

# Everything You Wanted to Know About Bikini Hair Removal and More

**BEAUTY**  
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While below-the-belt maintenance is a year-round essential, for obvious reasons it's especially important during bikini season. To find out the difference between sugaring and waxing, how to prevent ingrowns, the low-down on vajazzling, and more, we spoke to NYC's celebrated hair removal expert **Shobha Tummala** and **Shobha** brand director Jennifer Pesce.



**The Fashion Spot: What's the difference between sugaring and waxing? Why should one opt for one over the other?**

**Shobha Tummala:** **Waxing** is a rather common method of hair removal in which a sticky wax (it can be hot, warm, or cold) is applied to the skin and when removed, the hair that adheres to the wax is pulled out by the root. Wax is often made with various resins and chemicals to ensure that it's super sticky, and sometimes it is too harsh on sensitive skin. This is where sugaring comes in. **Sugaring** is a natural alternative to waxing – it is actually the forefather of the waxing method, because before there were manufactured chemicals, there was sugar, lemon juice, water, and glycerin! Sugaring dates back to the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Greece and South Asia, where it originally started as a home remedy to rid folks of excess body hair in hopes of keeping cool in extremely warm weather. We actually recommend sugaring as the best option for sensitive skin. The sugaring gel goes on just like warm wax and removes the hair from the root, but tugs less on your skin, resulting in hair-free skin with minimal redness and pain – yes, sugaring hurts less than waxing! You can check out our [DIY bikini tutorial online](#).

**tFS: How long can one expect to be hair-free after waxing?**

**ST:** Hair-free results post-wax usually last about 1 1/2 to 2 weeks depending on how quickly your hair grows. Typically, our clients come in for treatments every 3-5 weeks. Hair starts to slowly re-grow, but since it was removed from the root, it grows back softer than if you were to shave, which cuts the hair creating a sharp edge.



**tFS: What do you recommend doing in the days following a wax? Are there particular products to use? To avoid?**

**ST:** To avoid irritation after your treatment, remember our mantra, "48 hours of rest is best!" During this time, use gentle soaps, avoid the sun, sauna, and steam room, and definitely abstain from using any products containing acid.

A simple way to remember what to do after hair removal is through our acronym, SET, meaning Soothe, Exfoliate, Treat.

- **Soothe** – Use calming products like our **Shobha Rosewater Calming Gel** for the first 48 hours if any irritation arises. You can also apply a cold compress to the area if it is feeling really sensitive (soak a washcloth or paper towel in 1 part **Shobha Rosewater Toner** to 3 parts water) to help reduce redness and irritation.
- **Exfoliate** – Wait 48 hours (for waxing and sugaring; 24 hours if shaving), then exfoliate your skin in the shower. Simply use a washcloth to exfoliate while cleansing the area with your favorite soap or body wash.
- **Treat** – Apply a topical treatment, like our **Shobha Ingrown Relief Lotion**, which contains glycolic acid to speed up the skin-shedding process, while helping taking care of any bumps that might have already surfaced. If you shave, you can apply this right after, if you wax or sugar, wait 48 hours.

**tFS: Is waxing better than shaving for preventing ingrowns?**

**ST:** The hair removal method you choose is really personal, as everyone has different sensitivities. When shaving, the skin often gets irritated when you go 'against the grain' because it is cutting the hair below the surface, and then freshly cut edges irritate the skin below the surface. Try going with the grain instead, it may take longer, but you'll have a happier bikini as a result.

In general, ingrown hairs are caused when dead skin builds up, trapping hairs underneath the surface as they start to re-grow after hair removal, regardless of what method of hair removal you choose.

**tFS: What are the best ways to prevent ingrowns?**

**ST:** Exfoliation and consistency are key for smooth, bump-free skin. Think of exfoliating like brushing your teeth, if you just do it once, you might still get cavities, so for maintaining optimal results post hair removal, exfoliate regularly. When shaving, exfoliate before you shave to remove the dead layers of skin so that you get a cleaner shave. If you do choose to shave, shave 'with the grain' to avoid irritation.

**tFS: Does waxing really reduce hair growth?**

**ST:** Since the hair is removed from the root, over many years of waxing, it can damage the hair follicle and reduce the actual re-grow, but in general, the most noticeable result is that the hair grows back softer after being removed, so you don't have any itchy 5 o'clock shadow like shaving.

**tFS: How often do you recommend one should get waxed?**

**ST:** If you are looking to maintain a regular waxing regimen and reduce the pain factor as much as possible, we recommend a treatment every 3 to 5 weeks. Your hair needs to be long enough to lay flat on your skin (about 1/4 of an inch).



**tFS: What do you make of the whole "vajazzling" trend?**

**Jennifer Pesce:** Although vajazzling sounds fun, we are not convinced. For one, gluing tiny rhinestones on your newly open (and super sensitive) pores right after a wax does not sound soothing, but inflammatory. Also, the glue used is not natural, so we say 'no' to applying it to your nethers. And then there is the question of how long it really lasts and what happens during certain activities – wearing regular clothes or a bathing suit (does it look bumpy, does it rub and irritate the area?), and sex (for you and your partner).

**tFS: Do you think women have become more comfortable talking about below-the-belt maintenance?**

**ST:** Definitely, or at least in NYC! It is becoming even more popular in the middle of the country as well as on the coasts. There is definitely a much wider demographic that partakes in bikini maintenance now than even just a couple of years ago – including men!

**tFS: What are some of your favorite below-the-belt maintenance beauty products?**

**JP:** We are probably pretty biased in this – but most of our product line have actually been formulated so that they are bikini-area friendly (no parabens, no artificial fragrance or colors added).

We are also huge fans of organic cotton underwear – especially post waxing, as it allows the skin to breathe without irritation. Other bikini-friendly brands that have safe ingredients on my personal fave list include:

- **Natracare organic cotton tampons**
- **Flourish Honey Blossom Sugar Body Polish**
- **Bodhichitta Botanicals Nature the Goddess Shower Gel**
- **Little Twig Body Milk extra mild unscented**

image: Victoria's Secret

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The Fashion Spot's Style Editor, Sharon Feiereisen, is a freelance writer based in New York City. Her work has been published in *Newsday*, *AM New York*, *WHERE New York*, *Dan's Papers*, and on *BlackBook.com*, among many other print and online outlets. Fluent in French and German, Sharon is a confessed jewelry addict with a particularly strong affinity for nOir and Hermes. Check out her tumblr blog, *Random Happenings*.

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