Combined Saline and Laser Eyebrow Tattoo Removal

Phil Zarafa

Introduction:

Goal: To sufficiently remove dense pigment and underlying warm red undertones, allowing the client to proceed with a new cosmetic brow tattoo.

Concerns: As with many cosmetic brow tattoos, the pigment contained warm undertones, such as reds and yellows, commonly used to mimic natural brow hair tones. These undertones can oxidize or shift in color when treated with laser alone, so a combined approach was recommended. The client had two saline removal sessions to remove most of the warm undertones before commencing laser treatment. The goal of the laser treatment was to target the remaining carbon-based pigment and correct any color imbalance.

	Step 1
	Saline tattoo removal, 2 sessions with 8 weeks interval

	Step 2
Laser	Fotona QX MAX
Wavelength	1064 nm
Handpiece	R28
Fluence	2.0 J/cm^2
Mode	Q-Sw, 5 ns
Frequency	5 Hz
Spot size	8 mm
Sessions	1 session

Phil Zarafa is a laser tattoo-removal specialist and the owner of Tailored Tattoo Removal, a private studio based in Melbourne, Australia. He has been working with Fotona lasers since 2015. He entered the industry after needing tattoo removal himself; the need for tattoo removal sparked a deep interest in the science and precision of laser technology.
His core areas of expertise include full tattoo removal, lightening for cover-ups and cosmetic removal. He works closely with many tattoo and cosmetic artists to help clients achieve the best possible outcomes. Understanding that every tattoo removal journey is unique, Phil is known for his personalized, client-focused approach.

CLINICAL CASE:

Prior to laser treatment, the client underwent two saline removal sessions, eight weeks apart, to begin lifting the dense cosmetic pigment. Saline tattoo removal works by implanting a saline solution into the skin, which lifts the ink pigment out and creates a controlled scab formation. As the scab heals and lifts, it draws embedded pigment particles to the surface and out of the skin. This method is particularly effective for removing lighter cosmetic inks with warm undertones, such as reds, oranges and yellows, that may not respond predictably to laser alone.

Once the client completed her second and final saline removal session, she waited another eight weeks before beginning her laser treatment. The eyebrow area was thoroughly cleansed with a gentle skin cleansing wipe to minimize risk of infection and remove any sunscreen and make up. Protective eye shields were applied and treatment parameters were carefully selected based on pigment density, skin type and previous saline removal history.

A single conservative pass was performed using the 1064nm wavelength, targeting the residual carbon-based pigment while avoiding excessive thermal accumulation in the delicate area. The laser settings were chosen to deliver effective pigment fragmentation without risking skin damage or paradoxical pigment darkening, which can occur with certain cosmetic inks. A mild uniform frosting and mild erythema was observed immediately after treatment, indicating a successful breakdown of residual pigment particles.

The client reported tolerable discomfort due to the small treatment area and short duration. Cold-air cooling was applied continuously throughout the procedure to maintain epidermal comfort and reduce post-treatment inflammation. No blistering, pinpoint bleeding or textural disruption was noted. The client was monitored for several minutes post-treatment.

Aftercare instructions: The client was advised to avoid sun exposure on the treated area for up to 14 days, and also to avoid makeup on the area for 3 days post treatment. A gentle natural post-laser healing cream was recommended twice a day for 14 days. Picking, rubbing or applying actives was strictly discouraged. Sunscreen was recommended on the treated area on top of the post-laser cream when outside.

Fading progress: The client had previously lifted most of the warm undertones through saline removal. The single laser session effectively removed the remaining carbon-based pigment, resulting in visibly clean brows. No warm red undertones or residual staining were present post-treatment. A slight yellow undertone remained post-treatment. However, this was not considered a concern as the client planned to undergo re-tattooing of the brows approximately three months post laser removal. The remaining undertone was expected to be effectively camouflaged during the new brow tattoo procedure and did not pose a barrier to achieving a natural result.

End result: Following one laser session, the client returned 8 weeks later. The treatment area had healed without complications, leaving a clear and even-toned base suitable for re-tattooing. The client was highly satisfied with the outcome and expressed confidence in proceeding with a new brow design.

Before commencing the laser removal process (and 8 weeks after the second saline session)

Results directly after laser treatment

Results 8 weeks after laser treatment