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Get Inked - Not Screwed

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GET INKED — NOT SCREWED

TAKE THESE TIPS INTO CONSIDERATION BEFORE YOU PERMANENTLY BRAND YOURSELF WITH WORKS OF ART.

BY DALLAS DAWKES  DESIGN SARAH VANCE  PHOTO RILEY EVELETH

If you’ve never gotten a tattoo before, or even if you have, realize a lot of thought that should go into the process to protect your body and ensure you get the best work done. From what to get to proper care, we lay out what you need to know.

SELECTING A TATTOO PARLOR

The place you get your tattoo and the person inking you will make all of the difference. According to Iowa law, each artist must be licensed and complete bloodborne pathogen and standard first aid training to legally give you a tattoo. This means they know the safety issues that accompany using needles and, as Emily Veach, tattoo artist at Heroic Ink, says, “you just have to prove that you can do it without giving someone hepatitis C.”

Veach cautions, however, that this does not mean your tattoo artist has had any formal art training. Make sure you look at their previous art in the shop or online and read any reviews. Around Ames, Heroic Ink is worth checking out. The two owners, Jason “Hugo” Kenemer and Scott “Mump” Mumper, have been featured in several national tattoo magazines and have won awards for their work. Heroic Ink was even named Best Tattoo Parlor in the Ames Tribune’s Best of Story County 2013 for the fourth year. Asylum, Ames Tribune’s Best Tattoo Parlor runner-up, is another notable tattoo parlor, located right in the heart of Campus Town. Offering a full range of services, custom work and tattoo lookbooks, Asylum has an artist to suit almost any style of tattoo you may want. Inkblot Studio has recently brought a unique one-man show to Ames. Owner Daniel Forrester is the sole artist of Inkblot and caters to people who are willing to pay more for custom ink. Intricate designs and realistic shading bring Forrester’s work to life for a tattoo that is truly one-of-a-kind.

DECIDING WHAT TO GET

What you get doesn’t have to symbolize something meaningful, but make sure you aren’t getting it just because it’s popular. Tattoos should bring out your unique interests and display works of art that you will always enjoy, rather than one that will fade out of style by next year. Remember, you get what you pay for: if you pay $50, you will get a $50 tattoo—nothing more.
If you’re having trouble committing to a tattoo, try printing or sketching it out. Temporary tattoo paper can be found online if you want to get a more realistic idea. Make sure you are completely comfortable with the design before you go into the parlor. Give precise input when the artist is putting the outline on your body; it is your last chance to change location and size, so don’t be afraid to speak up.

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CARING FOR THE TATTOO

There are several ways to care for your tattoo, but not all are equal. It may take some time for you to figure out which way you like best, but we are here to help. Compiling care tips from Heroic Ink and first-hand tattoo care knowledge, we give you our care method—but be sure to go over care with your tattoo artist.

ETHOS-APPROVED CARE METHOD

- Leave plastic wrap on for one hour, then remove it and clean the tattoo with a gentle antibacterial soap and rinse with warm water. Make sure you clean your tattoo with just your hand. A towel or sponge could irritate the tattoo. Finish with a coat of lotion or moisturizing cream to keep it hydrated and keep it exposed to allow it to breathe. We suggest H2Ocean Tattoo Moisturizing Cream, Aveeno Active Naturals or Aquaphor Healing Ointment (look for unscented to avoid irritants).
- Do NOT keep putting new plastic wrap on it or keep it covered with bandages after the first three hours. Allow it to heal.
- Continue to clean with warm, soapy water throughout the healing process and apply just as much moisturizer as needed to keep it hydrated. During the first week, the tattoo should be cleaned two to three times a day. It will start to peel and itch during this time. Let the skin heal naturally, and do not rub off the dry skin.
- After the first week, the lotion or healing ointment can continue to be added as needed until the tattoo is healed and there is no more flaking.

TOUCH-UPS

When your tattoo has fully healed, you may notice your color isn’t as bright as you wanted it to be, or maybe it’s uneven. Color doesn’t always take to your skin evenly, so a touch-up may be needed to make the tattoo everything you have always wanted. Fortunately, most tattoo parlors will touch-up your tattoo for free—if you got your tattoo from them originally.