



instant gratification from a smooth, hair-free face somehow helps you grapple with a few seconds of discomfort.

Process: A warm patch of wax is applied to the skin and depending on the product used, the aesthetician uses either a gauze strip or the hardened wax itself to quickly rip away the wax, taking the hairs along with it.

Lasts: Anywhere from three to six weeks.

Costs: Prices for upper lip, chin, cheeks or sides of face range from \$8 to \$17.

Tips: The best time to wax is the week after your menstrual cycle when your pain threshold is at its highest. Avoid sun exposure 24 hours before and after a waxing service, and always let your aesthetician know if you're using any oral or topical medications — sun exposure, various drugs and skin treatments can increase skin sensitivity.

Get it at: Dolce Salon & Spa, Chandler, Ariz., www.dolcesalonspa.com; Skin By Tania, Marina Del Rey, Calif., www.skinbytania.com; Zuri BoutiqueSalonSpa, Denver, Colo., www.zurisalonspa.com.

Home options: Persian Cold Wax Strips, \$6.49 at www.sadaf.com; Poetic Waxing Kit, \$40 at www.Hairworld.com.

Threading: Floss of a different feather

Ask any threading practitioner what advantage this ancient beauty practice has over waxing, and you'll get a list as long as its history. "There's much less possibility of damaging the skin," notes

threading professional Jennifer Hosier. A practice common among Middle Eastern and Indian women, threading can be compared to the results of tweezing, but Hosier says that it's much quicker and can eliminate even the finest hairs. And the ouch factor? "Most people tell me it's less painful than waxing," she says.

Process: The practitioner rolls a twisted cotton thread along the surface of the skin, entwining hair in the thread and then lifting it from the follicle.

Lasts: Results last three to six weeks, but unlike waxing you don't have to wait for the quarter-inch of outgrowth before re-threading.

Costs: For small areas like the upper lip, prices range from \$10 to \$20. For a full facial threading, prices range from \$40 to \$80, depending on the prevalence of practitioners in your area.

Tips: Remove makeup before a threading service, and if possible, wash your face afterward to clear away stray hairs.

Get it at: Anoo's Skin Retreat, Boca Raton, Fla., www.glowingface.com; Enessa Aromatherapy, Los Angeles, www.enessa.com; Salon Va Bella, Tempe, Ariz., www.salonvabella.com.

Home option: Teach yourself to thread with Jennifer Hosier's "One Simple Thread" step-by-step DVD, \$39.95 at www.onesimplethread.com.

Sugaring: Sweet and simple

According to aesthetician Sherry Ecker, once her waxing clients try sugaring,

they're hooked. Owner of DermaTherapy in Glendale, Ariz., Ecker describes the process, which dates back to ancient Egypt, as spreading warm honey on your skin. The sugar engulfs the hair follicle and with no stripping or hardening, hair is lifted as the product is removed by hand. "With sugaring, you can go over an area as many times as you need to — it really gets that fine hair better than waxing does," Ecker says. "Most people find it's much gentler on their skin, and the sugar is completely natural. You can eat it."

Process: The aesthetician spreads the sugar paste on the skin and flicks it off in the direction of hair growth, lifting the hair along with it.

Lasts: Lasts three to six weeks and like threading, a quarter-inch of hair regrowth isn't required before re-sugaring. Like waxing, sugaring can lead to finer, sparser regrowth over time.

Costs: In most neighborhoods, costs are equal to or just slightly higher than waxing, and sugaring professionals are harder to find.

Tips: Use a gentle facial scrub two days before your sugaring appointment for better results. Don't exercise just before your appointment — the sugar will melt on overheated skin.

Get it at: DermaTherapy, Glendale, Ariz., www.dermatherapyinc.com; Rob Rivers Salon & Spa, Mystic, Conn., www.rbrivers.com; New York, N.Y., www.shobbastrading.com.

Home option: Parissa Chamomile Body Sugar Kit, \$10 at www.parissa.com.