



## TAKING IT OFF AT HOME

If you've ever gotten stuck—both literally and figuratively—trying to give yourself a home waxing job, this page is for you. We've gathered the best expert waxing tips, as well as the latest information on shaving and depilatories



### waxing dos and don'ts

- DON'T** wax skin treated with skin-thinning medications like Retin A, Renova or Accutane. "Some medications can make the skin fragile and too sensitive to wax," says N.Y.C. dermatologist Lisa Airan.
- DO** numb skin 20 minutes before waxing with a spray or cream containing 4 percent lidocaine (like Gigi's). Take a couple of ibuprofen one hour before your treatment to make the process less painful.
- DON'T** make a mess. At-home waxes now come in roll-ons (like Sally Hansen, left) and mini wands (try Aussie Nad's Facial Wand wax, \$10; drugstores), making it easy to prevent a sticky situation.
- DO** swipe freshly waxed skin with a lotion containing salicylic acid to prevent ingrown hairs (try Bliss), then soothe it with an anti-inflammatory like 1 percent hydrocortisone or azulene to counter redness.
- DON'T** forget to apply a sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher after waxing. "Freshly waxed skin is prone to hyperpigmentation if it's not protected with sunscreen," says Airan.

From left: Gigi Anesthetic Numbing spray, \$12; sallybeauty.com. J. Sisters Aqua azulene oil, \$18; jsisters.com. Sally Hansen No-Heat gel roll-on, \$8.50; at drugstores. Bliss ingrown hair eliminating pads, \$35; 888-243-8825.

### step-by-step waxing

**1 PREP LEGS** Let hair grow out to ¼ inch (most women wax every three to four weeks). Exfoliate two days in advance to remove dead skin (exfoliating immediately prior will irritate skin). Before applying wax, rub on a soothing, non-talc powder like Johnson's baby powder. "It removes surface oil, making it easier to grab hair," says Vilma Diaz of Greenhouse Spa in New York City.



**2 APPLY WAX** Heat wax following package instructions. Working in small sections, apply it in the direction of hair growth to ensure hair is pulled from the root. "Hold spatula at a 90-degree angle and glide wax on in a thin, even layer to prevent skin burns," advises Shobha Tummala of Shobha salon in N.Y.C. Before wax hardens apply a muslin strip on top for easy removal.



**3 REMOVE THE STRIP** Peel strip in the opposite direction of hair growth, keeping it as close to the skin as possible. "Pulling it straight up can damage skin and heighten pain," says Marcia Kilgore, founder of Bliss. Apply pressure on the target spot immediately after removing strip. "This may help reduce pain," says New York City dermatologist David Colbert.



### the razor's edge

- PROS** Shaving your legs is fast, easy and also happens to exfoliate skin.
- CONS** In a word? Stubble. Also shaving creates blunt-edge hairs, which can easily become ingrown. Shaving every day can dry out skin as well—especially if you use a drying soap.
- INSIDER TIP** To reduce irritation try a razor with a moisturizing bar (Schick Intuition, \$8) or conditioning strips (Gillette Venus Divine, \$9), both at drugstores.

### the real depila-story

- PROS** Depilatories remove hair but don't cause as many ingrowns because regrowth is fine and wispy, not blunt.
- CONS** They're messy, they require ¼-inch-long hair (hello, Tarzan), they take longer (at least five minutes), and most of them smell hideous.
- INSIDER TIP** Look for one with a fresh, fruity scent to camouflage the odor (try Nair Hair Remover Four Minute lotion in Cucumber Melon, \$4.29; drugstore.com).