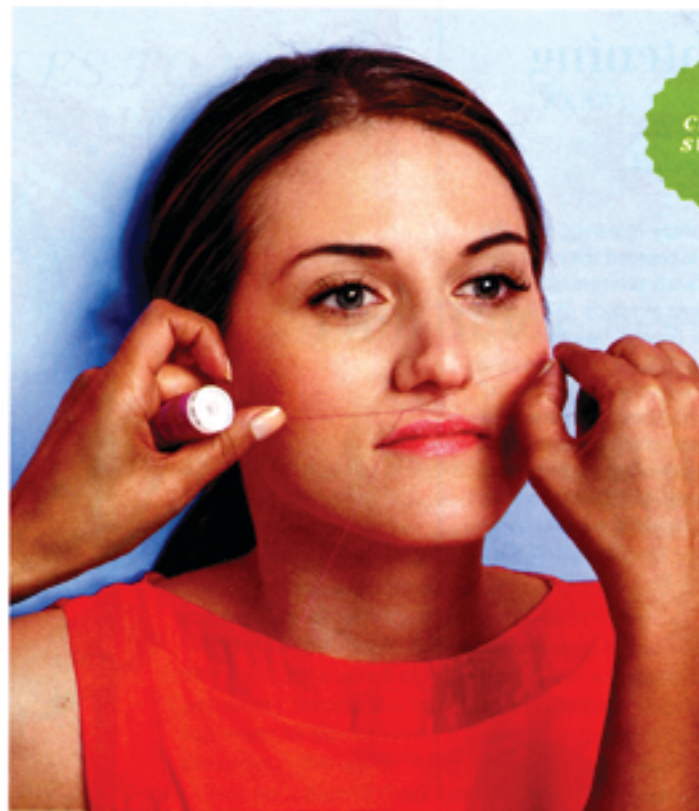


## Hair-Free

THREADING AND  
COMFORT WAX

*Two ways to get smooth.*

■ The beauty adventure I eagerly suggested for this story? Bravely testing out various types of massage. The beauty adventure I was assigned? Having my body hair ripped out by the roots. My first stop: Shobha, a threading salon near our Manhattan offices. Shashi, my designated threader, learned the ancient South Asian technique in her native India and assured me that removing the hair from my upper lip wouldn't hurt much. Then she applied a benzocaine numbing cream on the area. (Just in case you're sensitive, she said. *Uh, okay.*) After five minutes, she wiped off the cream and got to work. Holding one end of a long cotton thread in her teeth, she used her hands to loop and twist the string into a sort of lasso—rolling it over my skin so the



CLEAN  
SWEEP

twisted part caught each tiny hair. It felt simultaneously like a tickle, a scrape, and a sharp tug. Not an altogether pleasant sensation, but less painful (at least with the numbing cream) than my usual wax. Unlike

waxing, however, the process wasn't over in one fell *riiiiip*; Shashi zipped the taut thread across my lip many times before achieving total smoothness. Still, I'm a convert. Here's why: My skin was pink

only for about five minutes afterward (compared with at least 30 when I wax), and is still hairless weeks later. (\$10; [myshobha.com](http://myshobha.com) for salons)

Next I headed to European Wax Center, a nationwide chain that removes hair with what they call Comfort Wax—which sounded about as plausible to me as "Jolly Dirge." So imagine my delight when the aesthetician pulled the first piece of wax from my shin and the sensation was...comfortable. She didn't use muslin or paper strips—just spread the wax on with a spatula and peeled it off with her fingers. Unlike other stripless waxes I've tried, this one stayed pliable. When I left, my legs weren't red or sticky. Just smooth. Not exactly a massage—but not the fist-clenching experience I'd anticipated, either. I'll be back more than once before summer's over. (\$60 for full leg; [waxcenter.com](http://waxcenter.com) for locations) —J.B.