

Pull a (safe) disappearing act

In a survey of people ages 18 to 50, nearly one in four had tattoos, and about 17 percent of them regretted it. Do you have ink you wish were invisible? **Jody Levine M.D., a dermatologist in New York City** explains how to erase your art.

1 Choose a doctor An M.D. who specializes in laser removal has the proper schooling and access to the latest technology—important because “different lasers may need to be used over the course of a single tattoo removal, depending on the ink’s depth and color,” Dr. Levine says. Burns and scars are more likely to occur in tattoo parlors that offer removal and in medispas where the person wielding the laser is not an M.D. “Many women have come to me after unsuccessful attempts by nondoctors. In the end, it means more time and money,” Dr. Levine says.

2 Be realistic about the pain Every zap of the laser feels like a rubber band snap. And the bigger the tattoo, the more hits it takes. “Apply a prescription anesthetic cream 40 minutes prior to a treatment, then cover the area in plastic wrap to increase absorption,” Dr. Levine says.

3 Be patient Total removal takes at least six sessions. (Colored tattoos—yellow is most stubborn—and those bigger than 4 square inches can take more than a year.) Expect nearly a week of scabbing and possibly blistering after each session, plus twice-daily applications of an antibacterial ointment.



Need a quick fix? Cover FX foundation, \$37, hides even the darkest ink.