

A Hair-Free Body: Trends, Technology & Truth

From the brows to the toes, you name it and someone has waxed it, shaved it, tweezed it, lasered it. With so many removal options available today, the task of choosing the right one for you can be daunting. Ready to attempt an at-home wax? Wondering whether your body can brave the sting of laser hair removal? How about your wallet? Find out as we investigate the choices and see whether new technology can take the place of age-old techniques.

Shaving, one of the most widely practiced methods, is often the first introduction teens have to hair removal. The pros? It's cheap, quick, and—once you've survived a few unavoidable nicks—easy. The cons? Irritation, bumps and ingrown hairs, usually in sensitive areas like the underarms and bikini line. Switching to an electric razor for these spots can help, since you eliminate the skin irritation factor. To get rid of the bumps, some people also swear by products like Tend Skin, which contain super-exfoliating acetylsalicylic acid. Otherwise, be sure you are keeping skin well hydrated and covered with an adequate layer of shaving cream or gel, and try to avoid shaving "against the grain" which, while providing a closer shave, is likely to cause more irritation.

Depilatory creams, like Nair, are spread over the skin to chemically dissolve the hair after a set period of contact. The results are similar to shaving, as the root of the hair is not affected and

grows back within several days. Since there are no razors involved, those who are wary of shaving mishaps often turn to this method. Though formulas have been updated over the years, some people still experience skin reactions to the chemicals, so it's important to do a patch test your first time or whenever you switch brands.

Predominantly used in South Asia, **threading** is an old technique that's gaining new popularity in the United States. A piece of thread is twisted into a loop, which aestheticians move over the skin, twisting the thread as they go to quickly trap and "tweeze" even the shortest hairs, many at a time. The low-tech "lasso" effect catches even the tiniest hairs by the root without affecting the skin. The

results last just as long as tweezing or waxing, although you can't exactly do it to yourself. The Shobha Salon in Manhattan, brainchild of Harvard Business School grad Shobha Tummala, is one place where threading is offered. Shobha rep Lindsey Barton recommends it for the face, explaining, "You want to make sure you use the gentlest version of hair removal, which threading is." Salon staff can precision-shape eyebrows for \$20, or for \$10 remove every last bit of peach fuzz from the upper lip, a notoriously sensitive spot. "You get used to it, though," says one Shobha Salon patron, who is now a threading devotee.

Waxing is one of the more traditional treatments, though not always a do-it-yourself option. Shaping brows can be

While it varies by individual and body part, laser hair removal can be extremely painful for some people.

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