

## Everything You Need to Know About Permanent Makeup



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BY: [MARIANNE MYCHASKIW](#)

Well...maybe the "permanent" moniker is a bit misleading. According to Emilia Berry, owner and founder of [PermaLine Cosmetics](#) (<http://www.permalinecosmetics.com/>) in New York City, the term "semi-permanent" is more accurate, considering that it does fade over time, and it isn't a tattoo. Blame it on your weird aunt with the block-shaped tattoo eyebrows, but semi-permanent makeup sometimes gets a bad rap, and in lieu of the obvious effects of years past, the 2016 take on the method is to appear natural.

"What we want is an adjustment in shade that looks like it could be your own, so to do that, we implant the pigment into a very shallow layer beneath the epidermis, slightly to the upper dermis," Berry explains. "It's very, very shallow, which is why it allows for fading over the course of two to three years."

You won't see any tattoo ink at the PermaLine offices—technicians work with high-quality pigments, which are shade-matched to be an exact reflection of the hairs on your eyebrows and lashes, or the pink of your lips. Berry works with a variety of needles, ranging from a single needle to multi-prong needles depending on the desired effect.

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As expected, every appointment begins with a consultation. Berry will always begin by speaking to her client on the end goal, and from there, she'll draw a template of what is being done. Once the client approves, she works with them to pick the proper shade, which gets placed right on top of her sketch after the appropriate areas have been numbed.

If you're on blood thinners, you wouldn't be a good candidate for semi-permanent cosmetics, but everyone else should qualify. At PermaLine, Berry practices on eyebrows, the lash line, and lips, so we asked her for details on each procedure, along with what to expect. Scroll down to get all the info you've ever wanted to know about semi-permanent cosmetics.



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### 1. BEFORE THE APPOINTMENT

Make sure to do tons of research on the places you're considering. Berry recommends looking up reviews, as well as before and after pictures, but take note if you see the same pictures repeated, as some practices have been known to steal their pictures. "We have a watermark on our photos to prevent that, and always ask to see permits. If they don't have a permit, run," she says. "Liability insurance is important in the case that something goes wrong, and just look around and use your judgement—the office should be extremely sterile." One giveaway you're in good hands? The one-way needle. Any needles that arrive in pre-packaged and sanitized from the company are what you should seek out, and the proper ink—not tattoo ink—needs to be used.

Berry suggests arriving for your appointment a half hour early so that the appropriate numbing measures are taken, though rest assured that your technician will continue numbing you throughout the process. "After the first pass, the client is usually good, and they say it was easier than they thought it would be. It isn't uncomfortable as in pain, but more so the idea that I'm so close with a needle," she tells us. "Because of the technique that is utilized, they have their eyes closed the entire time, and we aren't implanting the pigment at a level that there should be pain."

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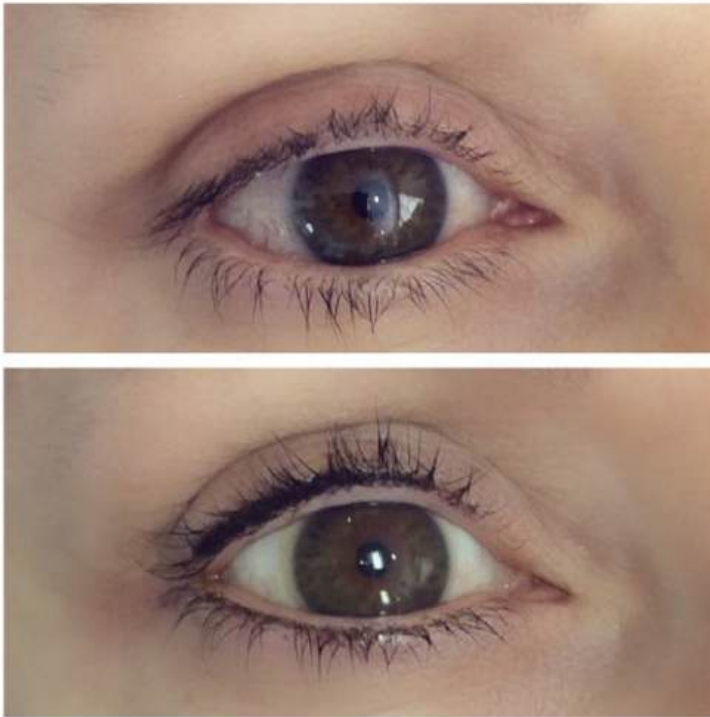


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## 2. EYEBROWS

Don't confuse this technique with [microblading](http://www.instyle.com/news/what-is-eyebrow-microblading-guide-facts) (<http://www.instyle.com/news/what-is-eyebrow-microblading-guide-facts>). With semi-permanent brows, Berry uses what she calls a "hairstroke technique" by needling in individual hairs to create a natural-looking full shape. "I do work with the single needle that has three or four in a row to create really crisp, beautiful hair strokes. It's also called a micro-stroke technique, and I never do the block technique, because it looks too severe," she tells us.

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### 3. EYES

Though "tattoo eyeliner" was once considered the norm, it isn't something Berry does at her practice. Instead, she opts for a lash enhancement, which involves implanting the pigment in between the lashes to create a fuller effect over a harsh line. "I follow the natural shape of the eye and place them a little thicker on the outer corners, and get thinner as I work inward," she explains. "I don't go above or below the natural lash border, and will only put a small amount at the bottom lashes to balance, but not much at all. It just adds thickness to the lash base, and you wake up in the morning and never look tired."

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COURTESY

#### 4. LIPS

"As we get older, some women will lose pigment around their lips, and the pink fades away, so I try to match the natural pink color on the inside portion of your bottom lip," says Berry. "I repigment the lips, and there's the possibility to make the lips look slightly larger." She starts by tracing your vermillion border, then fills in the rest of the lips with the pink shade, which veers no more than a shade or two darker than your natural hue. Healing takes about a week, and although you can expect the lips to swell a bit, Berry found that most of her clients loved that effect and were sad once it had gone down.

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#### 5. AFTER THE APPOINTMENT

Though there isn't much downtime associated with semi-permanent makeup, you can expect your lips to be slightly swollen immediately after, your lash line to be a bit red (almost as if you've been crying, nothing too serious), and your brows will be pretty crisp and dark. Everything should fade by a few shades within five to seven days, where the effect is softened by 50%. Typically, the semi-permanent makeup should last anywhere from a year and a half to three years, just be cautious of the ingredients in your anti-aging serums and moisturizers. "If you use retinol, vitamin C, or hydroquinone, those ingredients will fade the brows and lips faster almost by half, and of course sun exposure can shorten the life of semi-permanent makeup," says Berry. "I would recommend getting them touched up every two years."

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