

MILES MODELS, LLC

Do Tattoos, Piercings, and Modeling Go Together?

When you think back to the “original” supermodels like Twiggy, Jean Shrimpton, or even models of the 80s and 90s like Cindy Crawford and Tyra Banks, you’ll recall that they are not tattooed or pierced anywhere more exotic than their ears. Flip through any magazine older than ten years and you won’t see much more than a belly button ring or a henna tattoo on a model. This has led many aspiring models to think their chances of success are diminished because of the tattoos and piercings they have. While piercings are certainly easier to remove than a tattoo, many models don’t want to sacrifice their personal style for a modeling job.

The good news is: you don’t have to!

It’s true – some of the biggest names in modeling today have several tattoos and piercings, and it hasn’t slowed their careers down at all. Rather, these models are unique and more recognizable because of it. With that in mind, there are still a few guidelines to help you successfully navigate your modeling career when you have tattoos and piercings.

Be Honest

If you submit photos to a modeling agency or scouting company, do not attempt to hide your tattoos or piercings. If they aren’t visible in the photos you submit, be sure to disclose it with your submission. Although most tattoos and piercings are easy to cover up for photos, it is still crucial that modeling professionals are aware of them. If you show up to a photo shoot with a large tattoo on your back that the makeup artist wasn’t aware of (or if there is no makeup artist), it might jeopardize your chances of completing and being paid for the job.

Be Flexible

If you are hired for a modeling job with the condition that they will need to cover up your tattoos or piercings, be flexible and reasonable about this request. Consider that you are lucky to have been hired in the first place as there were likely several other models who were vying for the job. The cover-up is only temporary, and you’ll be free to express your individuality in other ways during the shoot. Photographers and agents will appreciate and take note of your flexibility that you will be much more likely to be considered for future jobs.

Be Appropriate

You probably understand why having a curse word tattooed on your body might limit your chances of getting a photo spread in a mainstream magazine. If you already have a tattoo that would be deemed inappropriate by most, you will almost certainly be asked to cover it up at some point in your modeling career. If you aren’t willing to cover up your tattoos for a job (especially inappropriate ones!), keep in mind this will limit the industries you will be hired to work in. If you have a lot of tattoos, you can still be a model, but the mainstream route won’t always be the easiest. Consider being a tattoo or piercing model, a commercial model, or a glamor model where plentiful tattoos and piercings are more commonly seen.

Be Creative

If you are given the opportunity to model and showcase your tattoos, don’t be afraid to do so in a way that will make you stand out. Cara Delevingne showcases her tattooed hands (among several other tattoos and piercings she has!) in many of her photo shoots by framing her face with her hands. Other supermodels like Gisele Bündchen, Kate Moss, and Erin Wasson also have tattoos (although not as plentiful as Cara’s!) and aren’t afraid to show them off for some jobs. You’ll notice, however, that for certain jobs their tattoos and piercings are covered up.

Tattoos and piercings being acceptable for models is just another way the modeling industry is becoming more and more inclusive to all different types of people. If you've always wanted to be a model but thought perhaps you don't have what it takes or that you don't have the classic "model look," think again! From tattooed and pierced models to plus-sized, disabled, petite, or short models, there is a job for everyone who wants to be a model if they have the right agency helping them!