



Piercing – raising the bar?

Almost always, it seems, if someone has body piercing done, they will have previously acquired at least one tattoo. The opposite does not apply, and many people with tattoos wouldn't contemplate piercing – ears excepted, of course. So to go for a body piercing is really upping the ante.

However, a single piercing is a much cheaper form of adornment than a tattoo, and can start from as little as £20 in a specialist parlour – and even less for a single ear-stud administered in a pharmacy. A piercing is also far more flexible and can be used to hold not only a wide range of decorative devices but, in some circumstances, functional ones as well. Also, if you decide you have had enough of it, you can remove the stud or whatever, the flesh usually heals over, and it is gone.

Typically, a standard piercing will not

cost more than £50 unless you're asking for more costly jewellery or you and the piercing somewhere 'special'.

Piercing points

After ears, the most common places are the navel, the tongue and the nose, followed by eyebrows. While, fewer in number, nipple piercings are also quite common.

Genital piercing is much rarer and altogether a different kettle of fish (I think there's a joke there somewhere!). Not only that, many body-art parlours will not carry it out. There are highly specialised practitioners for this type of work, which more resembles superficial surgery than simple piercing. Aftercare can be more concentrated and the risk of infection, obviously, is much higher.

Unlike tattooing, the age of people having piercings remains relatively low, with most new devotees being in their late teens to mid-twenties. While virtually all demographic groups now have their share of

tattoo-wearers, those who are body-pierced have a tendency to be either from the BDSM fraternity or the Goth brigade.

Body art is now a growing and increasingly acceptable form of fashion-statement for everyone – but whatever you decide to have done, take time over the decision to be sure that you get the result you really want.

The tattoo images below and the main background design opposite were supplied by Rod Medina from North Side Tattoo of 32a Middle Lane, Crouch End, London N8.

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or take a look at his Blog:

www.rodmedina.multiply.com



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NON-PERMANENT OPTIONS

You can try a temporary tattoo, just to see if it really is what you want before committing to the permanent version. These are really just skin-top inks and will last, typically, for around two weeks. It is a good way of assessing your commitment, decorating for a party or to give you flexibility to change your 'war paint' as the mood takes you. However, it is not the real thing and will not be as defined. This is, effectively, body painting and could be a place to start for you if you are unsure. For more information have a look at one of the major suppliers of these products, Jagua, at www.jaguatattoo.co.uk They, notably, do not use so-called 'black henna' – para-phenylenediamine – a potentially harmful chemical, but a natural dye extracted from the fruit Genipapo American – known in South America as 'jagua'.

Lastly, there is the semi-permanent version. This method uses a needle process and temporary stains that can last for between three and five years. However, they do tend to fade and the image blurs quite quickly.

The sound advice is to ask your artist and they will advise whatever they think is best for you.



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