Legal information my lawyer made me do it...

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**** The biggest thing I have learn in writing this book is find a mentor when you are
starting out someone reputable and skilled that can show you the ropes and work
with you. This ebook is only an informational guide it is not a replacement of an in
shop apprenticeship. *****
About the Author

Tim has been involved in tattooing for over 7 years and as owner of www.DoTattoos.com providing access to tattoo designs and meanings, along with information on everything from what’s involved in getting a tattoo through to aftercare.

Tim compiles and produces his reference material and guides from research and personal experience, for Tattoo enthusiasts and aspiring Tattoo Artists alike.

Tim is passionate and dedicated to helping you discover all you can in the awesome world of tattooing.

“I wish you the very BEST of Luck with your Tattoo Goals!”
In releasing this E-Book I would like to thank my beautiful wife for her continued support not only while I was producing this E-Book but throughout the years.

I would also like to thank my friend Paul Bernoth for taking the time out from his busy schedule for the interview and his candid answers.

To Shane Beatie, my trusty word smith, thanks for massaging the content and throwing in the occasional comma or full stop in.

This E-Book is dedicated to all those tattoo enthusiasts and aspiring tattoo artists out there. You know who you are and want to be!

Tim B. Miller
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The Origins and Importance of Shading

Grey wash tattoos have some of their origins in the Japanese style of tattoo but can be traced in modern times from the style of tattoos that tended to be completed in prisons. In the prison environment tattoo machines are usually created by utilizing any kind of specific motor available; such as fans, radios and even hair dryers or whatever else they could find.

The ink used to tattoo in prison was more commonly obtained from ink pens, although in rarer instances genuine tattoo ink was actually smuggled into the prison. Sewing needles and electric guitar strings were also commonly used in place of tattoo needles. Pen casings were used instead of tubes for encasing the needles.

With only a single needle point and the reduced availability of professional materials to the tattooist, they were faced by a considerable challenge and really had to develop their expertise to create shading in tattoos.

Any tattoo artist that attempts shading and grey wash tattoos will say they often find it quite demanding. However in order to be considered a truly excellent tattoo artist you will certainly want to master this style of tattooing. If you do a good job with this style of tattooing it can get around and get an individual a whole lot of business, but if you mess it up it can ruin your reputation extremely fast.

The various grey wash and shading techniques offer several great tattooing results and if you can master this style of tattooing your work will appear genuinely awesome as well as extremely skilled from all other types of tattooing.

Performing grey wash tattoos is not just the application of black solid lines with a feathering effect, absolutely not, it really is the actual skill of applying light source and shadows plus angles providing a degree of realism when carried out just right. The critical thing here is having just the right amount of highlights and shadow effects.

One thing to continue to keep in mind if you want to really grasp this method and perfect it, it will take a great amount of practice and training, and you guessed it trial and error! However your dedication in developing this skill set will reap rewards, just like I mentioned earlier in the piece, if you can get this kind of style mastered you will certainly end up being in demand from customers, no doubt about it!

In reality the first point in tattooing you need to get straight in your mind is that you need to get really good at shading and the use of grey wash, because if you can't the tattoo simply will not
Tattoo Shading The Grey Wash Style Guide

have depth for it to stand out or achieve that three dimensional look.

Becoming familiar with techniques of shading and grey wash is not only a powerful weapon in delivering a great tattoo outright but it can also hide mistakes in an outline, aide in cover up jobs as well as in the repair of all those bad tats from the scratchers out there.

Before we move on to the guide lets just firstly identify exactly where shading and grey wash fits in on that overall tattoo application process and highlight one of the most significant rules in that process... just in case you didn’t already know!

1. Always begin with your outline moving up and away from your dominant hand,

2. Then it is time for shading and grey wash areas of which we will go into further detail in the guide, and

3. Then add color if required. But it is important to remember always, always perform all of your black work first prior to doing your color, why?....The D to L Rule!

The D to L Rule

One of the absolute universal and principle rules in tattooing to remember is that once the outline is completed, it is a matter of working from Dark to Light (D to L).

If you do not follow this simple, little but perhaps most significant rule, the dark colors can mix with the light colors leading to discoloration, smudges or even smears can occur!

You will note on the previous page that I provide you with a `Road-map to help drive your through the Guide` and that I have started with some fundamentals of tattooing. These lay the foundation for the shading and grey wash techniques displayed in the various videos I have included and they go hand in hand together with this guide.

I have also included a answer question interview with a working professional tattoo artist I know to confirm and underline the points that are made throughout the guide.

"Now lets look at some basic fundamentals shall we..."

Tim

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Working on Skin, A Tattoo Artist's Canvas

To be a truly great tattoo artist you must have the desire to know all you can about the profession. As you are performing art on the human body, you really need to know your canvas which is the human skin. Let’s take a look at some basics you absolutely must know as a minimum.

The human skin is the body’s living protective membrane and has 3 major layers to it, which are the Epidermis, Dermis and the Subcutaneous Fat layers.

The epidermis is like a shield and it's job is to protect the body from the real world all around you from every day things such as the sun, contact with airborne chemicals, toxins and even moisture. Did you know the epidermis layer receives nutrients and oxygen from your lower layer of skin.
One important point to note and remember in particular, is that not everyone's epidermis is the same, for example the thickness can vary significantly from one person to another. The epidermis itself is comprised of 5 layers of skin.

The Stratum Basale is the bottom layer of the epidermis and it's job is to continue to push skin cells to the very top layers which eventually die and fall off. I have learned the epidermis shed off skin on average approximately around every 12-14 days.

Okay, let's talk next about the second major skin layer. The dermis layer, in the middle of the skin. This layer is comprised of glands, nerves, your hair follicles and of course your blood vessels. The job of the dermis is to give the skin structure as well as all it's strength.

This is the actual layer that the tattoo ink should go into. Why is this you might ask? Well it's quite simple really it is where the cells are very strong and healthy and allows the ink or pigment you place to retain it's integrity resulting in a clear, easily distinguishable image.

Now the very bottom area of the skin is? Do you remember?... that's right the subcutaneous fat layer, which covers all your muscles, bones and has larger blood vessels and nerves.

This fat layers job is to protect your muscle tissue, bones, nerves and blood vessels however due to it's structure does not allow the ink or pigment to retain it's integrity and will tend to disperse thus often resulting in blow outs and a distorted image.

To be an effective and good tattoo artist you need to learn how exactly how deep the needle should go and be maintained amongst the skin layers. As mentioned and you will undoubtedly soon discover not only is everybody different but the depth of this layer also depends where you are applying the tattoo on the body.

One of the handy things I learned in my early days as a general rule was that for setting for outlining or a liner machine depth the measurement should be that of a dime and for shading a little bit thicker like a nickel.

This traditional depth is determined by the measured space between the bottom of the armature bar and the top of the front coil which determines the penetrating depth of the needle and length of stroke while operating.

Obviously you have to compensate if operate your machine with needle hang as opposed to running flush with the tube and accommodate for the various individual skin types by

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adjusting with your hand pressure.

Always keep the skin tight when giving a tattoo. Many artists use their index and thumb on the non tattooing hand to spread the skin while applying the tattoo. If you don't do this you will get a group, cluster or a knotting effect which creates quite the mess leaving a very sloppy looking tattoo. What does knotting look like? Well it looks like small little puddles of ink where your lines should be.

Alternatively if you don’t stretch the skin often you'll find the needle won't penetrate the skin or end up attempting compensate and cramping the skin with the risk of ripping the epidermis layer.

Achieving the correct depth and finding what I call the sweet spot within the dermis layer is critical for the tattoo’s initial and ongoing appearance, if you don't get the ink deep enough the tattoo can fade with time. On the other hand if you go too deep your lines may lose their pattern.

So in summary remember these points about your canvas the human skin:

• What level of the skin do we want to go into? Yes that's right the second, middle layer the Dermis layer.
• Penetration depth measurement guide; dime for liner, nickel for shader
• Not every-bodies dermis level is at the same depth look for their `sweet spot`
• Stretch the skin using your thumb and index finger

Be patient, it will take time to get good at consistently achieving the correct depth, but it is crucial for your success in tattooing.
Stencils, Stencil Solutions and Ointment

To apply your tattoo design you will need hectographic paper, better known as 'stencil paper' to transfer the design onto the skin. Here is short but good video on using stencil paper:

1st Video Page 11
Click Here To Watch it Online
Once you have your tattoo design ready to go you will want to use one of a number of solutions to help transfer the design onto the skin. The first tattoo I got was while I was in the Navy and the tattoo artist used deodorant, speed stick style with no fragrance. Here are some other options you can use:

- Baby lotion
- Pine oil
- Green soap
- Surgical Lubricant
- Speed Stick Style Deodorant (Note if you use deodorant directly on skin it can only be used once so get those small travel sizes dispose of them)

In my opinion and experience Dettol, an anti-bacterial solution, is the best. Great Stuff and it works very well!

You will encounter some tattoo artists who like to draw the tattoo design themselves. The reason for this is they like to incorporate their own style with the advantage of being more familiar with the design and therefore the tattoo will tend to turn up more like the design as it appears on paper.

As compared to selecting a design from flash stock where, unless an artist has prepared a color version themselves, the resulting tattoo may appear different due to the style they have developed over time and have preference for.

It's always a good idea to check their portfolio of completed tattoos to get an idea of their style or flair and gain impression of how the end result may look.

As an artist If your using an existing flash design it's also a good idea to reproduce the flash in your own color versions as well as draw the stencil pattern by hand rather than using a thermal fax as it allows you to become more familiar with the design before tattooing it.
Another tip as an artist is the application of ointments such as A and D ointment or Vaseline, this helps achieve a couple of things, firstly your hands glide across the skin which helps you with your tattooing allowing smoother movement.

Another advantage, especially in larger jobs such ointments will help avoid the skin from drying out too much an aide in the healing process as a result.

The key here however is use ointment sparingly, don't over do it as this can cause problems too, such as your hands will be sliding too much and you can't keep the skin taut.
Cross Contamination and Blood Born Pathogens

The biggest no-no in tattooing is cross contamination beyond your sterile working environment and the client your working on. Remember your working with skin which can contain bacteria along with bodily fluids, there will be blood!

This is why artists are required to use single use sterile disposable products and autoclave’s for non-disposable instruments they may re-use (It’s just safer and easier to use sterile single use disposable options where ever possible!).

So what’s cross contamination? Well essentially it’s when you take a sterile product and transfer potential pathogens, through contact with the body, to another sterile product or sterile environment and there by contaminating it.

For example:
After starting tattooing you dip the needle into your ink cap to reload ink, that cap is now contaminated and can not be reused once you have finished tattooing that client, similarly the needle cannot be used for another client and must be disposed of in accordance with health department regulations.

In the case of ointments or solutions they are never transferred or applied to the body of the client directly from the container or dispensing unit, in this instance use disposable single use tongue depressors to allocate what may be used be for each client and only then apply using either a further disposable applicator or wearing sterile surgical quality gloves.

This information does not nearly complete your requirements, responsibilities or considerations regarding sterility or avoiding cross contamination. Refer to local and state authorities for local regulations. Your regional Health Department will have published health advisories or regulations specific to tattooing and can normally be accessed through the internet.
Needles: A Tattoo Artists Brushes

Okay let's talk a little about the tattoo needles you will be using also known as “sharps”, your tattoo needle is comprised of a bar with a group of needles soldered onto to one end. The bar is usually 4.75” in length. The arrangement of the needle group will be different for each specific purpose. As a basic rule tight round groupings are used for liners while there are an array of other configurations for shading and coloring. The following are end on examples of the circular pattern of round liners.

In so far as shading today is concerned you will typically be using the needle group configuration called the Magnum more often referred to as a "Mag" as compared to the traditional flat needle configuration.

While there a variety of Mag configurations depending on your supplier the more commonly used configuration consists of two stacked rows of needles, one above a bottom row arranged in weaved or staggered pattern when looking end on. Similar in arrangement, If you can imagine stacking a bunch of cans on their side, with typically more needles on the bottom row.

This configuration helps cover a larger area of the skin quicker while reducing the potential for doing any damage, simply because you spend less time working each area.

The almighty Mags are extremely versatile and hence popular amongst tattoo artists today, but in particular are wonderful for doing grey wash tattoos. They have a nice incline and a delicate shading effect in capable hands. They are also good for filling in with color due the coverage advantage they provide.

With shading the size (width or diameter) and taper of the needle sharp is also significant. There are different tapers as well as the width or “gauge” of the sharp used in needle
Tattoo Shading The Grey Wash Style Guide

groupings. To in order to gain a more even black coverage with a feathered grey you should use a grouping constructed of a smaller diameter (narrower) sharp with a short taper. In order to achieve a charcoal appearance you will need to use a larger diameter sharp (wider) with and extended tapper.

Okay let's recap on the types of needle groupings and uses:

- **Round Liners.** For outlines: Consisting of a tight needle grouping in circular configuration (*typically ten sharps or less*).
- **Round Shaders.** For filling in color in small areas: Consisting of a loose needle grouping in circular configuration (*typically 15 sharps or less*).
- **Mags.** For covering a large area shading and color fill. Consisting of two rows of sharps stacked and in a weaved or staggered pattern, double stacked or a curved configuration (*typically start from 5 sharps and up in odd numbered groupings*).
- **Flats.** Traditionally used for shading and creating the whip effect. Consisting of a single flat row of splayed sharps, (*Typically start from 4 sharps and up*).

Here are some other examples of the more common needle groupings or configurations you will come across:

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"Hooks"

A word of caution, always be on the look out for Hooks each time you start with fresh new needles, yes even when straight out of the sterile packaging. Using an eye loop look at the ends or points and make sure there is no damage to them, checking that they are nice and straight.

It doesn’t hurt to inspect the needle ends throughout the completion of the tattoo, particularly on larger jobs where you have been using them a while. Especially if the tattoo skin starts to appear rough or signs of deterioration.

One other thing to look out for is burs and barbs they look like little bumps on the needles. You want to make sure your needles are setup right to reduce any problems as any of these will impair your ability to produce a good tattoo and even end in ripping or damaging the skin!
Speed: Balance Between Machine and Hand

Balancing speed is as crucial a step in your success as any element in the technical process of shading or tattooing overall for that matter.

Once your machine has been tuned and you are in a position to start tattooing there are two main aspects to balancing speed, these are the machine speed as determined by the power supply and the hand speed you maintain in movement of the sweep. Both speeds need to be regulated in conjunction with each other, according to the needle grouping you are utilizing and the design in order for your desired shading effect to appear as they should.

That said there are two issues associated with not balancing speed:

1. If your hand speed is too fast your lines will tend to be spotty, or
2. If your hand speed is too slow for the machine speed set you can slice into the skin, we certainly don't want that!

With practice and experience you'll learn to get a feel for it by judging coverage and how to adjust your hand speed according to machine speed, needle grouping and ultimately the shading effect you wish to create.

Before you ever attempt to tattoo skin you should practice on either fake skins, fruit such as grapefruits, oranges, or pumpkins for example.

A word of caution and advice on some of these alternative practice surfaces you may use, none exactly match all the characteristics of skin or the variants there of you may experience over time, but each have their own benefits in practicing the art.

There is an advantage too in using a variety of the different practice alternatives because as with working on different people not all the skin will be the same so you will have to adjust your speed and pressure for the needle penetration.

You will want to adjust your machine and power output based upon your needle types you are using and each time you change them. As your fine-tuning your tattoo machine look over the coverage your getting, this will help determine exactly how much you need to adjust your power to your machine.

Also when you have a larger needle grouping extra hand pressure or machine adjustment may be needed to effectively reach the dermis area. The smaller the needle grouping, typically the less amount of tension that is required and the quicker your machine may operate. Thus reduce the power supply to your machine and your hand movement.
acquately.

While it will depend on the construction of your machine and the various components it’s made from but as a ball park I have seen a lot of artists typically use somewhere around six to seven volts, normally in association with a 7 to 9 mags, to good effect.

So in summary arriving at the right speed is a balanced combination of:

• The needle groupings utilized
• Set speed of machine (as function of output delivered by power supply)
• Hand speed

You know the saying practice makes perfect, it will take time, trial and error to get used to balancing speed, adjusting power to your machine along with hand speed.

PRACTICE SURFACES

The following are of some characteristics of the more popular practice alternatives. I provide these not to dissuade you from their use but rather inform you so you know what to expect from each type and thus better prepare you to compensate when the time comes to tattoo the real thing.

• Fake Skin: Generally made from rubber often require you to apply more pressure and force to tattoo as compared to real skin, but useful for establishing tattoo speed, needle control and stretching techniques (be aware the same force or pressure would tear skin)
• Banana Skins: Advantages are that surface is as sensitive as skin and will allow you to develop a sense of hand pressure control and an idea of how much you can work an area before tearing up the surface, takes ink similar enough to skin to leave a pattern to determine if you a tattooing clean lines. Disadvantages are the discoloration they tend to gain, as they deteriorate in a short time and tend to stain with ink.
• Grapefruits(or similar citrus fruits): Advantages are that they take ink very similar to skin, though are a little tougher, but probably the better option for establishing shading techniques for that reason.
Creating Black & Grey Washes

Okay let's talk a little about the shade of grey you can put together as a wash. As you get more experience you will find your favorite base black ink you prefer to use and become more comfortable in creating the right variants of wash. Let's look at some techniques you can use to make those different shades of grey which are either a matter of diluting your ink on the go or creating pre-made washes in advance.

For diluting your ink ‘on the go’ there a several methods out there but here’s a step by step instruction on the method I found works well for me. Effectively your aiming to create 5 different strengths of wash with mixtures respectively 6%-12%-25%-50%-75% of full strength.

Firstly you should take two equally sized and exactly similar clean empty ink style bottles or similar, distilling your base black into one and filling the other with water which makes it easier to dispense to ink caps than the larger containers for example ink comes in:

1. Set out 5 ink caps one for each of the five different shades your going to create,
2. Fill the First four caps with water,
3. Apportion 1 drop of pigment in the second cap,
4. Then apportion 2 drops of each in the third cap,
5. Next apportion 3 drops of ink in the fourth cap.
6. Put solid pigment in cap 5.
7. Now working from cap 5 using your machine, set up complete with needle to be utilized, dip into Cap five and then in cap 4
8. Next pass dip again in Cap 5 continuing dipping down the caps to cap 3
9. Repeat this sequence , dipping further down the caps with each successive pass until you finally dip in Cap 1 which will be the lightest shade.

Try a test patch on a practice surface to see what the shade of each mixture look like. Just remember to clean your needle in water first and after each successive shade test so you alter the mix.

By altering the sequence from the base pigment and back and forth across the caps, test again and your discover the diversities you can create. Just record the sequence so you can easily replicate them as necessary.

To get in between shades, dip the needle back and forth between ink caps. However be aware that for bigger pieces you will occasionally be required refill and change your ink caps as the respective washes will be altered by fluid, blood, and other contaminants from the soiled needle or simply run out.
Similarly once you find your ideal mixtures and sequence you can repeat this process on a larger scale using the same ratios with bottles.

This way, you have premixed your own consistent grey wash shades and can use them as needed secure in the knowledge they will be the same shade mixture is time. Just remember to label the bottles ahead of time as they will all appear black as shake for use as pigment can settle.

Instead of tap water to mix some artists will use distilled water or a mixture of water and pure glycerin or witch hazel. As with the mixture sequence and shades it’s a matter of experimenting in conjunction with your base black pigment to see what works for you.

As an alternative and a perhaps more scientific measured method you might try the ratios and methodology described in the following video.
The Tattoo Angles and Alignment

For effective shading your angle and depth is very important. Let's go over the angle first, a lot of artists go with 90 degrees but many other artists like a 45 degree angle. Both angles will work but the 45 degree angle is the recommended angle for beginners until you achieve a consistent level of needle control.

Either way you go just keep in mind the way you work and move the needle group along with the depth of the penetration of the needles. When working with a mag in shading you are working your needles in reverse.

That is to stay away from the back of the tube where the needles would normally sit or rest when the tattoo machine is not running. The angle of the needles say for example at a 45 degrees is the angle from the skin surface heading away from the outline in the direction of the sweeping motion.

The angle between the needle and the skin along with speed of movement determines the actual depth the needle penetrates. If you don’t manage to balance those two aspects right and thus the penetration you can end up with blowouts.

When you go to start your shading sweep, begin by aligning your needles along the outline of the design that you are using.

Remember the D to L rule, the same applies here, you are moving from the dark point beginning at the outline moving in a direction towards the light point as determined by the light source position you have decided on. Always make sure all your needles in the grouping are touching the skin at all times.

Keep an eye out and ensure all your needles are inline, aligned to the skin consistent with the angle you wish to maintain in the sweep.

You don’t want one side to be deeper than the other side. Also if you don’t adjust accordingly throughout the movement to maintain your angle, alignment and speed there is a very good chance you can end up tearing up the skin with the needles.

Once you get going, moving through the sweep motion from the dark point, as you move towards the light point begin the whipping motion again moving away from the dark point.

This is achieved by using your wrist to whip the needles away from the skin.
Tattoo Shading The Grey Wash Style Guide

What this does is causes the needles to move up and away from the skin. Effectively you are moving the needles from a deeper depth to a more shallow depth. The motion of this technique creates the grey tones and a feathering needed or simply put the shading effect.

- Creating an increased darkness in the tone or hue is a matter of either reducing the speed of movement, the number of passes made, variation in the strength of ink or wash used.

- Creating a graduation in tone or smooth transition of shading from the light point back to the dark point is a matter of a combination of the above as well as reducing the length of the sweep motion with each successive pass.

So lets summarize all of the technical elements required to effect the desired shading outcome, the variation in tone and graduation of hue:

- Needle grouping utilized
- Speed of machine (as determined by the output of the power supply)
- Alignment and angle of needle group in relation to
  - the direction of the sweep, and
  - the surface of the skin
- Speed of movement with the hand
- Movement of hand in combination with wrist throughout sweep
  - initially maintaining needle depth and alignment to skin, then
  - utilizing wrist movement (whipping away) at end of sweep to reduce depth
- Number of times gone over and reduction in length of successive sweeps
- The use and variation of grey wash tones and full strength black

This all seems complex to begin with but with practice and patience, take the time to discover how altering the emphasis in each component can impact the end result in shading and you will become a more effective tattoo artist.

Shading, Dark Point to Light Point

The dark point does not necessarily have to be 100% black, it can be any reduced percentage of black short of the tone of the light point. The light point does not necessarily have be white (or skin tone) it can be any increased percentage of tone, short of the the dark points tone. Much will depend on the light source point and the depth throughout the design you wish to create. Bear in mind black is simply the saturation of grey and white or the light point is just the absence of grey.
Interview, 28 Common Questions and Answers

Alright that’s the process, the rest of the guide will be a transcript of an interview I had with Paul Bernoth, an accomplished Professional Tattoo Artist from Australia. Paul answers 28 of the most common questions that aspiring or up coming artists have. I have included a number of videos that visually support the information in the guide as well as the interview.

1) Where did tattoo shading originate?
To the best of my knowledge in Japan.

2) Can you give me some facts about working on skin?
Well bit of a strange questions as tattooing on anything other than skin is unusual?

Well its not erasable and as skin is forever, also you need to be wary as to not overwork the skin as it will heal, but if overworked or drilled through can badly scar or injure someone. Its best to not overwork and comeback 4 weeks later and touch up any color.

3) Do you have to keep the skin taut when tattooing? If not what can happen?
You can get blow outs and crappy lines, with shading and coloring you can get uneven shading and color. When doing a large surface area; you should put your free hand into a ‘C’ shape or the web effect. Here is a video demonstrating this:
4) **How deep should the ink go into the skin? For outline and shading...** *(Dermis section)*
It depends on the person or the body part as but generally about a millimeter or so. Or about 1/16th - 1/32 if an inch. Going past the epidermis and entering the dermis section, if you go any deeper you will cause severe scar tissue and a whole lot of pain to your customer!

5) **What are the proper angles for shading?**
Well anywhere from 30 to 90 but for a beginner probably about 45 degrees, be careful around outlines as work from the outline in not out towards the outline to stop blow outs.

6) **Can you give any tips on using tattoo stencil?**
Make sure person is in a natural position, use a stencil transfer machine if avail, also hand drawing the stencil gives you an idea how you will line the design.

Another thing is get the client to approve the position before tattooing, if they are unhappy wipe off with alcohol and start again.

7) **What do you recommend for transferring stencil?**
KY jelly (personal lube) or Dettol

8) **Let’s talk about needles now....Please give us some insight on the right needles to be used for shading? What type of needles do you use?**
Shading can be done with RS round shaders for beginners, once competent and comfortable move up to mags.
I personally use 7 or 9 mag

9) **What would you consider to be the best for shading?**
That's easy mags.

10) **Can you please give us some instructions on how to do black and gray shading.**
Too much to mention but generally you can use the flick of your wrist to gradually guide the needle from the deepest to shallow which will give a gradient in tone, or by scrubbing and using the pressure of you hand to give the different gradients.
11) **What types of liquids can you use for dilution?**
Many from water, rosewater, witch hazel, I've even heard or people using vodka? but I use distilled water.

12) **Now lets’ shift gears into tattoo machines and the speed for shading. What are the two speeds for tattooing?**
Well it depends on the artist hand speed but I use these myself (these are figures when machine is loaded)

- Liner - between 120 and 140 hertz
- Shader- between 100 and 120 hertz
- Color packer between 90 and 110hertz

13) **Can you give us some tips and tricks on control your machine and hand speed.**
Nah not really just practice and what ever works for you.

14) **Outlines for tattoo shading. Why is it some important to have your outlines so good?**
The outline is the basis of the tattoo, like a foundation for a building. Once you have finished your outline, clean up and go over for any faint lines, missed spots etc.. and touch up until it looks solid and if your happy then move on to shading.

15) **What are the three types of outlines?**

- Typical outline
- Grey line
- Blood line
- Sculpted lines
- (Shitty beginner shaky lines)

16) **Okay, lets talk about tattoo shading techniques. What methods do you use for tattoo shading? (Two Methods Sweep & Brush)**
I used both plus a few others which maybe aren't conventional. I would stick to sweep shading for a beginner, basically its like a scooping motion.
Black - n - Grey Tattoo Shading Basics

Following are some videos on tattoo shading techniques...

3 Shading Techniques pt 1 of 3

4th Video Page 27
Click Here to watch it online

Shading Techniques pt 2 of 3

5th Video Page 27
Click Here to watch it online
17) **Can you give us some pointers with these methods?**
Go slowly and don't overwork an area, if your diluting your own inks make sure its not too light as you will have to go over the same area many times to get the desired tone.

Also its easier to darken so start light and add more ink if your not happy with the tone.

18) **What is the most common problem with black and grey tattoo shading?**
I'm not sure of the term but when the shading isn't gradually lighten, its like the black and then white, need to gradually go from dark to light, also overworking the skin. Another thing is going too fast.

19) **What is the most common problem with shading in general?**
Not picking where the light source is coming from, I have seen some of the best artists who have 3 different light sources and it just looks wrong.
20) I was told there are two types of tattoo machines what are they?  
(Use one for lining and one for shading so you don’t have to readjust your machines between steps) 
Well its best to have different machine so they are setup ready to go when its time to shade or color but I have seen shaders setup as a liner and vice-a-versa.

I generally use a liner with a longer stroke than most, below is what the differences on my machines. Liner- runs faster, generally has thicker springs and smaller rating capacitor and hits harder shader - should run slower than liner and hit softer, has thinner springs and larger rated cap.

21) What are the best tattoo machines to use for shading? What do you use? 
The best machine for shading is a slower softer hitting machine, I have about 4 or 5 shaders, few handmade.

I use a superior which has been rebuilt and only the frame and vise and hex screws are original and one which might even be Chinese. Again all have been pulled apart and have something which were original, springs or coils or caps etc.

22) What do you suggest to practice on? What are some tips to remember when practicing? 
Well first start on yourself, thighs are great for practicing but nowadays you can buy fake skin (heard its shit as ink stains it and can see the tattoo from the stains) fruit and pig belly (from butcher not live)

Practice until your lines are solid, consistent, and realistic. You’ll know when you’re ready to do a real tattoo

23) Can you give me some patterns to practice on that are simple and easy to work with? 
Not on hand but I would start with traditional styles, skulls, stars, roses, as these all have the 3 elements, outlining, shading and coloring.

Don't start on tribal as full black fill shouldn't be for the beginners. Okay maybe something small like kanji symbols. Don't start with big designs, start small and work up.
24) Can you give us some tips and advise on tattoo safety? Too much to say, could write a book on this question. Use common sense, actually common sense ain't that common anymore.
25) **What do you suggest for Tattoo Apprenticeships?**

It’s hard, I’ve learnt the hard way but to be honest, if you can get one with your preferred shop or artist great but sometime beggars can’t be choosers.

(Find an apprenticeship under someone you respect and admire. Nothing beats hands-on experience)

**14 yr Old Tattoo Apprentice**

26) **What kind of checklist would you have before starting your shading project?**

Can I do this, If not walk away. If design is pre-drawn, follow it if not then draw the design and get the pencils out and shade on paper, once sorted go for it.
27) Tattoo Aftercare

Once tattoo done and cleaned up apply Bepanthen cream and cover with plastic wrap, leave on until home (no more than 2 hours) and then wash with warm soapy water, pat dry and allow to dry naturally for 20 minutes, apply Bepanthen cream 3 times daily.

For first night in bed, if tattoo on area you may sleep on then cover with plastic wrap otherwise in the morning your PJ's will be stuck to you tattoo or the bedding (plus sheets will be stained)

Keep applying cream until peeled and then use vitamin E cream until shinny appearance has faded, keep out of pools, saunas, spas, ocean and sun.

For 2 weeks and don't listen to any fools in any bars as there are plenty of tattoo experts out there, if something wrong call the shop and get their advice.

28) Gives your final tattoo shading tips that has helped you the most.

Practice, practice, practice.. and also when starting out make sure your hand speed isn't too slow.

If you hack someone you will learn quickly and don't go too deep, its best to go over an area, lining or shading then to go to deep and mess some one up.
Here are some further videos to help out

Beginning Tattooing Tips: How To Setup A Traditional Tattoo Machine

10th Video Page 33
Click Here to watch it online

Beginning Tattooing Tips: How To Start A Tattoo

11th Video Page 33
Click Here to watch it online
Shading Techniques For a Color Tattoo

Making a "Grey Wash" Tattoo Ink System
Black & Grey Portrait Training Video

14th Video Page 35
Click Here to watch it online

Tattoo Lesson 1

15th Video Page 35
Click Here to watch it online
How a Tattoo Machine Works

16th Video Page 36
Click Here to watch it online

Clean and Set a Tattoo Machine

17th Video Page 36
Click Here to watch it online
How to Sterilize Tattoo Needles

18th Video Page 37
Click Here to watch it online

Some Nice Work for Black and Grey Tattoo on Side and Stomach

19th Video Page 37
Click Here to watch it online
Tattoo Shading The Grey Wash Style Guide

Grey Wash Tattoo Photo Gallery

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pageNum_rs_artist=6&totalRows_rs_artist=63&artist=Nicki

Tattoo Quotes:

My body is a journal in a way. It’s like what sailors used to do, where every tattoo meant something, a specific time in your life when you make a mark on yourself, whether you do it yourself with a knife or with a professional tattoo artist. ---- Johnny Depp

Tattoo the pristine flesh
What is permanent anyway?
This ink only lasts ‘til the grave,
Skin and ideas decompose
That which we did compose. ----Corri Alius

Show me a man with a tattoo and I’ll show you a man with an interesting past.
~Jack London

You think it, I ink it. ~Saying of tattooists

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