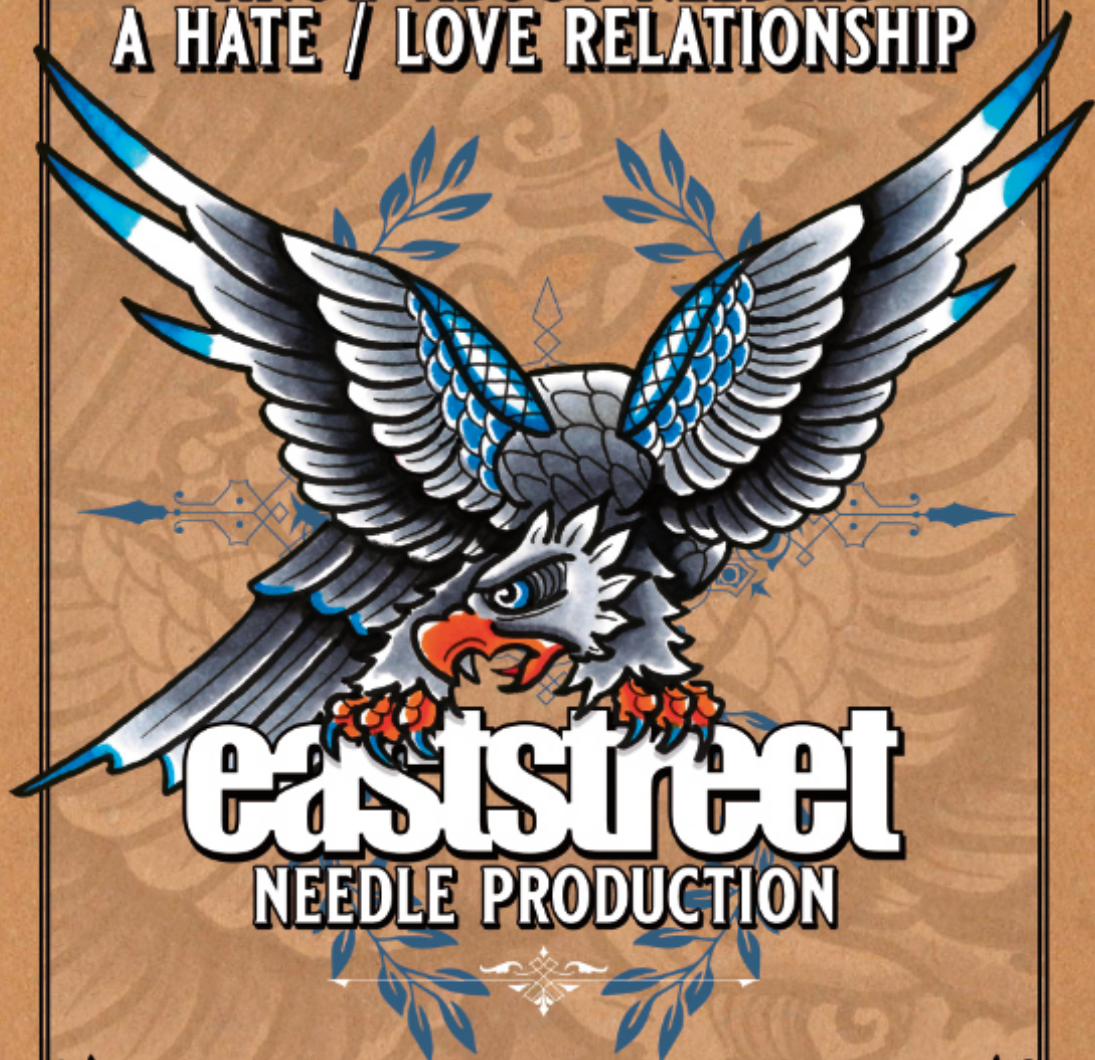


**EVERYTHING YOU
DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAVE TO
KNOW ABOUT NEEDLES
A HATE / LOVE RELATIONSHIP**



Chapter 1



Everything you didn't know you have to know about needles A hate/ love relationship.

It always surprises me that this 3cm long and barely 0,0003-gram item can either fill me with so much happiness or drive me into complete despair.

No matter how much time has been spent on perfecting a design, purchasing the most expensive fancy pansy machine, hanging innumerable endangered species of stuffed animals on your studio walls. You know, the details that make you a tattoo artist.... It's always going to be these few mm of needle that pass through the skin that will make or break the result. Of course, talent and equipment are important, but I truly believe that deep diving into the different needle types and their characteristics is going to make you a keener tattoo artist.

That's why I am sharing my knowledge and personal experience. And with personal experience I mean my 30 years of trying, failing, and trying once again.

Sometimes achieving something to be proud of. So here I come after all these year, acting like I know it all. Like the deep and hidden secrets of tattooing and everything around it were gifted to me by the tattoo gods. Truth is that I'm still learning but I hope this will serve as the guide I wished I had three decades ago when I started navigating the world of needles.

It sure as hell would have saved the skin of childhood friends from being ripped apart by my home-soldered needles that I was using for the fourth time that week.

Let's begin with...

The history of the needle:

The first kit I ever used was a Spaulding & Rogers "starter kit". This was the shit for all kitchen warriors back in the day thinking they were going to be Swedens answer to Paul Booth. The kit included three different

liners that all looked pretty much the same to me back then. I think it was a 1, 3 and something I saw as massive, probably a small 7 liner.

These 3 needles were used more times than I want to admit since the needles cost my new business way too much. After tattooing I sterilized the needles in my hot air sterilizer. It was basically an oven, probably more suitable to make grilled cheese than kill things like hepatitis. I soon realized this wasn't the way to go. The needles would go bad after the fourth use and maybe a small part of me started to think it wasn't the best idea to reuse needles. Soldering my own needles would be the only forward. So I went out looking for a reliable supplier of needles, jigs, etc in a city without tattoo shops on the streets, no ink master on tv, and no tattoo-celebrities on Instagram. We are talking the bronze age of tattooing. The internet was only just being about on the news. So to hunt down these products I would send for them via magazines or newspaper. After several phone calls or letters I took a trip to Western Union and happily sent away my hard earned cash without any clue when or even if I would receive any needles. Usually it went weeks or even months but then, if you were lucky, the supplies would one day magically appear. With the newly arrived needles and a soldering kit from "Clas Ohlson" I started the dreadful process of making needles. If you have ever tried this for yourself, you'll remember the horrible fumes of solder pewter that probably shaved 10 years straight off your already short life. I won't describe the process in great detail as I don't think you'll run the risk of ever having to do this yourself. However if you do find yourself ever needing that knowledge, contact me and I'll be happy to teach you all I remember.

On a good day I could produce 10 needles an hour. On a bad day.. more like 2. Considering that the standard price of a needle was sold for 5 SEK you can easily calculate the hourly wage for this job. Of course, a well-made needle could be used about five times or so I believed during these early days as a skin wizard. But it was still not an effective method to produce enough

needles. So we organized them with a system of marked containers. One for new and sterilized needles, one for "slightly used" needles and the last container for heavily used needles. The last container came in handy for the quick touch up jobs.



The Magnum needle was a well-kept secret far into the 90s and very few tattoo artists knew of its existence. Creating one were a real shit job. You had to slowly spread all the tips into the right width while trying to stabilize it with soldering tin. But when you think of how many tribals were made during the 90s, the magnum needle was worth the sweat!

But those days are long gone now for both good and bad. What I miss is the ability to customize the needles to my idea of perfection. What I don't miss is that I never got them to my idea of perfection while doing it myself.

That's why we decide to manufacture so many different configurations of needles. So all tattooers out there get it just the way they want them.

The production is a little larger than 10 needles a day now though and by working with leading factories in

China we have created what we think are some of the best needles on the market.

Now with all that being said, lets deep dive into different types of needles and their uses!

Chapter 2

The different needle sizes and configurations

Most common needle sizes divided in metric mm (eu) and imperial inch (us)

0,25 (eu) = 08 (us)

0,30 = 10

0,35 = 12

0.40= 14



12 inch or in other words 0,35mm is considered the standard size. 0.30 called bug pins are smaller needles that's also very common. For example a 30/5 is roughly the same size as a 0.35/7 needle.

Liner sizes:

Liners go all the way from size 1-18. Any larger than 18 would be hard to get solid and have a machine strong enough to push. Basically though lines made with for example a 5 could all turn out very different

Magnum sizes:

From 5 up to 39 is considered normal. We will have some bigger available if you wanna get crazy.

So, what is the difference?

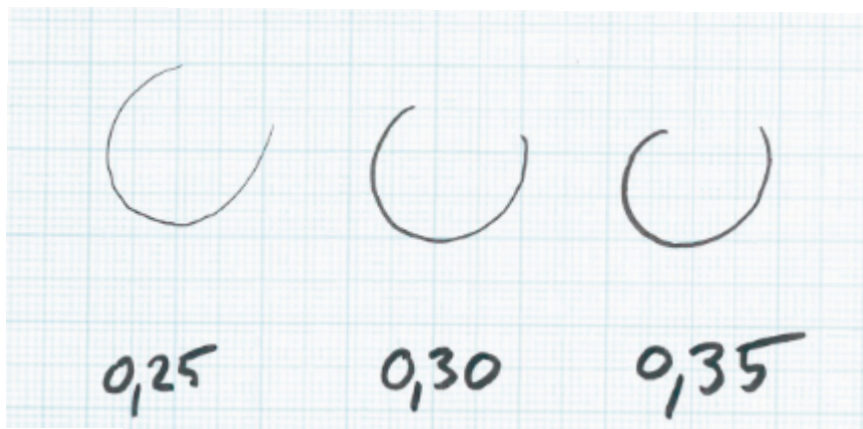
Let's start with liners.

0,25 is extremely thin and is rather unstable for most users. You need to go up to at least 5 needles for stability. Thinner than that is best suited for cosmetic tattoos where you don't want to go too deep.

0,30 is preferable for a thin but stable line that will stand the test of time.

0,35 is what I would like to call the standard and the most versatile. If soldered tighter it is a great needle for lines. But if soldered wider, like our hollow needles, it will be great for thick and solid traditional lines.

0,40 is a size I don't have that much to say about as its rarely used or sold by any brand. The thickness causes a large penetration on the skin and can cause problem with the healing and end result.



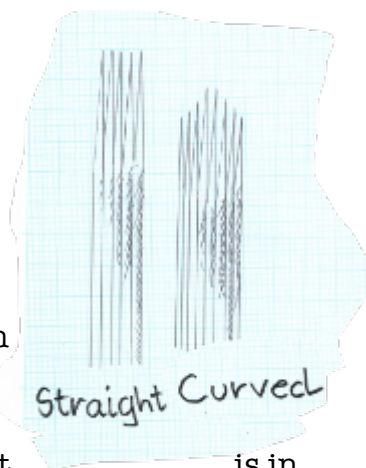
Magnum

As previously mentioned, this was a reality new term during the 90's. Today however they are as common as a tattoo shop in Stockholm. When mastering the technique, magnums are unbeatable when working on compact coloring and shading. All magnum come either with straight edges or curved. Also called soft edge, round, convex, semi but they mean the same. That the needles arch to the center of the needle. But the usual idea is that straight are for packing color or tribals and curved more for soft shading and realism.

Everybody have their favorite here and there's not really any right from wrong.

0.25 Seriously uncommon in my days but now liked mainly for cartridge user that works in realism style with extremely soft shadings.

0.30 A much more common size these days that works great for both soft shading and packing bigger fields of black and color. Can cause slightly less impact on the skin than standard .035



0.35 Call me a bit old fashioned but is in my opinion the perfect magnum size for most styles. Packing, shading, coloring, I personally like it for all.

Round shader

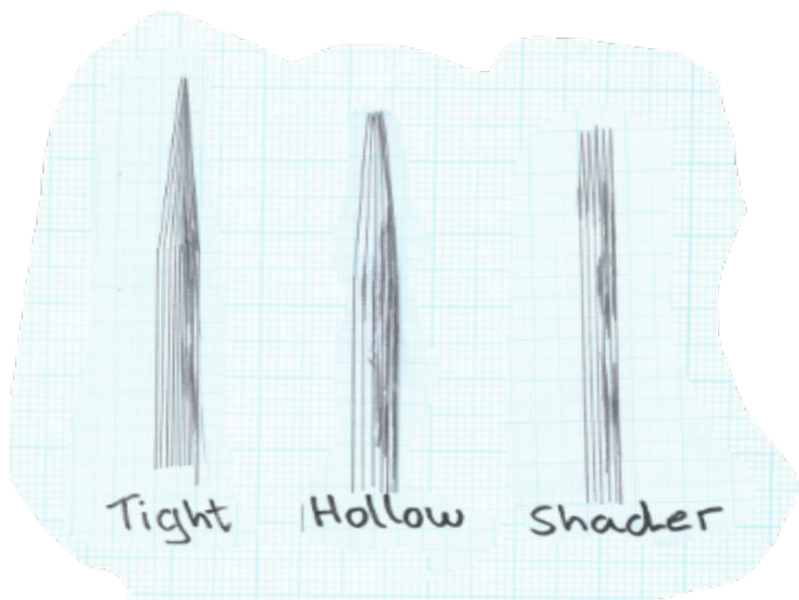
In principle this is a liner but where the needle points haven't been pressed together to form a needle tip. Very useful for coloring smaller areas where a magnum won't fit. Also commonly used for thick and bold old school lines that doesn't need a tapered thin edge. If skilled you can angle the needle to create a fine edge on ex. flames. This is not something I would recommend for beginners!

Here you could use any of the different types of needles, but the principle is the thinner the needle the harder colour-packing will be.

Hollow Point

In easy words this is a round shader but that's made for lining.

A fantastic needle that has the properties of the thin tip at the edge from a liner. But also the looser grouping from the round shader making the needle loose and big. The centre needle is poked out, so a void is created making it "hollow" allowing more ink and better flow and makes penetrate hard or loose skin areas easier. This is done by hand and is fiddly as fuck (believe me I've done it myself in the 90's) hence the higher price.



Needle tips

As we have covered the different thicknesses it's now time for a lesson on different tips.

We usually talk about short, medium and long taper. Long taper is by far the most common.

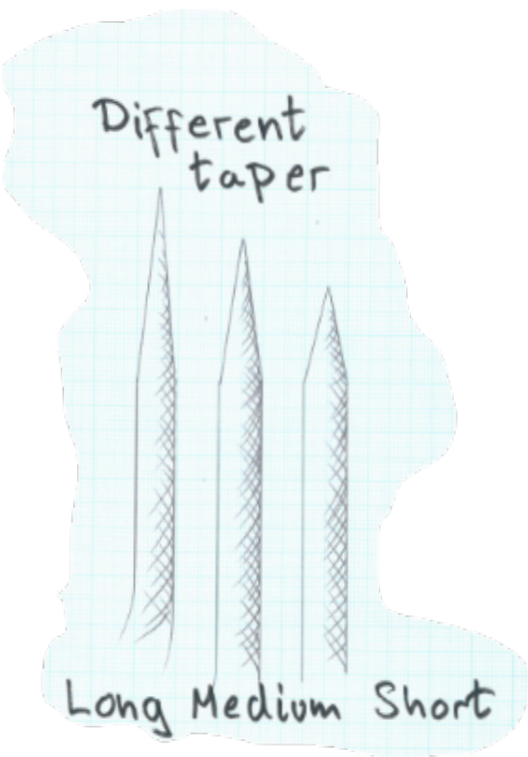
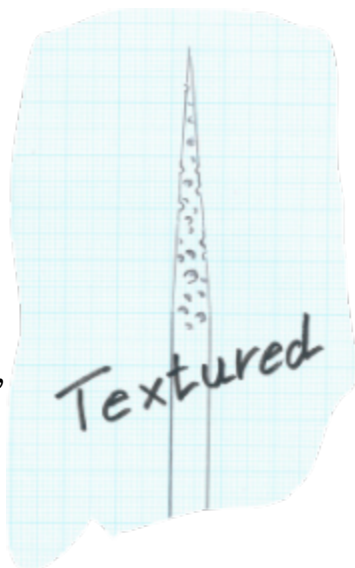
The difference is microscopic and only nerds and liars will tell you they notice the difference.

Simply put this determine the space between each individual needle where short taper has the most space, medium taper a bit less and long taper has the least amount of space between. More space can make it easier to pack color with.

This is simply the sharpness of the needle. More space between each needle can make it easier to pack color with. It is hard to get the idea without an illustration. So have a look below and I think you will start to get the hold of it if this is a new area to you.

You can find both polished needles that shine like mirrors or cheaper versions that tend to be a little scratchy and might even damage the skin. If you're not a stingy person, I would advise you for the more expensive option.

A dying variety (unfortunately) is textured which is pretty much what it sounds like. The exact opposite of polished but where small dents are placed along the tip, this makes it last longer and is perfect for a little rough coloring or shading.



Materials

Needles should always be made of Stainless Steel, ALWAYS. And solder should be lead-free, ALWAYS.

Then there are several different qualities of steel. It is possible to get it almost 100% nickel-free, but it affects the quality of the needle.

316L Steel, chosen in our new needles is the highest rated quality with low traces of nickel.

A needle in this material is much more resistant and can handle a long session without losing its edge.

Chapter 3

When to use what?

This following part is some of my recommendations. Keep in mind that they are my personal recommendations and there are probably as many opinions on this as there are tattoo artists. But just like everyone else I believe that mine is the best

So, a simple review of the skin's different layers, and quick one because this part is boring, right?

The three layers of the skin are:

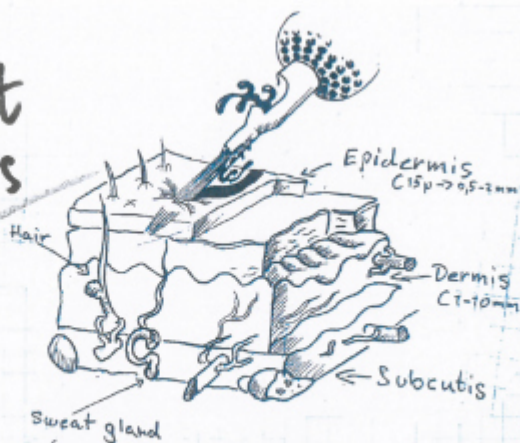
- The epidermis
- The dermis
- The subcutis

The thickness of these layers of skin varies on different parts of the body, but you should stay in the area around the dermis if you are not looking wreck the skin of your poor customer.

You must figure out for yourself where the skin is thinning and where you can push a little harder.

Let's say you tattoo a small text on a wrist, I'm sure you know the customer... they want the font tiny and prefer it to be hardly visible. Now you are going try to persuade them to place the text further up their arm and inevitably fail to do so. Either because of your shit persuasion skills or your customer being sincerely stupid. Rent still must be paid so, fuck it, let's go. To minimize damage, it is critical to not go too deep and the tip of your needle must be tight so that you do not create a double line. A sparser tip will result in a double line or more damage to the skin as you are going to have to press harder and further into the epidermis to create a single solid line.

Perfect Lines



Not Deep Enough



To Deep



Now it's time for your dream customers bodysuit. You want to be quick and precise here to set the first line work in skin, regardless of how many sessions you are planning. Having a first base of lines is going to make your life easier regardless of whether you plan to run several laps over them. I would recommend a round shader or hollow point for this.

A little heads up when you get to the thighs and ass, they have a tendency for lines to swell up to double the size even after a year.

If you plan to run really fat lines like in “new school crazy weird stuff” then I would recommend that you run two separate lines with eg. a 9 and then fill in it all in with a magnum or round shader.

If you, like me, are lazy and want every single line done in one sitting. I would set up my station with a 0.35 - 11 round shader or even better a hollow point, a tight 0.30 / 9 liner and if I plan on some generous lines a 0.35 / 3 or 5 for details like on a kimono or hair that wraps around your sweet wind bar.

Japanese waves can be super cool to just run as background details, maybe even with a little diluted paint.

My personal choice for this would be a (0.30 / 3RL)

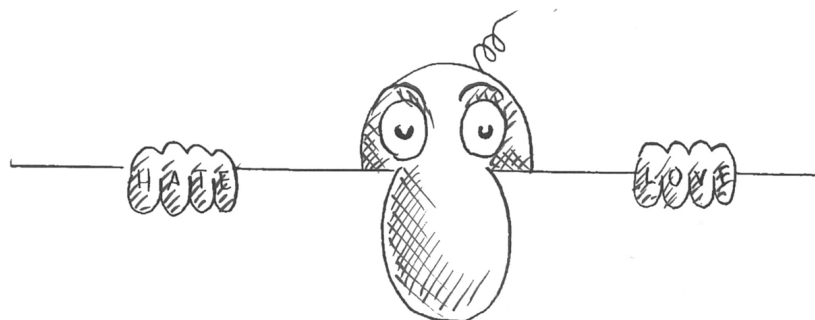
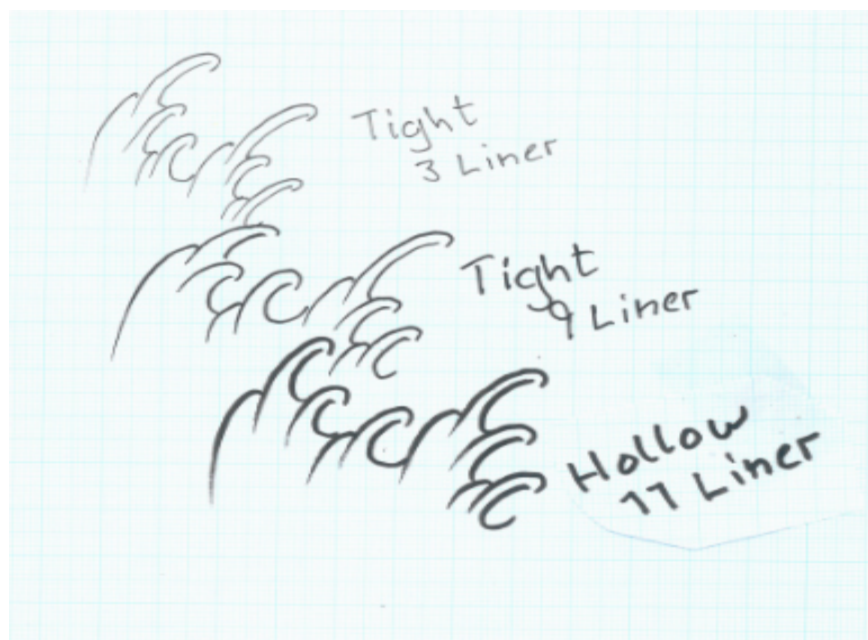
If you prefer a classic Japanese, you want to use a relatively thin needle. (0.35 / 7RL)

If you want your raging waves to be the main character, use a fat Hollow Point (0.35 / 11HRL)

You take your pick.

Creating the same wave formation but all with a different feel depending on the thickness you choose and with our carefully selected sample pack you will surely find your favorite.

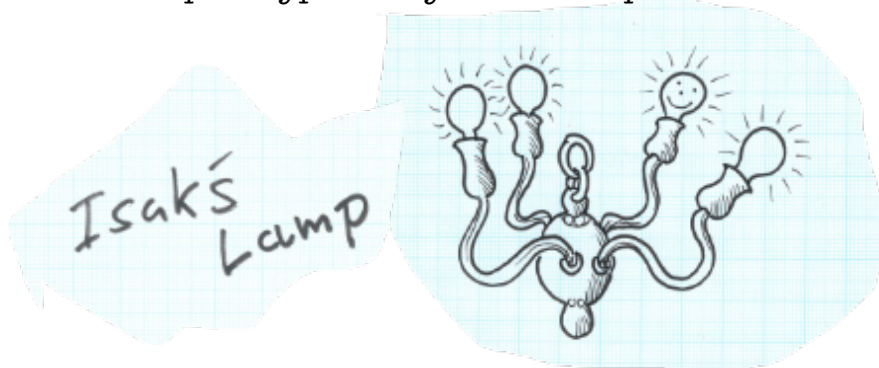
Ride on!



Epilog

Let me finish with a few words about plastic tubes and cartridges that have become the most used tools today. Personally, I used to be opposed to these and would have gone so far as to say they were the tools of the devil. I guess I must have softened over the years. These days I exclusively use cartridge for magnum. But for lines, there is were I draw the line and only use traditional needles.

Our Enso tubes are my own design that sparked as I was deconstructing a vintage light fixture and suddenly realized how ergonomic the socket felt in my hand. I created a prototype in clay and drew up a sketch.



So, I packed these in a bag and took off for China. When I arrived at our Factory and sat down with our engineer to create what today is our Enso tubes. Our focus was on extra sturdy plastic as we felt this was lacking on the current market. We put extra focus on the tips. The round tip with a bevelled cut. The diamond tip extra long with sharp thin edges. Only a few years later we also created a cartridge tube in the same high-quality design. This quickly turned into our best seller!

With these words of wisdom I leave you to enjoy our new selection of East Street Needle Production.

Isak/East Street Tattoo Supply.

EAST STREET NEEDLE PRODUCTION

NEEDLES ON BAR

0,25 long taper (Extremely fine needle)

Liner 3-11

Magnum 7-15

Magnum curved 7-15

0,30 Long taper (Bugpin Needle)

Liner 3-14

Magnum 5-15

Magnum Curved 7-15

0,35 Long taper (Standard Needle)

Liner 1-18

Magnum 5-39

Magnum Curved 5-23

Round Shader 3-18

0,35 Medium taper textured (Rough as hell)

Magnum 7-15

Magnum Curved 7-15

0.35 Hollow round liner

Liner 5-14

CARTRIDGES

0,25 long taper (Extremely fine needle)

Liner 3-11

Magnum 7-23

Magnum curved 7-21

0,30 Long taper (Bugpin Needle)

Liner 1-18

Magnum 5-23

Magnum Curved 7-21

Round Shader 5-18

0,35 Long taper (Standard Needle)

Liner 1-18

Magnum 5-45

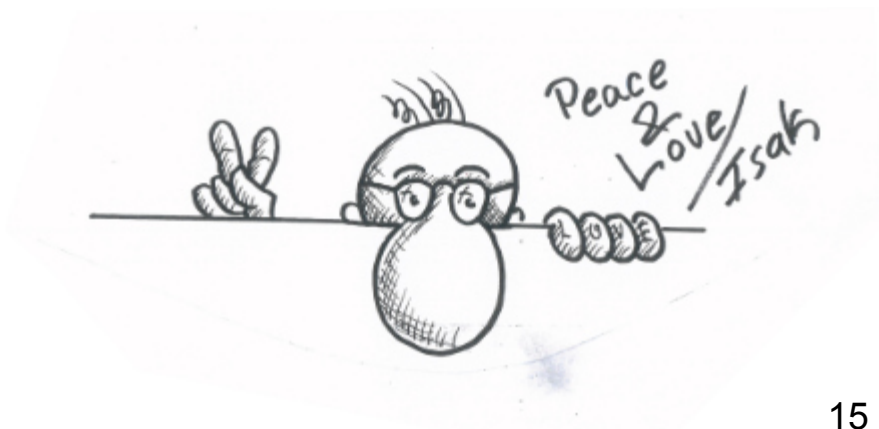
Magnum Curved 5-23

Round Shader 3-18

0.35 Hollow round liner

Liner 5-18

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