars, nuts, chips, crackers, or fresh fruit). You might want to make sure you have a ride home if you think there's a chance you'll need one. We have snacks and filtered water available at the shop also.

Wear clothing that will allow the artist to work in the area you chose. If you're unsure what garments are best, bring a few choices along. You should consider wearing clothes that it won't matter if you get ink stains on. Even in the summer it's a good idea to bring a sweatshirt or something warm to wear because getting tattooed can sometimes make you feel cold.

It might seem to go without saying, but please make sure you shower or bathe beforehand. Unless you're getting an underarm tattoo, please also wear deodorant.

The area to be tattooed, and usually a large space surrounding it, will need to be shaved to prepare your skin for the tattoo. Some clients prefer to shave the area themselves beforehand and are welcome to do so, so long as they know that if for any reason the artist is unhappy with the client's shaving job, they'll do it again themselves. Tattoo artists are used to shaving people for tattoo preparation so you don't worry about being shy or embarrassed, they've seen it all.

Always eat a full meal before heading in to get tattooed! Eating heavy and filling foods helps in particular because they tend to last longer. Not being hungry will make it easier for you to sit calmly.

Don't drink a bunch of caffeine or energy drinks before coming in! It will not only thin your blood; it will make it harder to sit still.

You need to always show up on time, while also keeping in mind that sometimes an artist may be running a little behind. The person ahead of you might be taking longer than expected. You'll be happy they take the extra time to make sure you're happy once it's your turn, so please try and be understanding. You can use this extra time to get comfortable with the atmosphere, find the restroom and smoking area, fill out paperwork, and introduce yourself to the front counter employee. This is always a good idea in case you need to ask them for assistance while you're getting tattooed. Counter staff is usually willing to help you if you need it, as long as they're not too busy.

## WHAT DO TO AND WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE TATTOO:

Yes it will hurt, but probably not nearly as bad as you think it will. Tattoos have been described as feeling somewhat like an "electric cat scratch"; tingly and scratchy at the same time.

A very small and simple tattoo could take as little as ten minutes to apply. Most will take much longer than this. Except for large tattoos, (which usually get breaks) you're probably going to have to sit still the entire time of the tattoo. You will want to prepare yourself to endure pain for that long, without moving around. You'll have to figure out how to keep yourself calm and will perhaps want to practice calming yourself down by breathing through the pain.

Don't be afraid to ask for assistance if you are nauseous, dizzy, or feel confused about anything. Sometimes people feel faint when getting tattooed, particularly during the first few minutes. There's no need to be embarrassed or afraid. Let the artist know if you are feeling anything unusual besides the tattoo itself.

Needless to say, if you ask to take frequent breaks or feel the need to constantly adjust your position to see the artist's progress, it's going to take longer. The artist will work as fast as they feel comfortable working, but you should be aware that regular stops tend to break up their rhythm and could make it take much longer. Think of it as, "Are we there yet?" syndrome.

If you're familiar with other kinds of artists, you won't be surprised to find that sometimes tattoo artists can be very introverted. They may prefer not holding a conversation while they're tattooing. It wouldn't hurt to ask them beforehand if they'll mind conversation. If they don't and you feel you'll need to talk to someone to help you cope, bring a friend. Wearing headphones and listening to music or audio books might also help you relax.

During longer sessions, ask to take breaks if you need them. Usually a tattoo artist will allow a break every hour or so. Much more than that can interrupt the progress. When you do get a break make sure to use it wisely; use the bathroom, smoke a cigarette, drink water and munch on your snacks. You'll probably notice that after a break the tattoo hurts pretty badly. Consider this another reason to limit the number of breaks you request.

## WHAT TO DO AFTER GETTING A TATTOO:

Please wait until after the artist has removed their gloves and washed their hands to offer them money...and please don't set any money on their furniture or equipment! You can usually take care of the bill with them at the front counter.

It's a service industry, an incredibly intimate one in fact, so yes you should tip your artist. The normal tipping percentage is around the same amount expected for other service industries, which are again, less intimate.

The aftercare for your tattoo will be given to you both verbally and in writing to take home with you. Even if you're feeling kind of out of it or are tired, it's still very important to listen to and pay close attention to your aftercare instructions.

Ask about touch-ups for your tattoo. Our artists usually offer a free touch-up if necessary, but there are sometimes rules about when and how you may obtain these follow-up sessions. Be aware that if you don't follow the aftercare instructions and choose to do something detrimental to your tattoo, your artist might not only be disappointed with you, they might not do touch-ups for free.

As with any healing, the better you take care of yourself the better your body will heal. In the days preceding your new tattoo please take good care of yourself. Drink lots of water, get plenty of rest, and try and keep your body fed and nourished. Excessive drinking will inhibit your healing processes, particularly the first night after getting a new tattoo. Take it easy and your tattoo should thank you with a quick, trouble free heal. We recommend you wait at least 3 days before resuming any strenuous exercise.

If you had a good experience, tell others about it. We would love it if you tagged us (#outerlimitstattoo) in pictures and posts where you write about how happy you are with your new tattoo, and how awesome we all are! Word-of-mouth is an artist's best form of advertising.

If you had a bad experience, feel free to let the artist know by directly contacting them. If you're still unhappy you can always email, call or come into the studio to talk with the Location Manager. Unfortunately, because our tattoo artists are all independent contractors, we only have so much we'll be able to do, but we'll still try our best to make you reasonably happy. Understand too that artists are human. They can make mistakes or sometimes have a bad day, but they're usually willing to help if you were displeased with your experience. Most will be glad to hear your feedback to help them do better in the future, but you'll have to tell us for us to improve, so please do.

Don't be afraid to call your artist or the studio with questions about the tattoo. Our artists and staff are more than willing to explain aftercare, do follow-up check-ins, or just give you any information you may need.