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Hair Removal for Grownups

A graying bikini line, increasingly sensitive skin and “hag” hairs that appear overnight all make getting rid of unwanted fuzz—an already tiresome chore—more complex. So we asked pros how to smooth things out safely. Read on for their age-appropriate tips

by Genevieve Monsma



Photograph: Yasu + Junko

If the hair on your face is wiry and dark, you can try any of the aforementioned options for fine or gray hair. But most experts say you'll be most satisfied splurging on laser treatments, which offer a nearly permanent solution; most people see at least a 90 percent reduction in regrowth. Expect to undergo eight to 12 treatments, each priced at \$100 or more. Electrolysis is another option, but it will probably require more sessions because the electric current targets just one follicle at a time, making the process a bit slower (by contrast, lasers zap inch-wide areas, allowing the treatment to target more follicles in a single session). Finally, you too can wait to try Olay's facial depilatory for coarse hair, as noted above.

4. You've got: less body hair

"As you age, most women see a reduction in body hair on their legs, underarms and bikini line," says Cirillo-

Hyland. Although generally a good thing, since this means you can skip the daily shave, it doesn't completely eliminate the need to groom. So if you're over the whole razor thing, consider [Depilar](#), a two-step treatment that costs less than lasering and promises a nearly permanent (90 percent) reduction in body hair of all shades. How it works: First, the hairy area is waxed to empty out the hair follicles; then it is slathered with a gel containing the enzymes trypsin and chymotrypsin, which destroy cells responsible for hair growth. Expect to undergo six to eight 10-minute treatments (each \$40 or more), about two months apart. A yearly touch-up may be necessary. If your sparse body hair is darker than your skin, you may also find success with an at-home laser. These devices zap follicles just like in a doctor's office, although it usually takes longer to see results. We like the Tria Hair Removal Laser (\$395; [triabeauty.com](#)). Or try Sally Hansen's new Simply Smooth Hair Remover (\$11; drugstores). This depilatory finishes the job in three minutes, then washes away, as does the hair it removed.

5. You've got: sensitive body skin

At home, it's probably time to retire depilatories, since most formulas contain hair-dissolving chemicals that can induce inflammation. The same is true of waxing—unless the wax is sugar based. Sugar wax sticks less to skin than traditional wax does, reducing the likelihood of contact dermatitis. Many salons carry sugar wax; do-it-yourselfers can try Shobha Sugaring Kit for Body and Bikini (\$30; [myshobha.com](#)). Shaving may be your safest at-home option, but choose a razor with three or more blades, such as the Schick Hydro Silk Razor (\$10; drugstores), which cuts hair close to the skin, preventing chafing. And if you're after a more permanent solution, most pros say you can get lasered (unless you're fair haired; then you're not a good candidate). "Lasers don't affect the skin's surface, just the area beneath it," says Neil Sadick, MD, a New York-based dermatologist. Ditto for electrolysis, which zaps the roots of hair (fair or dark) with an electric current but shouldn't affect the skin.

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