

The Valley's Tattoo-Removal Vixen

by Nadine Toren



Do you have an artsy reminder of an ex? Well, if you're looking to rid your body from all tats...we're here to help.

It's body art some of us get on a whim, then question weeks, months or years later--and that's exactly when Scottsdale's Shelly Cook comes in. Cook spends her days zapping tattoos, making once-permanent marks disappear. She says 50% of Americans have tats, and 60% eventually regret them and opt for their removal.

"Most people get tattoos at 18 or 19, not really thinking things through. Once 20, 30, or 40 rolls around, they realize they don't have much connection to their ex, Winne the Pooh, or a tribal design," said Shelly Cook, Laser Certified Tech.

Yep, Cook's seen it all...ex's names, nasty words, even picket fences covering people's foreheads. She even once had a guy return for a removal three times, after tattooing three different women's names on his body. Some people never learn.

"I gave him a permanent marker after the third time around," she said.

And now she's giving us some insight for those contemplating a tat, or for the others yearning to rid themselves of their youthful mishap.

"Not a lot of people were doing it 7 years ago—it wasn't known to be very safe."

Cook says she first started with laser hair removal, but discovered tattoo removal was an up-and-coming biz. That's when she began taking on clients at the Valley's National Laser Institute, and has since built quite the clientele. She's removed thousands of tattoos off an array of people, like local athletes, CEOs, elite entrepreneurs, and 80-year old grandmas. It's a quick process, considering she books every 15 minutes, but a single visit takes just seconds.

"It takes about 2-5 seconds for a tattoo the size of a quarter."

But you'll have to get an average 12-15 treatments every 4-6 weeks to get the job done. And even though the laser works fast, it still hurts.

"Think of bacon grease splattering—that's what it feels like; a bunch of painful little pricks."

And for the most part, the tattoo will completely disappear within due time, but Cook has seen cases where it only fades. The removal success rate all depends on the person's body chemistry, the amount of ink, and the color.

"The easiest color to remove is black; the hardest is green and blue."

The closer your tat is to your heart, the easier it will fade. The laser technology breaks the ink into smaller particles triggering your body to eliminate them...a very welcoming disappearing act for many people.

"It's a really fulfilling job. I relieve people from their past."

And Cook says she takes pride in having the lowest prices in town. Each treatment starts at \$50.

To book, call 480.232.1597

Television personality and AZfoothills.com columnist Nadine Toren is scouring the area, finding savvy Valley features, bringing readers "on the scene." Every day she'll introduce you to celebrities, athletes, and give you an inside look into local events and hot spots. She'll touch on topical issues, and keep AZ fans posted on all the big talkers around town.