

# POPSUGAR

## Does Tattoo Removal Hurt? Here's the Straight Answer

Grandma was wrong: you don't actually have to live with your bad tattoo choices for the rest of your life. Thanks to some pretty nifty advancements in laser technology, tattoos aren't the lifetime commitment they used to be. If you're already dealing with ink remorse, this news should come as a relief. Take that, Grams! Now that we've done our victory lap, let's get real about [tattoo removal](#).

**The Details:** Laser tattoo removal works by targeting ink pigments below your skin and breaking them down into even smaller particles, which are then absorbed by your blood stream. Most people need anywhere between four and 10 treatments to see results; it depends on the size and density of your ink. The cost of your treatments will also vary based on the size of your tattoo, ranging from about \$150 to \$1,500 per session.

**Is It Painful?:** "You can definitely feel it, but it's not unbearable," said [Dr. Anna Avaliani](#), a dermatologist in the Upper East Side in Manhattan who specializes in laser treatments. OK, phew! She describes the feeling as snapping rubber bands really fast against your skin. Uh, that doesn't sound so great after all. However, [Avaliani](#) says it hurts less than getting the actual tattoo — or so her patients tell her. You can read someone's [first-hand experience here](#). While [Dr. Avaliani](#) assured us that it's a quick treatment (each session is about 10 minutes), your pain level all depends on the type of laser treatment you receive.

*"The older generation of lasers are called [Q switch](#). They typically hurt a lot more and take longer to perform and many more sessions are needed to remove a tattoo," she explained. Thankfully, there's a new sheriff in town, and it goes by the name [PicoSure](#). "PicoSure causes the ink to break down into smaller particles, which are then absorbed by the body. It is one of the only lasers on the market that can treat all ink colors and is safe on most skin colors."*

**The Aftermath:** You can expect to experience some redness and soreness in the days following the treatment, and maybe even some blisters. But not to worry, [Dr. Avaliani](#) says it's not a sign you were burned by the laser. "Blisters are a sign the laser broke down a lot of pigment," she said. Your body responds with inflammation, and that's how the blisters come to be. All in all? Tattoo removal could be worse, but it's probably still best not to scramble off to the tattoo parlor knowing you can get your [leaf tattoo](#) removed if it goes out of style.