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Tattoo removal with Er:YAG predrilling

Yanina Nachman-Lee

Parameters:

	Treatments 1-2	Treatments 3-6: Step 1	Treatments 3-6: Step 2	Treatment 7
Laser source:	Q-Sw Nd:YAG	Er:YAG	Q-Sw Nd:YAG	Er:YAG
Pulse duration:	-	MSP	-	MSP
Fluence:	7-8 J/cm^2	10 J/cm2	4-4.5 J/cm2	5 J/cm2
Frequency:	2.5-3 Hz	10 Hz	2.5-3 Hz	10 Hz
Handpiece:	R28	PS03	R28	FS01
Spotsize:	5-6 mm	5 mm	5 mm	-

Treatment procedure:

The patient came to our clinic in order to remove a black tattoo on his right upper arm and shoulder. The tattoo was about 8 to 9 years old. The patient was informed that multiple treatments would be needed to completely remove the tattoo pigment.

The tattooed area was numbed using 15% lidocaine + 5% pilocarpine ointment, which was mixed with 2% lidocaine gel to achieve better absorption in comparison to ointment only. The mixture was applied to the area for 45 min. Cold-air cooling was also used during the treatment to make the procedure even more comfortable for the patient. Different techniques were used during the 7 treatment sessions that were needed for total clearance. Sometimes only Nd:YAG was used, while for the majority of the sessions a combination treatment with Er:YAG predrilling was used. The exact protocol is shown in the table. The first 2 sessions were spaced 4-6 weeks apart, while sessions 3 to 7 were spaced 8-12 weeks apart.

After each session, trolamine salicylate cream was applied and the area was bandaged for 2-3 hours.