Introduction

Welcome to the Tattoos Unlimited eBook. Inside you will find hundreds of high quality fashionable designs ready to be printed and inked. Our goal is to provide you quality tattoo information and tattoo ideas at a great price. If you decide to get one of these designs inked, please send a digital picture to contact@tattoosunlimited.com. We’d love to see it, and may feature it on our website.

ULTRA IMPORTANT: When you are selecting a page to print, be sure that you select the option to print ONLY the current page! If you simply choose print, you may end up printing the entire eBook. We recommend viewing at 100% to prevent distortion.

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Beginner’s Guide to Getting a Tattoo

The main concern when thinking about getting a tattoo should be finding something that you really like as well as the location on your body. Keep in mind that this will be with you for the rest of your life, so you must be comfortable with this decision.

Custom tattoos tend to be more expensive and time consuming because they demand the artist to pay closer attention to the detail and design. In addition, it is a design that they have never done before. Simple, more common designs are generally less expensive and take less time.

Another aspect of the design to consider is color or black. Black tattoos are very attractive because they tend to stand out more on the skin due to more of a contrast. Color tattoos generally are more expensive but there can be more creativity involved because the possibilities are endless with color.

The location of the tattoo is key. You must consider some things when thinking of location. Will others see it easily? Do I want this to be easily seen by others? Do I want it in more of a private place so only those close to me would view it? Which body parts hurt more than others?

Generally, places that have thinner skin tend to hurt more. These places include, but are not limited to, due to differences in all of our bodies, the ankles, head and the lower back. Less painful places include the upper arm, back of the shoulder and the chest.
Tattoo Safety Precautions

Before making the decision to get a tattoo, be sure you are educated about possible health risks associated with the practice. These risks are minimal but can occur nonetheless.

Non-sterile tattoo practices can possibly lead to the transmission of infectious organisms such as Hepatitis B and tuberculosis. To limit the risk, be sure to see the next section on How to Choose a Tattoo Parlor.

Be sure to follow the exact instructions on caring for your new tattoo. Your skin is open and is in the healing process during the first few weeks after your tattooing session so be sure to take care of it carefully.

Another thing to consider is allergic reactions to the pigment. If you are aware of any allergies you may have, be sure to share them with your tattoo artist.

There is a list provided by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that is known as Universal Precautions. This is part of the Blood borne Pathogens Rule that was issued by the EPA. They apply in any health service setting that exposure to bodily fluids and blood is likely to occur. This includes tattoo parlors.

Many states and local authorities have their own regulations for tattoo parlors that are based on the EPA guidelines. Check to see if your state or local municipality has such regulations. Also, look into any professional licensure that your state may have in effect for tattoo parlors.

Finally, the biggest thing to remember when getting a tattoo is to NOT let a friend try to tattoo you. Please leave it to the professionals who make this art their livelihood. They have the training and licensing to provide you with a clean and safe service.
Choosing a Tattoo Parlor

Choosing the right tattoo parlor is very important, especially when getting your first tattoo. There are many things to consider when choosing a tattoo parlor.

Make sure that the parlor is a place where you feel comfortable and relaxed. Some people have had the experience of joining a friend for their tattooing session so you may already have an idea of a place like this.

Most importantly, the parlor should be clean and professional. Clean is always important when dealing with needles and blood.

The tattoo parlor should be well lit. This is important for a few reasons. The bright, or better yet, natural light is a better way for you and the artist to see the true nature of the colors used and what the tattoo will actually look like. It also makes it easier to feel relaxed knowing that you can see what is going on all around you.

When walking into a tattoo parlor for the first time, don’t be afraid to ask questions. Are the needles and other materials one-time use? Will gloves be worn? How long have the artists been tattooing? Are they members of a professional organization?

Be sure that all of the needles are opened in front of you. This will ensure that they haven’t been used 15 minutes before you for the person down the street.

If you know of anyone with a tattoo, feel free to ask them where they got it done and if they would recommend the parlor or a particular artist. Tattoo magazines are a good place too. You may find an article or advertisement for one in your area. Also, browse around the internet to find a place.

Remember, this is a permanent investment, be sure to choose the tattoo parlor that is right for you.
Tattoo Care

The first thing to remember about your tattoo is that this is a lifetime investment! Do not rely on information from friends about the care of your new tattoo. The artist will provide you with the proper care for the tattoo.

Generally, if your tattoo has been bandaged, leave it on for approximately two hours. Then, wash it gently with luke-warm water using antibacterial soap. Pat it dry, do not rub. This washing should occur three to four times a day.

Do not apply another bandage to the tattoo. Allow it to be exposed to air. This will help the healing process. Also, try to avoid tightly fitted clothing. Clean, loose clothing will be the best.

After washing, apply very thin coats of Bacitracin or A&D Ointment and work it into the skin. Do not over apply. Apply just enough so that the tattoo appears shiny. If you can see the ointment on your skin, you are using too much.

Do not soak the tattoo in water or let the shower directly spray hard onto it. Also, avoid swimming pools, the ocean, hot tubs or any other source of water, aside from the shower, until the tattoo is healed. Also avoid getting the new tattoo sunburned until it is healed. All of these can fade the tattoo and hinder the healing process.

When the tattoo begins the healing process, do not directly scratch the tattoo. Itching means healing and a little bit of alcohol will relieve the itch. Also, do not pick the scabs that may form. Let them fall off gradually. This will usually happen in one to three weeks.

If swelling or redness occurs, you can use ice packs to help the swelling go down.

Most importantly, notify a doctor if you have even the slightest sign of infection.

The healing process can be as little as one week or as long as six weeks or more depending on the size and complexity of your particular design.
History of Tattoos

Arguably, tattoos date back to about 3000 B.C. Marks found on a mummified human body dating that old, have tattoos. Tattoos have also been found on Egyptian and Nubian mummies that date back to about 2000 B.C. Many references can also be found in books from classical authors referring to the Greeks, Germans and Gauls.

Europeans rediscovered tattooing when they encountered Polynesians and American Indians during some exploration. The word tattoo comes from the Tahitian word “tattau” which means “to mark”. European and U.S. societies considered tattoos very exotic so many tattooed Indians and Polynesians drew a crowd at the circus and fairs during the 18th and 19th centuries.

The reason for tattooing has changed over the years and across various cultures. In the early practice of tattooing, it was primarily for decoration. This ancient practice still holds true today for most people. Early Romans used tattoos for identification. They would tattoo slaves and criminals so that everyone would know their status. Tahitian tattoos were rites of passage and told to story and history of the person’s life. In the early days of the U.S. when sailors would travel to foreign lands, they would collect tattoos as souvenirs of their travels and experiences.

Methods of tattooing varied across cultures and time as well. Many Indians in North and South America created tattoos simply by pricking. Some tribes in California then began to introduce scratches when introducing color. In Polynesia, pigment was pricked into the skin by using a small tool that resembled a rake. In New Zealand, the Maori people used wood carving techniques using a bone-cutting tool to make shallow, colored grooves in the skin. When the Europeans arrived, they began to use metal, taking a small step toward the puncture style of tattooing we see today.
The Essential Guide To Getting a Kanji Tattoo

Japanese tattoos are cool. Of course, if you have money to burn like any of these ladies, you can afford to hire a professional translator to pick out the perfect character combination. But if personal translation is out of your league how can you avoid becoming a kanji fashion victim and get stuck with a tattoo you will really regret?

1. Know the difference – hiragana, katakana and kanji

Before you talk to your tattoo artist, make sure you know what you are talking about. You say you want a Japanese tattoo, but what do you know about Japanese characters? You need a quick stint in 2-minute Japanese boot camp.

First off, let’s be clear that there is no Japanese “alphabet”. There are three sets of Japanese characters – hiragana, katakana and kanji – and each group has its own history, function and style. Get your head around these facts and you will already know more than 99% of the people walking around with Japanese tattoos right now:

**Hiragana** – These simple, rounded characters represent sounds, but have no independent meaning. They were developed by women in the Heian period and are still considered feminine by Japanese people.

**Katakana** – Developed by Buddhist monks around the same time as hiragana, these are simple, angular characters that also represent sounds and have no meaning of their own. You saw them cascading down the screen in Matrix (although they were backwards!)

**Kanji** – Originally from China, these characters are like pictures, representing a meaning and also several different sounds depending on the situation.

Just reading this has probably given you an idea of which style you might like for your tattoo – but don’t stop just yet! Now you know what kinds of Japanese characters there are, let’s move on to…

2. Writing styles

Come a bit closer. Lean forward towards the screen. That’s right. Now, look at the words in front of you. Take a good, close look at the shapes of these letters. OK? Now tell me honestly: Would you want a tattoo in Times New Roman? How about Tahoma? What’s that? You don’t want a tattoo by Canon or Epson? Sure you don’t. And in the same way, you don’t want to have your Japanese tattoo looking like a printout either!

So, now we move on to writing styles. Just like there are three kinds of Japanese characters, there are also three ways they can be written. Don’t worry. This is easy! I know, you are thinking that you can’t even read Japanese, so how on earth will you be able to recognize these different styles? Well, try this:
**Kaisho – Block letters.** You learned to write your ABCs like this, and Japanese kids learn to write their characters in just the same way: Like a Volvo – boxy but good.

**Gyousho – Cursive letters.** You moved up to middle school and learned you could write faster by letting the parts of some letters flow into the next. Yes, you guessed it - the Japanese do the same thing, and they call it *gyousho*.

**Sousho – Super-cursive letters.** Ever seen a prescription from a doctor? Then you know what *sousho* is like in Japanese: Sure, the writer or some other trained person can (probably) read it, but no one else has a clue what it says!

Are you getting the picture? If you want to look like a computer printout, then be my guest and go for the *kaisho* style. That’s your choice. But I think you probably want to use either *gyousho* or *sousho* for your tattoo. My personal preference would be *gyousho*: It’s stylish, but it won’t leave even native speakers baffled.

3. Real or fake?

Remember Mel C from the Spice Girls? Well guess what kanji she got tattooed on her arm? That’s right – “Girl Power”: Great in English, but show this kanji combination to most Japanese people and you’ll get a blank look at best. Want a worse example? Try “big daddy”. Now, you know what it means in English, but put it into kanji and you end up with “large father”! It just doesn’t work.

I’m sure you remember that kanji are the only characters that have meaning as well as sound. And their beauty means that they are what most people want for their tattoos. But watch out: As well as being popular, they can also be the most dangerous!

Let’s see if we can find a pattern here: Look carefully at the examples above. What are they communicating - concrete concepts or abstract ideas? Can you see the difficulty the translators had? The kanji for “dragon”, “samurai”, “love” or any other concrete ideas are pretty easy to discover. But go for anything with an idiomatic meaning and whoever is trying to help you translate it is going to get a major headache!

Just an idea, but how about this suggestion: Rather than trying to force a round English peg into a square Japanese hole, why not find a real Japanese phrase that you like and get that instead? *Bushidou* (the Way of the Warrior) and *Ninjutsu* (The Art of Stealth) are two good examples of real Japanese terms that would make great tattoos.

4. Your name in Japanese

As I’m sure you remember from 2-minute Japanese boot camp, *katakana* are the characters usually used to write foreign words and names. So, if you want to get a tattoo of your name, technically these would be the characters you would choose. (If katakana float your boat, then you should check out the [*katakana name translator here*](#).) But I am guessing that, like most people, you want your name written in kanji.
Do a quick search on Google and you can find a number of sites that specialize in translating names into kanji. Basically there are two different methods that these sites use, so let’s look at them here.

**Translating the meaning** – This method involves finding out the original meaning of the English name, and then researching the kanji equivalent.

For example, my name has its origins in Greek and means “crowned one”. The one who is crowned is the king, so I could translate my name into the kanji for king and call myself *oohsama*. (Perhaps a little pretentious – and disturbingly similar to Mr. Bin Laden’s first name!)

**Translating the sound** – This is a lot more difficult! Flick through a dictionary and you will find a bunch of kanji that can be combined to sound like your name. But sound isn’t everything: Remember that kanji have meaning as well. In fact, it is even more complex than this! Be sure to check each of the following factors with anyone who translates your name like using this method:

1. **Sound** – Does it sound like your name or not? I have seen my name “translated” on certain websites to sound like *Stefan*. Shame my name (Stephen) is actually said the same as Steven!
2. **On-yomi and kun-yomi** – Yes, more technical words! But don’t panic – they are easy to understand: Basically, kanji have two kinds of reading. One kind, on-yomi, is their original Chinese sound. The other, kun-yomi, is their Japanese-only sound. What to watch is that (like oil and water) on-yomi and kun-yomi don’t mix. Use either all on-yomi reading or all kun-yomi readings to make the sound of your name.
3. **Meaning** – Do the kanji have a good meaning together? Now, it can be very difficult to find kanji that sound right and have a good meaning, so you may need to compromise a little on one of these.
4. **Masculine or feminine** – I guess this is more like a sub-category of meaning, but it is something you need to check out to avoid embarrassment. For example, while “Asian Beauty” may be a great combination for a woman, I get the feeling most men would not be too happy about having that permanently written into their skin!

5. **If in doubt, check!**

First, use your new-found knowledge of Japanese to ask a few difficult questions to your tattoo artist or kanji “specialist”. If you get the feeling they don’t know what they are talking about, you probably want to look elsewhere.

Next, before you get anything permanent done, use an online dictionary (like the one at [http://kanjidict.stc.cx/dict](http://kanjidict.stc.cx/dict)) to check whether the Japanese really means what you want it to. You may not be able to input Japanese yourself, but you can copy and paste characters from an email or web page and see what they mean.

Finally, if you are lucky enough to know any, ask a Japanese person what they think. Their confused expression may tell you that you have come up with another “big daddy”!

Follow this advice and you will avoid the most dangerous pitfalls of Japanese tattoos and get a kanji tattoo you can be proud of.
Special Offer for Tattoos Unlimited Customers

Get a 7.5% Discount when making a purchase on www.japanese-name-translation.com!

Simply enter the PROMOTIONAL CODE: “TATTOOSUNLIM” when ordering.

Check out their kanji name translations (over 2,200 name downloads) and their special order regular translations (from $10) and calligraphy translations (from $25). This code is valid right now and is ONLY available to Tattoos Unlimited customers. Just key it in at checkout and discount is applied before you go to the secure server for final payment.

About the Author of The Essential Guide to Getting A Kanji Tattoo

Stephen Munday lives in Japan and is the creator of www.japanese-name-translation.com, where you can download images of over 2,200 names in kanji or have a unique phrase translated into Japanese for a tattoo. This article is copyright. You must contact Stephen Munday at the above site if you wish to reproduce it in any way.
Dog  Dragon  Goat
Horse  Monkey  Ox
Pig  Rabbit  Rat
Rooster  Snake  Tiger
Blessed | Crazy | Demon
幸福 | 狂 | 鬼怪
pronunciation: shing fu | pronunciation: kuang | pronunciation: goei kuay

Desire | Dream | Eternal Love
慾 | 夢 | 永愛
pronunciation: yu | pronunciation: mong | pronunciation: yeong ai

Eternity | Extraordinary | Faith
永恆 | 非凡 | 信
pronunciation: yeong heng | pronunciation: fei faan | pronunciation: hsin

Fearless | Good and Evil | Happiness
無畏 | 善惡 | 樂
pronunciation: wu wei | pronunciation: shan erh | pronunciation: lerh
Harmony

Hope

I Love You

Peace

Holy Spirit

Kiss

Love

Patriot

Pure

Scorpion

Honor

pronunciation: her hsieh

pronunciation: sheng ling

pronunciation: rong yu

pronunciation: shyi wang

pronunciation: wen

pronunciation: ai

pronunciation: wo aini

pronunciation: ai guoh jeth

pronunciation: her pyng

pronunciation: chwen

pronunciation: hsieh
SECRET       SUCCESS       TRUE LOVE

秘密 成功 真爱
pronunciation: mi mi         pronunciation: cheng gong         pronunciation: jen ai

TRUSTWORTHY       TRUTH       VICTORY

可靠 真相 勝利
pronunciation: kerh khao     pronunciation: jen shiang     pronunciation: sheng li

WARRIOR       VIRTUE

战士 善
pronunciation: jaan shyr     pronunciation: shan

HAPPINESS WEALTH AND LONGEVITY

福祿壽
pronunciation: fu lu shou