

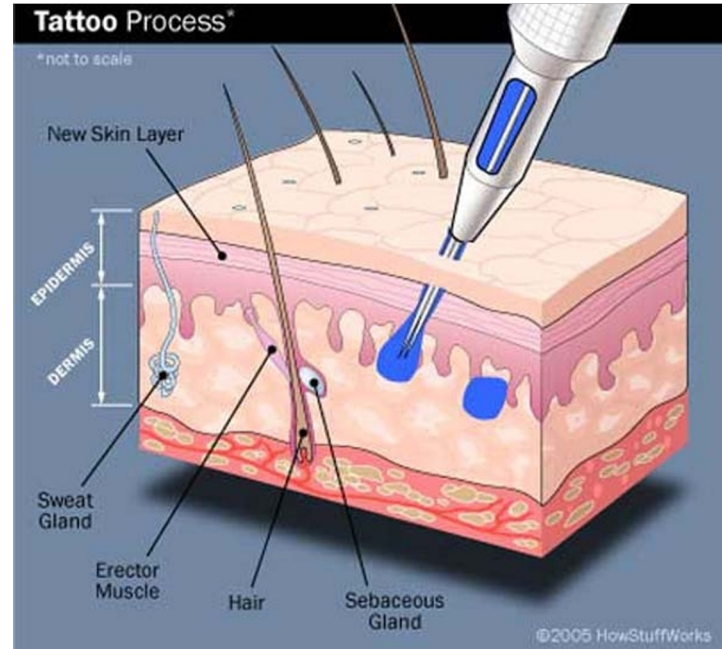
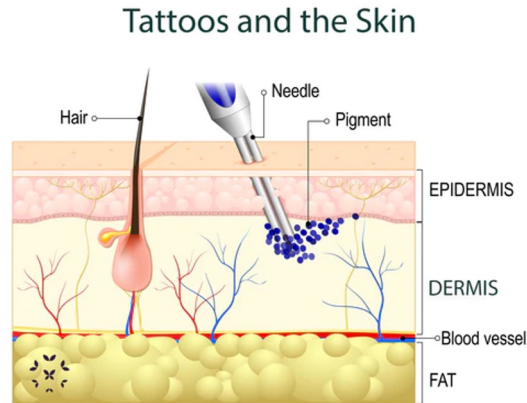
A Brief History of Tattoos

A dark blue, diagonal shape that starts from the bottom left corner and extends towards the top right, creating a modern, abstract design element.

What is a tattoo?

“A tattoo is a form of body modification made by inserting tattoo ink, dyes, and/or pigments, either indelible or temporary, into the dermis layer of the skin to form a design.” [1]

Tattoo comes from *tatau*, a Samoan word. Previously called painting, scarring, or staining.[2]



High Level

- Categorizing the Art
 - Decorative
 - No specific meaning
 - Symbolic
 - Specific meaning to the wearer
 - Pictorial
 - Depiction of a specific person, item, event, etc.
- Categorizing the Purpose
 - Rite of passage
 - Status symbol
 - Such as military ranks
 - Religious or spiritual devotion
 - Decoration
 - Mark of fertility
 - Pledges of love
 - Amulet/talisman
 - Protection
 - Punishment
 - Medical treatment

Methods

- Tebori/Bamboo
 - Originated in Japan
 - A piece of bamboo with nearly “two dozen sharp edges”
 - Ink is added to these edges
- Sewing/Skin Stitching
 - Originated in Egypt as well as among the indigenous tribes of North America
 - Yes, they would sew ash or ink into the skin
 - [Video](#)
- Puncture
 - Also originated in Egypt
 - Using a pin or needle and repeatedly puncturing the skin
 - This is basically the modern method
- Ta Moko
 - Originated among the Maori tribe
 - Cutting the skin and filling cuts with ashes
- Kalinga
 - Originated in the Philippines
 - [Video](#)
- Bone Tapping
 - Originated from Samoa, Fiji, New Zealand, etc.
 - Very similar to Kalinga
- Stick and Poke
 - Maybe the most common way to bypass laws
 - Most common method of “prison tattooing”
 - A challenging and precise style
- Scarification
 - Most prominent in Africa
 - Potentially the oldest method of body modification
- Henna
 - Not a permanent modification like tattooing or scars
 - Dates back to ancient Egypt

Methods

Tebori



Skin stitching



Stick and Poke



Scarification



The “first” tattoos

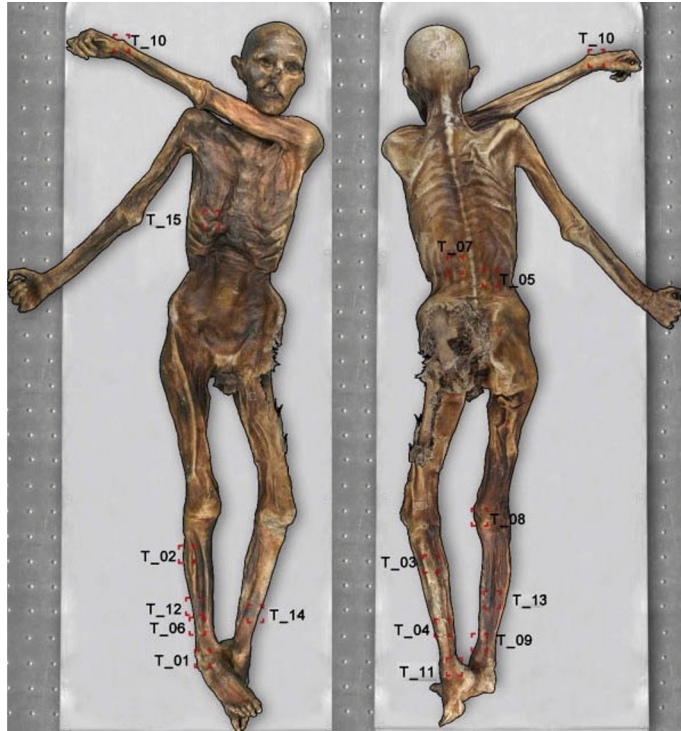
The oldest discoveries

- **Ötzi**
 - “The Iceman”
 - Discovered on a glacier along the Austrian-Italian border
 - Buried around 3250 BC
 - 61 tattoos total
 - Tattoos are grouped where Ötzi experienced degeneration in the joints and spine
- **Siberian Ice Maiden**
 - Discovered in the Ukok plateau near the Russia-China border
 - Buried over 2500 years ago
 - Tattoos are much more decorative in nature
 - Art related to her family status, as well as pieces related to mythological creatures



Early Tattoos

Ötzi



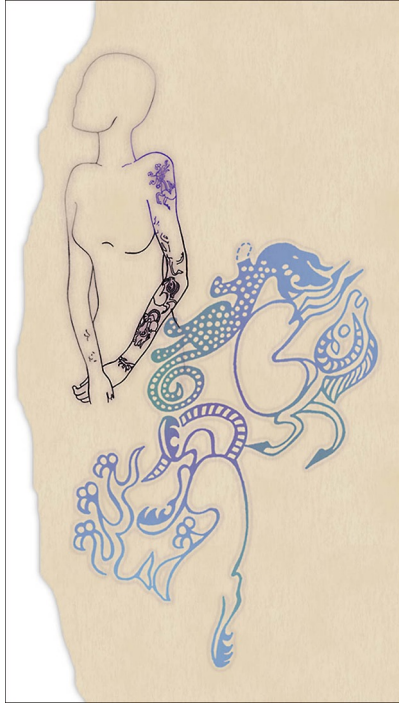
Early Tattoos

Siberian Ice Maiden



Early Tattoos

Siberian Ice Maiden



A warrior from the same tribe



Ancient Cultures

- China

- Mummies with tattoos dating back as far as 2100 BCE
- Generally considered “barbaric”
- Typically associated with folk heroes, convicted criminals, and bandits

- Egypt

- Dates back to at least 2000 BCE
- Little to no evidence of tattoos on men until around 300 BCE to 400 CE
- Decorative and medical purposes

- Samoa

- Practices have changed little over the last two thousand years
- Tools are handmade
 - Uses turtle shell and boar’s teeth
- Very painful process
- Takes multiple days

- Greece and Rome

- Evidence from 5th century BCE
- Typically applied to criminals, prisoners of war, and slaves
 - Learned this practice from the Persians
- However, most of the cultures around them considered tattoos to be “marks of pride”^[5]

More Recent Examples

- **Sutherland Macdonald**

- British
- Opened his own tattoo studio in 1880
- Believed to be the first “professional” tattoo artist

- **John O’Reilly**

- Known as the “Tattooed Irishman”
- An [article](#) from February 22, 1887 called his tattoos “hideous” and “barbarous”
- Tattooed by his brother, Samuel O’Reilly, who was an early experimenter of electric tattoo machines

- **Lady Viola**

- “The Most Beautiful Tattooed Woman in the World”
- Started in the 1920s
- Many portraits integrated into the pieces
- Mostly worked as a “tattoo attraction”

More Recent Examples

John O'Reilly



Lady Viola

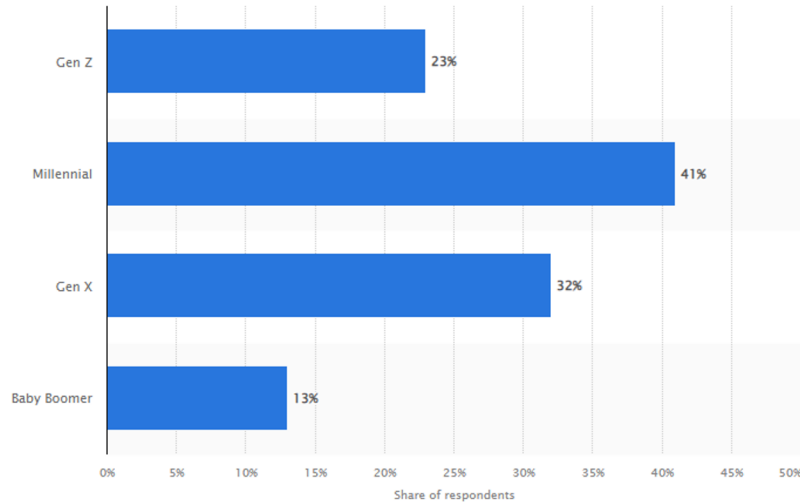


Modern Tattoos

- Pendulum swinging back and forth between taboo and mainstream
- 1930s: Taboo
- 1940s: Sailors return home from WWII with tattoos
- 1950s: Taboo
- 1960-1970s: Counterculture
- 1980-1990s: Tattoos start becoming mainstream
- 2000s to now: More and more celebrities get tattoos, which further popularized them

Contemporary Tattoo Fun Facts

Share of Americans with one or more tattoos, by generation



Where tattoos are most popular

Where Tattoos Are Most Popular

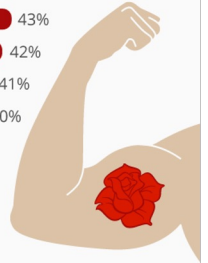
Share of survey respondents that have at least one tattoo



© StatistaCharts

n=9,054 internet users in 18 countries. Conducted April 2018.
Source: Dalia

statista



Sources

1. [Tattoo - Wikipedia](#)
2. [Meaning of Tatau 1](#)
3. [Ancient ink: Iceman Otzi has world's oldest tattoos](#)
4. [History of Tattoos: A Complete Timeline](#)
5. [Ancient Tattoos - Archeology Magazine](#)
6. [Pioneers of Female Body Art](#)
7. [The Story Behind the Siberian Ice Maiden and Her Tattoos](#)
8. [MEET THE 2500 YEAR OLD SIBERIAN ICE MAIDEN AND HER TATTOOS](#)
9. [11 Unique Traditional Tattooing Methods \(in a Nutshell\)](#)
10. [Siberian Princess reveals her 2,500 year old tattoos](#)