

Needle Diameter



The gauge of a tattoo needle is directly linked to ink flow. The narrower the gauge or diameter, the more controlled and finer the flow of ink is. The gauge is indicated by a number (usually 8, 10 or 12), and diameter by a millimeter measurement. **ALTHOUGH THEY MEAN THE SAME THING!** Needle manufacturers and tattoo suppliers use both terminologies depending on where the needles are from and being sold to i.e. country/language.

#8 gauge (0.25mm diameter)

One of the smaller needle gauges available (but not the smallest) and sometimes referred to as Bugpins. Used when wanting a slower flow of ink for intricate or detailed work. Some use #8-gauge needles for most of their work simply because they like that they hold more ink at a time (as the pins are more tightly compacted).

#10 Gauge (0.30mm Diameter)

A very common needle size. Also referred to as Double Zeros. Popular with all styles of tattooing and needle groupings as fundamentally they are the middle gauge size (when accepting 8, 10 and 12 as the main three gauges). The ink flow on 0.30mm needles is still a steady, controlled flow but not as restricted and slow as an #8 or 0.25mm.

#12 Gauge (0.35mm Diameter)

Just like the 0.30mm needles. #12 gauges are highly popular across all needle groupings and tattoo styles. Anyone referring to #12 or 0.35mm needles may also call them Standards. Common in lining and traditional work as they have a faster ink flow. Great for bold lines and color packing/shading large areas.

Other needle sizes not mentioned above: #6 or 0.20mm, #14 or 0.40 and #16 or 0.45mm! These are quite uncommon now though as they only have very few specific uses.

Tattoo Needle Counts

This is a simple one! Tattoo needles count basically means the number of pins used to make up the grouping. For example, a 1209RL means a 12 gauge (see above for gauge info), 09 Round Liner Needle. The 09 meaning 9 needle counts (or 9 pins used to make a round grouping). This would look like this:

