

Tattoo Aftercare Guide

Healing your new tattoo with Derm Shield second skin

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Your new tattoo is protected with **Derm Shield second skin** – a thin, breathable, waterproof film that stays on for the first few days. This guide covers wearing the film, taking it off and caring for your tattoo afterwards.

A **quick reference** of your routine is at the end.

1 The first days: wearing your second skin

Keep the film on for 2–5 days. We recommend taking it off on **day 3**, unless one of the reasons in section 2 comes up earlier.

Plasma, excess ink and a little blood often collect under the film. The tattoo can look cloudy, dark or blurry, or a small pocket of fluid can form. **That's completely normal** – it washes off when the film comes off.

While you're wearing the film

- **Showering is fine.** Keep it short and not too hot, don't aim a strong jet straight at the film, and afterwards gently pat the film dry with a clean towel – don't rub, especially at the edges.
- **Don't soak the tattoo** – no bath, pool, lake or sea.
- **No sauna**, and avoid intense exercise or anything that makes you sweat a lot. Sweat under the film loosens the adhesive.
- **Don't poke, trim or peel the film**, and don't press on fluid pockets to move them around.

2 When to take the film off earlier

Edges lifting	If only the edges around the tattoo are lifting and the tattoo itself is still fully covered , you can keep wearing it.
Tattoo exposed	If the film no longer fully covers the tattoo, fluid leaks out at the edges or air gets under it over the tattoo, take it off completely . Don't stick it back down or patch it with tape – that would trap bacteria from outside underneath.
Skin reaction	Rarely, the skin reacts to the adhesive. If you get strong itching, burning, a rash or clear redness – often along the edges of the film – take it off straight away and message us, ideally with a photo.

In every case, once the film is off, simply carry on with the aftercare in section 4.

3 How to take off the film

- 1 Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- 2 Take it off in the shower. Let warm (not hot) water run over the film for a few minutes to soften the adhesive.

- 3 Lift one corner and peel it back **slowly, low along the skin** – folding the film back over itself, not pulling it upwards. Going in the direction of hair growth makes it more comfortable.
- 4 If it's stuck, let more water run between the film and your skin. **Never rip it off dry.**
- 5 Wash the tattoo gently with warm (not hot) water and a mild, fragrance-free soap until all the fluid and excess ink are gone.
- 6 Pat it dry with a clean, disposable paper towel – **never a cloth towel.**
- 7 Apply a very thin layer of tattoo aftercare cream.

The tattoo may still weep a little plasma on the first day without the film. That's normal – just wash it and pat it dry as above.

Sticky leftovers from the film

On areas where the skin bends and stretches a lot – like the armpit, the inside of the elbow or the back of the knee – some adhesive can stay on your skin after the film is off, usually along the edges. To get it off, wash your hands, spread a little tattoo butter or Vaseline over the sticky spots and let it sit for a minute, then wipe it off gently with a clean gauze pad from the pharmacy. Focus on the skin around the tattoo; if there's residue on the tattoo itself, be very gentle and don't rub hard. Anything that doesn't come off easily will loosen over the next few washes. Afterwards, wash the area with mild soap, pat it dry and apply your usual aftercare cream. The butter or Vaseline only helps loosen the glue – it doesn't replace your aftercare.

4 Aftercare once the film is off

From now on, **each time you apply cream:**

- 1 Wash your hands thoroughly.
- 2 Wash the tattoo with warm (not hot) water and a mild, fragrance-free soap.
- 3 Pat it dry with a clean, disposable paper towel.
- 4 Apply a very thin layer of cream – just enough to lightly cover the surface. A thick, greasy layer won't help it heal faster.

Do this **2–3 times a day**. As the tattoo heals, you can gradually do it less often. Keep it up for about **10–14 days**, or until the skin has fully healed.

Use the cream your artist gave you or recommended, or a product you've used before that your tattoos have always healed well with. **Don't put perfumed products or anything containing alcohol** on the healing tattoo.

Optional: switch to a tattoo butter

When the peeling is nearly over, you can switch from your aftercare cream to a tattoo butter if you like. It isn't a must – just a nice way to keep the skin soft and nourished for the last stretch of healing. The same rules apply: clean hands, washed skin and a thin layer.

Keep your cream clean

Once your fingers have touched the fresh tattoo, they may have plasma, blood or other fluid on them. Don't touch the tip of the tube or dip those fingers back into the jar of cream or balm. Instead, take out the amount you need **beforehand** with a clean finger, a clean glove or a disposable spatula. If you need more, wash your hands again first (or put on a fresh pair of gloves). That way you won't contaminate a product you'll keep using for days.

If someone helps you

If your tattoo is somewhere hard to reach, like your back, and someone else helps with aftercare, they should wash their hands thoroughly and then put on clean, disposable gloves before every contact with the tattoo. The gloves go on right before aftercare – don't touch any other surfaces or objects with them first.

5 Keeping things clean at home

Wash your hands before every time you touch, wash or cream the tattoo. Everything that comes into contact with your fresh tattoo – hands, clothes, bedding, paper towels and aftercare products – should be as clean as possible.

- Store everything you use to wash, dry and care for the tattoo in a clean place.
- Keep a separate roll of paper towels just for the tattoo – not the open kitchen roll everyone uses for everything.
- Don't keep paper towels, creams or other aftercare products right next to the toilet, where tiny droplets can spray into the air every time it's flushed.

6 Clothes and bedding

Wear clean, loose, breathable clothes that don't press on or rub the tattoo – with the film on, tight clothes can also push it loose at the edges.

Once the film is off, your tattoo is uncovered for the first time. For the next few days, **don't put yesterday's clothes back on over it**: the fabric may have picked up plasma, sweat and dirt, and your healing tattoo shouldn't touch it again.

Sleep in clean bedding on the first night after taking the film off. You don't need to change it every day – but if it gets stained with blood or fluid, make sure that spot doesn't touch your tattooed skin again.

7 Pets

Don't let your dog, cat or any other pet have direct contact with your fresh tattoo – no touching, rubbing against it or licking, and no scratching at the film.

Once the film is off, also keep them from sleeping right next to the tattoo or on the bedding around it. If your pets normally sleep in your bed, it's especially important that your bedding is clean.

8 What to avoid while it heals

Showering	Normal warm showers are fine, with or without the film – the water doesn't need to be cool or lukewarm, just not very hot. Avoid long, hot, steamy showers and don't let the tattoo soak for long.
Exercise	For the first 7–10 days , avoid intense workouts, the gym and contact sports – especially anything that makes you sweat a lot or causes friction, dirt or pressure on the tattoo.
Swimming & soaking	No pool, sea or lake for at least 3–4 weeks , and in any case not until the skin has fully healed. The same goes for saunas, hot tubs and long baths.
Sun	No sunbathing or tanning beds for at least 4 weeks .
Scratching	Don't scratch, pick or peel flaking skin or scabs – let them come off on their own.

9 Normal healing or a problem?

A healing tattoo can look worrying even when everything is fine. **If you're unsure, message us first** – ideally with a clear photo in daylight. We'll tell you whether it's normal healing or whether you should see a doctor.

Usually normal in the first days

- Fluid, ink and a little blood collecting under the film, sometimes as a small pocket.
- Redness, slight swelling, warmth and tenderness around the tattoo, easing day by day.
- Itching, flaking and peeling, and a dull or cloudy look while the skin renews.
- After a longer session or a bigger piece: feeling a little feverish or shivery for a few hours. This usually passes the same day or by the next morning.

Message us if

- Your skin reacts to the film (see section 2).
- The fluid under the film turns thick, yellow or green, or there's a bad smell.
- Redness, swelling or pain gets **worse** after the first 2–3 days instead of better.
- Hard, raised lumps, blisters, or a rash or bumps on or around the tattoo.
- Fever or chills that last beyond the day after your session, or that start later.
- Anything else you're not sure about.

Questions?

Anything else on your mind about your new tattoo? Just get in touch – we're happy to help.

Thank you for trusting us!

The Flow The Needle team

Quick reference

Your routine at a glance

With the film on

- **Wear it:** 2–5 days – ideally take it off on day 3.
- Fluid, ink and a cloudy look under the film are normal.
- Short showers are fine; pat the film dry with a clean towel. No bath, pool, sauna or heavy sweating.
- Don't poke, trim or peel the film.
- **Take it off earlier** if the tattoo is no longer fully covered, it leaks, or your skin reacts. Never re-stick it.

Taking it off

- Clean hands → warm shower → peel slowly, low along the skin → wash with fragrance-free soap → pat dry with paper towel → very thin cream.
- Sticky glue left on joints? Loosen it with tattoo butter or Vaseline and wipe gently with gauze.

After the film

- Every time: wash → pat dry → very thin layer of cream.
- 2–3 times a day, less often as it heals, for about 10–14 days or until fully healed.
- Optional: when the peeling is nearly over, you can switch to a tattoo butter.

Every day

- Water: warm, never hot.
- Clean hands, always. Someone helping? Clean hands + disposable gloves.
- Don't touch the tube or jar with fingers that have touched the fresh tattoo.
- No perfumed or alcohol-based products on the tattoo.
- Clean, loose clothes, clean bedding, clean paper towels.
- No pets touching or licking the fresh tattoo.
- Unsure if something is normal? Message us first, with a photo.

Avoid while healing

- No pool, lake, sea, hot tub, sauna or long soaks until fully healed (swimming: at least 3–4 weeks).
- No intense exercise or contact sports for 7–10 days.
- No sunbathing or tanning beds for at least 4 weeks.
- No scratching or picking at flakes and scabs.