

10 Mistakes

Permanent Makeup
Artists Make

Yes,
You Do
It Too



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10 Mistakes Permanent Makeup Artists Make (Yes! You do it too!)

There are a number of things that permanent makeup techs do wrong without realizing it, and it is affecting the quality of your work! I will admit that I have fallen victim to all 10 of these mistakes as well. Just knowing about them is a step closer to being a better PMU tech, but you really have to make a conscious effort to implement them if you plan to free yourself from these awful habits!

Did I get bad training? Probably not. Some of these mistakes are just bad habits and many of them are passed down to new techs without realizing it. They may seem like common sense, but I promise you they are as visible in the PMU world as a rampaging elephant.

But good news! I am here to lead you on the road to recovery! Become aware of each of these 10 mistakes, identify when you are making them, free yourself of them, and instantly become a better PMU artist!

1. Running the needle all the time

A traditional tattoo power supply is regulated by a foot pedal that controls when the machine goes on and off by pressing (and holding) to run the machine and releasing to stop the machine. Nearly all the machines designed specifically for PMU have a continuous "on" button meaning that you switch the machine on and the needle will run until you switch it off, either by pressing a button on the console or a foot pedal. The new Cheyenne power supply is designed like this as well, which surprised me as it is a traditional tattoo set up.



Here's why it's wrong:

Running the machine continuously adds valuable minutes, which turns into hours, to your power supply and hand piece motor. These bad boys are expensive, so we certainly want to keep the mileage low to prevent extra wear and tear as well as overheating.

Running the machine continuously increases our chances of self-injury. I know, you have been tattooing for 100 years, and you have NEVER caught yourself with a running needle. That's awesome, but really, why chance it?

Running the machine continuously increases the chance of client injury or mistake. How many times have you been peacefully working on a client when suddenly you hit a spot that isn't quite as numb, has an inflamed nerve ending, or simply catches the client off guard and they wince, jerk, or my favorite-- jump up towards you! As a tattoo artist, I have had this happen many times (since we do not use numbing), and I have always been confident in my ability to pull the machine away from the skin in time...however, there is an additional safeguard in that once I take my foot off the foot pedal not only does the motor stop running, but the needle pulls back into the tube and protects my clients from an errant dot or line. Because PMU designed machines do not have this feature, the needle is still running, and that split second jerk can easily become an unwanted dot!

Running the machine continuously increases the chance of hooking your needle. Now, here's why this tip is incredibly important! All my other reasons for not running the machine continuously were precautionary, but hooking a needle can really affect the quality of your work. If the needle comes in contact with any surface other than skin it can easily bend the tip of the needle. You may not be able to see this with the naked eye, but if you check your needle with a loupe, you will see that the needle point has bent into a little hook. This is terrible for PMU (or any tattooing) because instead of a super fine,

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sharp point you are now trying to implant pigment with a dull needle and ripping and tearing the skin with the hook. If you are having trouble implanting color, or think you are really over working the skin, a hooked needle might be the culprit.



How do I fix this?

If your power supply has the option of using a foot pedal to turn the machine on and off, I strongly recommend using it. If you have a machine that provides continuous power and changing to a foot pedal operated power supply is not in your budget, simply turn the machine off every time you are not working in the skin. This means that every time you pull out of the skin you must turn the power off. Do not place the running hand piece on your treatment table, and certainly do not dip into your pigment with the machine running. If you forget and leave the machine running while dipping into your pigment cup, be sure to avoid the bottom or sides of the cup. If your needle makes even the tiniest bit of contact, you may need to switch out your needle for a fresh one.

2. Not Switching Needles

Many PMU techs are taught in the style of their teacher. I have noticed that many trainers teach PMU with a certain machine and certain needle leading the student to believe that this is the only way to work properly. I often see techs in the online groups asking "which needle do I use for XXX procedure?" There are as many answers to that question as there are technicians, and there is no right or wrong answer. I have seen full lips done beautifully with a single needle, and I have seen them done with enormous groupings and everything in between. So which is better? They all are and they are all not.

Wait, What??

OK, let me clarify. Each needle has a purpose and a set of techniques for how it is used. Depending on what you are trying to accomplish one needle configuration may be better than another, but since we all have our own unique style and way of doing things, we also have our own needle preferences, but sometimes you just need to change needles.



Here's why it's wrong:

Not all needles are created equal. Even needles made from the same manufacturer and in the same lot can have small differences in their sharpness and quality of configuration. If you happen to get a needle that is not like the others you are used to using, you may see a difference in performance.

Sometimes the needles can dull while you are working. Some people have incredibly tough skin, and some needles just aren't as sharp as their siblings. If the needle is beginning to dull, you will notice a change in performance.

You may have come into contact with a hard surface causing a hook or dull point in the needle.

It may not be the proper needle for the client. As you gain experience in the PMU world you will come to understand that while we are all human, our similarities stop there. We each have unique skin that has been exposed to a unique set of circumstances, and therefore no two people will be exactly alike.

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You may have done 100 sets of brows that all went smoothly and then in walks a client with aardvark skin and nothing works.



How do I fix this?

Purchase a small jeweler's loupe (a little magnifying glass) and check your needles before you use them to be sure that there are no imperfections.

If you suspect that your needles have dulled, toss it and crack open a fresh one.

As mentioned above, all skin is unique to the owner. Some have thin, fragile paper-like skin while others have thick, collagen packed and incredibly hydrated or oily skin. What worked for one client many not work for the next, so if you seem to be experiencing a problem, don't be afraid to try a different needle configuration, a different grouping, or a fresh needle.

3. Not Switching Techniques

As mentioned earlier, most trainers teach in their own style because that is what they have found to work best for them. For new techs or those who have not experienced multiple trainings, this means they have only been exposed to a narrow set of techniques. I have often heard techs say, "I was doing XXXX procedure and after XX passes and XX hours I still couldn't get the pigment in, what am I doing wrong?" Although the method you were taught may be tried and true for your teacher, it may be all wrong for you.



Here's why it's wrong:

As I mentioned in the previous section, humans are fabulously unique. There are some basic steps that we all need to learn in PMU training, but then it's time to let your unique style shine. You will find that your clients will vary based on age, skin care routine, skin color (Fitzpatrick scale), sun exposure, damage, sickness and other medical conditions (alopecia, trichotillomania, eczema, rosacea, etc), medications and overall body chemistry. What works for a technician with a clientele base of pale, fitz I Scandinavian clients in Northern Europe may not work for a tech with a clientele base of fitz IV clients in Arizona. Aside from the difference in the Fitzpatrick scale rating, these women are drastically different from the foods they eat to their exposure to the sun. I have talked with several trainers who can do their entire procedure (lips, brows or liner) with a single needle. I have not had any luck with that at all. It is quite possible that I just haven't perfected my single needle technique yet, or it can be that my average client is a sun worshipper of Mediterranean ancestry with skin that tends to be thick and rubbery. I don't know the answer to that, but here's what I do know: If it's not working...STOP DOING IT!!



How do I fix this?

Learn to relax. Seriously. Relax, take your time, and don't allow yourself to get frustrated. The problem may not be you--it may be your technique. You may be new at this, or you may have been practicing PMU for many years, but that does not leave you immune to falling into the

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habit of sticking with one technique pass after infuriating pass without seeing results. Make yourself a mental checklist and go through each item one at a time:

Change my stretch (without a good stretch the needles will simply bounce off the skin and not implant)

Change my speed

Change my angle

Change my pattern (circular, ovals, sweeps, etching etc)

Change my depth (you may be working too shallow)

Change my needle (to a fresh needle or a different configuration or grouping)

4. Not Switching Pigment

You have been working on this poor woman's lips for over an hour, yet you can barely see solid color. Her lips are swollen, and the numbing doesn't seem to be working anymore. She is bleeding a lot. You changed your speed, stretch, depth, needle, pattern and angle and still no results; but you keep using the same cup of pigment that you started with.



Here's why it's wrong:

When you are tattooing, you are breaking the skin, and bleeding is expected. Some people will barely bleed at all while others may run like an open faucet. That blood (and possibly other body fluids such as saliva or tears) is getting transferred from the client to the pigment cup via your machine. Quick lesson in pigments: A highly concentrated pigment (lots of colorless liquid) will produce a more saturated, solid pass whereas a diluted pigment (lots of liquid, not as much color) will produce a lighter, cloudy, smoky or faint pass. If you are trying to get a solid fill (eyeliner, lip color etc) and each pass is not producing the saturated fill you are looking for (after you have gone through your mental checklist from above) you may have diluted pigment.



How do I fix this?

Change your pigment. It's that simple. If you see that your client is producing a lot of blood (or other fluids) and you suspect that your pigment is getting diluted, set out a cup with fresh pigment. The best way to prevent this in the first place is to use small cups. If you know you will need a large amount of pigment, instead of using a large cup and risking dilution, set out 2 or 3 smaller cups.

Some procedure anesthetics contain epinephrine which work as a vasoconstrictor, squeezing the veins shut in the immediate area to slow down or stop the blood flow to that space. This can be particularly useful when your client is bleeding excessively and can also reduce swelling. Be sure to read up on the side effects of epinephrine and it's contraindications. You should also check with your local governing laws about what types of anesthetic ingredients are allowed as regulations vary.

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5. Overworking the Skin

So far we have learned that if our technique isn't producing the desired result we should adjust our technique, check or change our needles and change our pigment. Doing these simple steps will help you to troubleshoot the problem. If that isn't working and you keep trying to complete the procedure you need to be very careful that you are not over working the skin--this is *not* a time where you want to "try, try again."



Here's why it's wrong:

Each time the needle passes over an area it is moving up and down, creating tiny puncture holes in the skin. It is this hole that the pigment gets pushed into, creating the tattoo. A single hole in the skin is not a big deal, in fact, that hole will start to close and heal immediately. If your machine is running at say, 110 Hz that means that you are making 110 punctures per second, so you can see how that single hole can turn into thousands of holes in a matter of a minute. The more holes you create the more the skin is damaged and the harder the body has to work to heal it. In traditional tattooing the target area for pigment implantation is a little deeper than in cosmetic tattooing and the skin being worked on is thicker, heartier. The skin of the face is more delicate, therefore it is not feasible to try to implant pigment in a single pass, like a body tattooist. In cosmetic tattooing we are working slightly more superficial and with a gentler hand, therefore a slow, steady movement and several passes will produce a better result.

The less damage to the skin that is created, the faster it will heal and the less likely the client is to scar or get infected. When the skin is overworked, the scabbing can become thick and hard, which may crack causing bleeding, potential for scarring, potential for infection and loss of pigment.

But how many passes is too many? Well, again this is going to depend on your technique and your client. In general, less is more.



How do I fix this?

The best way to avoid overworking the skin is to work in as few passes as possible and lower your total needle time in the skin. Of course this may seem impossible when you are having trouble implanting color in the first place. Go through your check list-make sure your stretch, depth, speed, and needle configuration is not the problem, make sure your pigment is not being diluted.

Work in slow, but purposeful movements.

If your client is in a lot of pain, take some more time to let them numb. Some people metabolize the anesthetic slower and need more time than others. When a client is uncomfortable they are going to tense up which makes the skin harder to penetrate and will also squeeze out blood. Never allow them to hold something to clench like a stress ball or a friends hand.

If you are making too many passes the area will become swollen and it will get harder to implant, stop, apply some ice or cold compress to reduce swelling, apply anesthetic and wait.

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If you are creating a lot of damage to the skin it will start to look "chopped up" or rough, at this point it is better to stop and call it a day, any progress that is made may be lost in the healing. Feel confident that you will be able to use this foundation of color to build on at follow up time.

Too many techs make the mistake of pounding in more pigment in anticipation of the loss during healing, creating more damage creates more scabbing and extends healing time, so you are just going to lose that pigment anyway-it's better to work conservatively and handle the rest at follow up, your client will appreciate it.

6. Over Thinking the Work

I don't usually do consultations in person. There isn't anything that I can't say on the phone to a potential client to answer their questions. I do offer in person consultations if the client will feel more comfortable but it's not mandatory. At the time of the actual appointment I will assess their skin and select a color and technique based on that. I know a lot of techs (especially new ones) who do a formal in person consult and then completely obsess over their action plan until the day of the appointment. I personally find this unnecessary because as outlined previously even with a plan you may find that you need to switch things up.

I may look at a client and think XXXX is going to be the perfect color for them, but then when I put a drop on their forehead I see that I need color YYYY instead.

I've also seen techs take out 10 different colors and spend over an hour trying to decide, often asking the client for help-who usually knows nothing about color theory.



Here's why it's wrong:

Having expectations for how you plan to work sets you up to fall into old habits. You may have used color XXXX on every person you have ever worked on with Fitzpatrick XX skin, but this client may be the exception to every rule. Being stuck in old habits or thinking there is only one way to accomplish your goal is the theme of this entire book.

Taking too long to make a decision makes you appear uncertain to your client and that may waiver their confidence in you. Our business rides on our ability to exude confidence, gain the trust of our clients and solicit their referrals.

Offering too many options for the client also leads to indecision and doubt, and can open the door to a bossy client (I'll talk about this later).



How do I fix this?

You don't have to give up on consultations, if that's how you prefer to work, but instead spend the time educating your client on the process and what to expect. Answer their questions and concerns and maybe show them a few photos of other clients with similar color. Take this opportunity to appear as an expert in your field. Speak with confidence.

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If they ask "what color are you plan to use for me?" Answer with "*I* (not you) am going to choose a color that compliments your skin tone and natural hair color and accentuates your features." Don't give them a long winded spiel on warm and cool colors, color theory and Fitzpatrick scales, they have no clue what any of that means.

Use your experience and artistic eye to determine your action plan, but be open to trying other things as well. Within the first few minutes of meeting your client you should have a feel for her color, her lifestyle, her Fitzpatrick rating and her nationality, which is more than enough to determine the color range you should be using. If you have determined that she needs a medium brown with warm tones, pull out 1 or 2 colors and test them on her forehead (for brows, on the finger tips for lip color). If you are not satisfied with your color selection choose another color. When you are happy with the color you choose, show it to her and say "I choose this color for you because I feel that it will give us the perfect shade to match your tone." Explain that if the color heals and it is not 100% perfect, you will be able to easily adjust it at touch up time. If they feel apprehensive about the color, you can choose to go a shade lighter or if you know this is the perfect shade for her, explain that the color will mix with the color of her skin and that this particular shade will produce the desired result.

If you start working and you immediately feel that you have picked the wrong color, switch it out for a different shade. If you are uncertain about choosing colors you should think about taking a color theory class. Color theory might seem like an impossible to crack code but really understanding how the colors work together (or against each other) can really skyrocket your work.

Relax, if it's not working use your mental checklist.

Be fluid, "All roads lead to Rome", meaning, there are many ways to get the results you are looking for. If you are new and haven't had much training, think about taking classes with other techs whose work you admire. Trainings can be incredibly expensive, but our services are appropriately priced and reflect that. If you continue to build your education you will have an enormous "tool kit" of tools, techniques and troubleshooting skills to help you create gorgeous makeup effortlessly, which in turn will translate to making more money. I don't have a special technique that I pioneered on my own, I have a personal style that has evolved over many years through experience, trial and error and gleaning bits of info, tips and tricks from others techs, trainers and colleagues. One of the greatest errors you can make is to think you can learn everything you will ever need to know from a single training.

Practice! I've been doing PMU for over 13 years and I still doodle brows all day and use the practice pads to perfect my technique. Success in PMU is all about the flow so the more you train your hands to perform the movements, the better they will perform for you.

7. Taking Terrible Photos

There is nothing worse than completing a procedure that you are incredibly proud of only to go home and look at the photos and see that they simply do not do it justice. Our work relies greatly on our portfolio, it is, literally, the face of our business.

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Here's why it's wrong:

"It's all in the presentation" Poorly taken photographs do not properly showcase your work. Blurry photos do not show detail. Poor lighting can make color look off or skin look sullen. If your portfolio does not look as beautiful and professional as possible you are losing business to someone else whose work may or may not be better than yours, but is presented better.

Further, incredible photos that are poorly presented can also hurt your work. The more streamlined and professional the layout, the higher level you convey to the potential client.



How do I fix this?

It is not necessary to invest in pricey cameras and lighting equipment to achieve gorgeous photos. If you do not own a newer smart phone, you may want to think about investing in one. Aside from incredible camera resolution there are many apps available to help you organize, clean up and display your photos complete with templates, graphics and watermarks- everything you need to present your photos in a streamlined and professional way. You should also consider a smartphone for social media apps, which are crucial to your business presence in the virtual marketplace.

I had purchased a very expensive digital SLR camera for my business, complete with fancy lenses and filters and lighting. Guess what? I never use it. By the time I get home from work every day I am exhausted and I have my "second job" of being a mother and taking care of my home...so like the rest of you I don't have time to sit at the computer, upload my photos, organize them, put them in "before and after" templates and upload them to my website and other social media.

Social media (Instagram, Facebook and my business website) are the 3 main places I reach potential clients, so this is an important step and shouldn't be skipped.

One day I forgot to charge my camera battery and had to use my phone, and that's when the light bulb went off!

I was able to take my before and after photos, crop and adjust them and arrange them in a template, watermark them and send them off to social media in roughly 2 minutes, as well as send copies of the final photos to my client via text so that she can immediately send it out to her friends, Facebook and other social venues. Then something magical happened-the phone started ringing...friends and followers who had seen my client post her photos were calling to inquire about the service. I also noticed an increase in traffic on the photos I was posting on Instagram and Facebook. OK so it wasn't magic...it was timing. Instead of posting my photos late at night when most people are watching TV or settling in for the night, I was posting them right in the middle of prime internet traffic hours, and I was posting every few hours as I completed a procedure, increasing my visibility instead of posting 4 or 5 procedures at once.

While you don't need a fancy photography set up for photos, you definitely need a good quality light for working under which can easily double as your photo light. Be sure to take your before and after pics in the same lighting and at the same angle every time. Not only does it make the before and after photo look more professional but it lends some consistency to your portfolio. Pick a place where you plan to

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take all of your photos, make sure there is adequate light available (not just natural light which changes with weather and time of day). Choose a spot on the wall behind you where you want your clients to look and put a photo, wall decoration, or even just a sticker there so you can direct your clients to look at it for their photos.

A word on consistency. One of the biggest promises we can make in the PMU business is consistency. Your potential clients want to feel confident that they will receive the same quality of work that their friend did, or that they saw in your portfolio. One of the best ways to achieve this trust is to provide consistency in your photos. I personally like to tailor each service directly to my client. I don't have a "signature" brow shape or eyeliner, etc. Since I cannot provide consistency in the actual work I do (aside from quality), I try to take an identical set of photos for each client. Subconsciously that tells my potential clients that although I am flexible in my style to suit each person, I am consistent in my work.

Once you have the photos use an app that will put your pics in a collage template for you. Learn to change the background color to match your business colors, or use a color that accentuates the photos. Most collage apps have a "retouch" feature that will allow you adjust exposure and even smooth out the skin or eliminate blemishes. You definitely DO NOT want to over use these features as they will alter the actual work and are misleading to your customers, but adjusting the lighting or exposure so that the work can be seen clearly is OK and smoothing out some wrinkles or blemishes (as long as it is not in the actual area worked on) is fine and your clients will appreciate it as well.

Practice taking photos of your client from different angles to see which you like best, which are most flattering and which showcase your work the best. Often our clients have features that do not allow for a flattering "head-on" photos. For example, you may have a client whose brow bone structure makes only the bulb of the brow visible from the front, but slightly to the side you are able to see the bulb and tail-this is a better angle for this client.

Go on YouTube and look up short photo tip videos. Try search strings like "how to take before and after photos" or "how to take a portrait photo" for some helpful pro tips.

Lastly, but possibly most importantly...protect your images! Watermark your photos and make sure everything has your business website on it, so no matter how the photo is discovered, an interested client will be able to find you!

One last comment on photos: Don't be too perfect. Over "adjusting" your photos, photoshopping the work, over perfecting the skin or eliminating redness or changing the color is deceitful to your audience. Aside from the obvious fact that if your work is photoshopped you will not be able to deliver the same quality of work to your clients and they will be disappointed-which will hurt if not ruin your business-you may also create unrealistic expectations for your clients that you will not be able to deliver. You want to be sure that potential clients feel that their desired results are attainable but also for them to have realistic expectations of potential redness and swelling post-procedure.

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8. Obsessing over Perfection

So you spend hours drawing the template, using rulers, guides and stencils, trying to make your pre-draw as perfect as possible. You wipe and draw and erase and redraw and measure and draw and you just can't get it perfect. If you do manage to get it perfect, once you finish tattooing you notice something is slightly off and you can't figure out how to get it right.



Here's why it's wrong:

There is no such thing as perfect symmetry in the human body. Some people come incredibly close, but even still you will find minor differences from one side to the other. Don't believe me? Google images of your favorite super model and draw grid lines over her face. You will be surprised to see that once the lines are in place there will be differences in the size of her eyes, the shape, position or length of her brow and the shape of her lips. So if a supermodel doesn't have perfect symmetry, I assure you the average woman that come in for PMU is not going to have it either.

The longer it takes you to draw your template or design the more irritated the skin gets, leaving it red and swollen which can distort the skin.

Your client starts to lose confidence in you.

You start to lose confidence in yourself.

You keep trying to adjust the design on already irritated and swollen skin and you end up with a final product that is so far from what you and your client originally agreed on.



How do I fix this?

Nip it in the bud before you start. Before you begin your drawing explain to your client that the face is not symmetrical. Bones, skin, muscle and fatty tissue determine the topography of the face and it varies from side to side. Because of this, PMU can never be 100% perfect. I like to tell my clients that our brains have evolved to see and recognize this asymmetry, which is why computer generated faces look so weird-they are symmetrical! I tell them that I am going to make measurements and use them as guidelines but that I embrace a slight asymmetry because that is what is going to assure that the makeup looks more natural.

Most clients will readily accept this. Be sure to use the buzzwords "measurement" and "natural" I assure them I am going to measure and attempt to give the most balance and symmetry as possible but also plant the seed that asymmetry is essential to a natural look.

I use my GRID system to map out the face so that when they look in the mirror there is no question as to whether one brow is higher, longer, wider, or uneven with the other.

If my client insists on obsessing over something that is barely 1/4 of a millimeter I try to explain what I believe may be the causes of the difference (a droopy eye or uneven brow structure). If after measuring and rechecking they still insist something is off and I truly don't see it, I take a photo so we can look at it together. If that doesn't solve the problem I might suggest that perhaps they should reschedule their

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appointment when they have a clearer idea of what they expect their final look to be. If a client can't tell you clearly what they expect, you are going to be hard pressed to please them no matter how incredible the final result.

Once you start tattooing stick within your template. Don't make any unnecessary adjustments. Remember that now that the skin is swollen if it is going to be uneven and you don't want to find out that you went too far after the swelling goes down. Explain to your client that you don't want to over work the skin and that you prefer to allow it to heal before making any other template changes. Assure them that they can wear pencil or powder in the meantime before follow up.

When I am finished with my procedure I hand my clients the mirror. I tell them they only get 15 seconds and 3 wishes. There is a method to my madness. The 15 seconds is to keep them in tune with their first reaction. Sometimes you will hand them the mirror and they will immediately see something and say "does this brow look like it needs a few more hairs?" and they are usually right-but the longer they look the harder it gets to figure it out, so if it doesn't jump right out at you...wait till follow up and we will adjust it then. The three wish rule keeps the client from adding a dot here, and a line there, and a hair here and a spot there...going back and forth like that will only add inflammation and redness and it will take you away from the original template. Once again, assure the client that the follow up appointment is the time where you will make all the necessary tweaks to reach perfection-most of the time the "little" things will disappear in the healing.

9. Not Re-drawing the Template

I know I just said that you should not obsess over perfection, but you should certainly strive to come close. Your template is your guide, once it is lost you are left to using only your artistic eye-which might be really good, but if the client is swelling it can become very difficult to assess.

In the forums I often see techs asking how to keep their template on and what to do if it rubs off. Here's a little secret...it's ok to redraw!



Here's why it's wrong:

Once you start the procedure the client is laying down, gravity shifts the skin from falling down to the floor to falling to the back of the head. Clients with very loose skin can really distort once they lay down so it's really important that you follow your original guides. Working in the skin is also going to cause swelling which can distort the area, losing your template too early on can leave you to over compensating the design and the end result can become a disaster.



How do I fix this?

Whether you are using a surgical marker, sharpie, painting with pigment or using a makeup pencil, you may end up losing your template before you are finished...the answer here is simple...REDRAW IT.

There is this unwritten rule out there that once you commit to tattooing you are not allowed to pull your pencil out again. That is simply not true and if you are losing your template the best thing for you to do is sit your client up (remember the skin changes when laying down) and redraw. Of course you'll want to

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use something disposable because the skin has been opened and you can't sterilize surgical pens or makeup pencils.

Keep in mind that there may be redness and inflammation in the area so be conservative. Try to catch the template before it is completely gone so that you can just re-mark the areas. You don't want to change anything about the template at this point, just salvage what was lost.

Throw out anything you used to redraw, it's contaminated now.

10. Letting Clients Run the Show

This used to be one of my biggest mistakes and unfortunately there is a lot of work out there with my name on it that I am not proud of. I used to be a people pleaser, always afraid to not cater to my client. While I still like for my client to feel as though they are in control of their procedure I have learned to exert myself as the expert in the room. I am embarrassed to admit that I have allowed clients to bully me into awful shapes, inappropriate colors, hair strokes that were so close they blurred into block brows and dark brown lip liners that turned blackish, greyish as they healed. Sometimes the clients were happy with their results (to my horror) and some were not, only to have them say "well if you knew it wasn't going to look good why did you let me do it?"

I know many of you have had this happen at least once. I am here to tell you now: CUT IT OUT!!

If you are like me you have spent many thousands of dollars in trainings, many hundreds of hours practicing (both physically and mentally) and countless hours watching others work via photos, videos, Facebook groups, forums, etc. You have consumed every available bit of PMU knowledge you can get your hands on...but when you walk in the room with your client you surrender your expertise to them and allow them to run the show. THAT STOPS TODAY.



Here's why it is wrong:

The average person has no knowledge of color, skin, pigments, techniques, etc. They may know what their desired result is, but they do not know how to achieve it, or if it is even possible. (I once had a Fitzpatrick 5 woman with dark blue/brown lips demand that I give her gold "lipstick". No matter how I explained it to her she didn't seem to understand how impossible this was. She insisted a friend had it done, and I eventually released her to find another tech that could perform that service---If anyone knows that particular technique, I'm all ears.)



How do I fix this?

Don't display your colors. Showing off your color collection opens the door to allowing clients to choose their own colors, which may not be right for their skin tone.

Take into account your clients desired outcome and choose a color that you think will work. You can test it on their skin and let them make the final decision, but avoid testing more than 3 colors. Too many choices lead to indecision, which also usually leads to bad results.

10 Mistakes Permanent Makeup Artists Make (Yes! You do it too!)

Explain to your client that it is your job to figure out what color will mix with their skin tone to provide the desired outcome. Be confident in your color choice. If you need help predicting color you would benefit from taking a PMU color theory class.

It is always helpful to have healed photos available to show your client what that particular color will look like healed in their skin tone.

Err on the conservative side. It is always easier to add depth and darkness/boldness at follow up. Let your clients know that this is an art not a science and therefore the follow up is essential to achieving perfection.

Don't tell your client that what they want is stupid or ugly (no matter how bad you know it will look), instead tell them that what they are asking for is dated and that the style, shape or color you are proposing accentuates their features making them look awake, vibrant and younger.

If they still insist on doing something that you know is going to be a disaster (ie using dark eyebrow brown as a lip liner) explain to them that such a bold look is not what PMU is for. I like to tell my clients that PMU should be a Tuesday afternoon, meaning that it is the makeup you wear on a Tuesday while you are out running errands or going to the gym...a natural look. When they want to go out and really wear makeup, like on a Friday night, they can apply topical makeup and be as bold as they wish. It's rare that you will run into someone who wears dramatic Friday night makeup on a Tuesday afternoon, but explain to them that with a toned back, natural look they have the freedom to change their style and colors as they wish.

If your client is still demanding something that you know you shouldn't do, politely decline and tell them you are unwilling to perform the service. Some people get really angry and will say that the customer is always right and it is their money therefore you should give them what they want, no matter what. For these people I like to fall back on my insurance company or the permanent makeup association as an excuse. I tell them that to provide them with what they are asking for goes against the standards set for by my insurance company or PMU association and performing the procedure can mean losing my membership or being dropped from my policy and that I am bound by the association's code of ethics. I politely tell them that they may be able to find a tech who will do it for them, but to keep in mind that there is a reason why it is banned by the PMU governing bodies. Most people will accept this and appreciate your adherence to such high standards. I only had one woman who demanded that I still perform the procedure for her and I quickly googled some other local technicians and told her to consult with some of them.

I hope that by this part of the book you have realized that every single client must be approached as a unique individual and therefore your approach and technique should be fluid and adaptable. You should see every day as a chance to learn new things and take every opportunity to enrich yourself with ongoing education, trainings and workshops. The bigger your tool box gets, the more techniques you will have available to use for those difficult procedures.

10 Mistakes Permanent Makeup Artists Make (Yes! You do it too!)

About Angela



Angela apprenticed as a tattoo artist in 1997 in NYC and began working full time as a professional tattoo artist in 2001 in Tacoma, WA. She learned permanent make up in 2003 and has since worked as a tattoo artist and PMU tech in Tacoma WA, Stuttgart, Germany and now back in NYC. Her years as a tattoo artist have helped her as a PMU tech in providing expertise in choosing the proper color and technique to obtain beautifully natural results in all skin types and textures.

Angela uses top of the line tools and products in her procedures so you can be sure you are getting the very best. All products (tools and pigments) meet or exceed FDA and EU standards for permanent cosmetics. She is certified internationally and keeps up to date with

master level training in the latest techniques.

Angela's trainings are thorough and adhere to industry standards and ethics set by the Society of Permanent Cosmetics. All training's include a manual of material covered and all required working materials.

SPCP, Member # 155751
CPCP Certified
NYS License # 173368
Permanent Make up Society, Member

Special Training:

Advanced Permanent Make Up Techniques
Brows Hairstroke Master Class (Belinda Hayle)
Brows Hairstroke and Advanced Techniques, workshop (Karen Betts)
Scar Camouflage, workshop (Val Glover-Havan, April Meese)
Micro Needling Basic Course (Dr. Lance Setterfeild)
Brow Artist, Brow Artists International *pending
Camouflage, workshop (Lanette Scherr)
Lips, workshop (Jeanee Lusby)
3d Microstroke Brows, workshop (Daria Chuprys)
SPCP Train the Trainer (pending April 2016)

For more information about her training courses please visit www.TeachMePMU.com

www.Facebook.com/teachmepmu

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