

It all started with Ice Man. Yes, I said Ice Man. His real name is Otzi, and he and his tattoos date back to around to the 5th millennium BC. Otzi had approximately 57 carbon tattoos that consisted of simple lines and dots on his lower spine, behind left knee, and right ankle.

The tattoos may have been a form of healing, possibly acupuncture, because of placement. This makes you question the common phrase "so easy a caveman could do it" right? They were smarter than we thought! Silly Geico.

Central and northern European tribes dating back to 54 BC have also been documented to having tattoos. These guys didn't just have a few like Otzi, they were heavily covered!

The Picts were famously tattooed with dark blue wood or copper for blue tone designs. Tattoos for them was a type of sacrifice.

These tattoos were described by a man whose name we all recognize, Julius Caesar, in his Book V of The Gallic Wars. Next, lets look at Japan.

Japan tattooing ranged from rubbing cuts with ashes to hand pricking the skin and inserting the dye.

In addition, tattooing in Japan around this time quickly became disfavored and wasn't seen as a way to decorate a warrior like in other tribes. Instead, they put tattoos on criminals and used as an easy way to identify what type of criminal they were. First time offenses were marked up with a line across the forehead. A second crime was marked by adding an arch. Third offense was marked by another line. These marks formed the Japanese character for "dog". Harsh insult to have forever.

In time, the Japanese escalated the tattoo to an aesthetic art form. The Japanese body suit originated around 1700 as a reaction to their strict laws concerning conspicuous consumption.

Only the royalty were allowed to wear ornate clothing. As a result of all this, the middle class adorned themselves with elaborate full body tattoos. One highly tattooed person wearing only a loin cloth was considered well dressed.

The way we tattoo today doesn't come from from any of the previous styles but from Polynesia. The art of tattooing was discovered by the 18th century explorers. Their style had become popular among sailors before it eventually to Western societies, North and South America.

