Scalp Micro Pigmentation (SMP) Tattoo Removal

Phil Zarafa

Introduction:

The client was diagnosed with alopecia universalis. He wanted complete removal of previous SMP to restore a natural appearance prior to undergoing a new SMP procedure. The existing pigment now appeared unnatural due to age and pigment migration. Full removal was required to ensure optimal conditions for new SMP application.

The client presented with minimal concern regarding hair presence due to a pre-existing diagnosis of alopecia. The SMP had been performed approximately 10 years prior by two separate clinics, resulting in uneven pigment distribution. Given the varying ink densities ranging from significantly faded to darker, more blown-out pigment, uneven clearance was anticipated throughout the course of laser treatment.

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	3 sessions
Interval between sessions	6 weeks between Tx1 and Tx2 and 10 weeks between Tx2 and Tx3

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:

Complete tattoo removal was achieved over the course of three treatment sessions. A six-week interval was observed between the first and second sessions to allow for adequate healing and initial pigment clearance. The third and final session was conducted after a ten-week interval to maximize lymphatic clearance of pigment and to assess the skin's full response before targeting any residual deposits. This final session was limited to precise spot treatment, addressing isolated pigment that remained following the two initial full passes.

Observations during treatment: Initial treatment began with three test spots applied to distinct areas of the scalp to assess the frosting response across varying ink densities. The first session demonstrated immediate clearance in regions with lighter, less dense pigment. Treatment involved a single uniform pass across the entire scalp with minimal overlap to reduce the risk of over treatment and ensure consistent energy distribution.

Immediate skin reaction: Following treatment, the immediate skin response included minimal erythema and mild edema, both expected post laser. A uniform frosting reaction was observed during application. No blistering or pinpoint bleeding was present at the time of treatment and the skin remained intact with no signs of adverse response.

Aftercare instructions: The client was advised to apply a thin layer of a natural post-laser cream 2–3 times daily to keep the area hydrated, promote healing and reduce inflammation for 14 days. The area was to be kept clean with strict avoidance of sun exposure for 14 days and excessive heat, sweating or friction for 48 hours.

Fading progress: Progressive fading was observed between sessions with a significant reduction in pigment density following each treatment. Lighter and more superficial areas of ink responded well with noticeable clearance after the first session. Heavier pigment required multiple passes to break down effectively. By the third session, over 90% of visible pigment had been cleared with only isolated ink requiring spot treatment. No signs of hypopigmentation or textural skin changes were noted throughout the course of treatment.

End result: The treatment course resulted in complete clearance of the previous SMP ink with restoration of a clean pigment-free scalp. The client achieved the desired outcome with no adverse effects such as scarring, hypopigmentation or textural changes. The client was highly satisfied with the end results.

Before

6 weeks after the first treatment session

10 weeks after the second treatment session