



## Laser Tattoo Removal Fact Sheet - Alma Harmony Elite (Q-switched Nd:YAG)

A thorough consultation will be given and the treatment process explained and an honest prediction of your treatment outcome will be discussed. You will be asked to sign a consent form for treatment and fill out a medical history form. After care of the treated area is important to minimise the risk of infection, a post care instruction sheet will be discussed and given to you.

### What is a tattoo?

Tattoos are the result of pigments (colours) that have been injected into the skin. Tattoos have layers of ink stacked on top of each other, after these pigments are inserted they form various shaped constructions of pigment molecules and are too large to pass through cell membranes, therefore they stay trapped within the skin for many years.

### How Does the Q-switched Nd:YAG Work?

Q-switched lasers deliver short, intense bursts of light to the skin in billionths of a second at a high energy level. This means there is minimal heat energy transferred to the skin, therefore limiting damage to surrounding skin. The energy is rapidly absorbed by the tattoo ink and causes the pigment to shatter into smaller particles. When the ink particle is small enough it is absorbed by the body's immune system. Swelling and redness at the area after treatment is a normal immune response. Over the next few weeks the affected ink particles will be 'flushed away' by the body.

### Does It Work Effectively On All Ink Colours?

Black, dark blue and true red inks respond very well to the Q-switched Nd:YAG. Light green, light blue, yellow and lighter colours can be more difficult to remove and may require more treatments, but will result in a considerably lighter tattoo.

### How Many Treatments Will I Need?

Total removal of the tattoo is not always possible, but in most cases greater than 95% fading of the tattoo is achieved. Tattoos have layers of ink stacked on top of each other, having such a large concentration of particles means the ink cannot be effectively broken up in one session. Each session will produce fading and breaking up of areas of the tattoo. 'Shaded' areas of tattoos can generally be removed in fewer sessions as the concentration of ink is far less dense.

Professional tattoos may require up to 8 or more treatments to achieve a desired result while amateur tattoos may require less. Usually treatment sessions are 6-8 weeks apart. As a general guide, however, there are several factors that will determine the number of treatments required.

Laser tattoo removal works best on fair skin and on tattoos with black ink. Darker skin types contain more of the skin's natural pigment (melanin) and laser treatments can sometimes cause hyper or hypo pigmentation (darkening or lightening of the skin).

Because of greater blood supply and lymphatic drainage laser tattoo removal works best on areas of the body such as the back, chest, head, neck and upper legs.

Fewer sessions will be required if a cover up tattoo is being done. Clients often want parts of the tattoo removed, lightened or broken up to have a new or modified design in its place.

Tattooing of the skin can often lead to complications such as scarring and other changes in the tissue that make the tattoo more difficult to remove by Laser. For tattoos that have caused these problems, more sessions may be required.



### **Does Laser Tattoo Removal Hurt?**

The application of a topical anaesthetic cream makes the process quite comfortable. The sensation can be compared to a 'flick with a rubber band' with some heat but treatment is generally tolerated well by most clients.

The treated area may be slightly tender for a few days and bruising and swelling is a normal healing response.

### **Is Laser Tattoo Removal Safe And Are There Side Effects?**

The main risk following laser tattoo removal is infection. Directly after treatment an antiseptic cream will be applied and the area will be covered with a waterproof dressing. The area must remain dry for at least 72 hours. Swelling, pinpoint bleeding and bruising are a normal response immediately following the treatment.

Healing generally takes up to 4 weeks, during this time area must be kept out of the sun and a sunscreen applied.

The skin may blister slightly but this is uncommon, the area may form a scab and care must be taken not to pick or dislodge it may result in scarring. An antiseptic cream may be applied once the dressing has been removed.

Side effects of Laser tattoo removal are rare but do include hypopigmentation or hyperpigmentation (lightening or darkening of the skin).

Scarring is a rare but possible especially for clients with a history of keloid or hypertrophic scarring. Q-switched laser should not cause scarring as the laser does not pass deep enough into the skin to cause a scarring response. Secondly, the laser pulse is so fast that only the tattoo pigment is affected and surrounding cells and tissue are left undamaged.