

# Smooth Secrets

Whether you've been waxing since you were 20 or are new to the game, discover how to lessen the pain and make the most of your appointment. BY DENA BRAUN

Oh, the things we women will do for beauty! We'll spend hours at the salon to get the perfect cut and color; we'll shove ourselves into unyielding shapewear; and every few weeks, we'll head to the spa for the dreaded waxing to remove hair we don't think should be in places it is.

For years, leg and underarm hair have been cultural taboos, wayward eyebrows have been reined in and a fuzzy lip could easily send a woman into tears. In the 21st century, the trend toward a bare body has accelerated with the rise of the Brazilian bikini wax. So before your next waxing appointment, read this.

## BANISH PAIN

Make no bones about it, removing body hair can be painful, but you can lessen your chances of having a hair-raising experience.

"I tell women to take an Advil an hour and a half before the treatment and another a half hour before," says Roxanne Zbinden of

With all the different waxing styles done "down there," make sure you pick the one that's right for you.

## Which Wax?

### Regular Bikini Wax:

This removes any hair outside the panty line. A full bikini wax takes off a bit more, leaving a triangle shape of hair.

### French:

This style removes all hair from front (except for a small strip) to right before the back.

**Brazilian:** Hair is removed

in the front and in the back, with a small strip left in front.

**Hollywood:** This translates to a

completely bare Brazilian.



## Know Your Wax

- **Hard Wax**—A hot wax that doesn't require a strip to be removed.
- **Strip Wax**—A hot wax that is removed by adhering a strip of muslin to the wax and pulling it off.
- **Cold Wax**—Strips of muslin with cold wax already attached. They tend not to work as effectively as hot wax.
- **Sugaring**—A natural solution for waxing involving sugar.

# The trend toward a bare body has accelerated with the rise of the Brazilian bikini wax.

Cielo Spa in Santa Barbara, Calif. “I did have a client tell me that in her country (Russia) they gave a shot of vodka beforehand!”

Tricia Hetherington, owner of The Pretty Kitty in San Diego and Las Vegas suggests avoiding caffeine for several hours before waxing to minimize pain.

### SELECT YOUR WAX

The type of wax used can also affect the sting factor, although there isn't a consensus on which type is best.

“We use a soft Italian cream wax and prep the skin beforehand with grapeseed oil and baby powder so the wax is never directly on the skin,” Hetherington says. “You need to have better technique to use a strip wax like this, but if it's done right, it's less painful.”

Zbinden, on the other hand, has found success using a hard wax at her salon. This type of wax shrinks around the hair shaft; the aesthetician then removes

it with her hands instead of a muslin strip. “People tell us they like the wax better because it hurts less,” she says.

Another waxing trend, called sugaring, employs natural products in the process. The blend of water, sugar and lemon juice can be used like a hot wax to remove hair. According to Zbinden, the natural ingredients mean less irritation for the client, and she has found success using this type of wax for large areas such as the legs.

### BE CHOOSY

If you don't have a go-to salon for waxing, make sure the place you pick has a policy

against the dreaded practice of double dipping. Every time the aesthetician scoops wax out of the pot, she should be using a fresh stick.

“If a salon double dips, the wax is then contaminated for the next person,” Hetherington says. “Wax is the perfect breeding ground for bacteria.”

And don't be afraid to ask questions. “Ask how many procedures they do per day,” Hetherington says. “I believe speed is a factor, too. A Brazilian shouldn't take more than 15 minutes, and make sure they don't put their clients into strange positions. You don't have to humiliate the client to do a Brazilian.” ☞



## Wax with Caution

- If you're diabetic or use Retin A, you shouldn't wax.
- Leave areas with pimples, rashes, moles or sunburns undisturbed.
- Waxing isn't a DIY project. To achieve ideal results, wax needs to be removed very quickly and at a 40-degree angle. Both things are hard to do on yourself.