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novel waxing TECHNIQUES

I will remember my first waxing experience for the rest of my life. I was 15 and felt so mature and sophisticated going to a high end salon to be waxed. It was the celebration of my womanhood and a sign of my new sophistication and of proper grooming. It made me feel liberated to be getting waxed. Oh, what a happy day!

But the much awaited service proved to be a horrible and disappointing experience. I never thought anything could be as painful as that! Mind you, I went to a very reputable salon but the young girl who did my waxing was indifferent and definitely had no heart. I was escorted to a large room of five beds and was told to undress right there in the open and to join the other four women who were being waxed. They were being waxed right out in front of everybody—this was common in European salons at that time—and the ladies were chatting away, not minding at all. Some were smoking, some were reading magazines and they all seemed happy and carefree, which encouraged me. 4

by **Bella Schneider**

scare not
thy client—
preparation is
key to success





An educated waxing client is a good client—she won't jump off the bed and run out with only half of one leg waxed! She will also be a great future client.

I lay down and the girl asked me, “Full leg or half leg?”, with no explanation, nothing. Being a grown up woman I said, “Go ahead and take it all off!” Note that at that time, every salon used hard wax and then recycled it by straining out the hair. She applied the wax with a large spatula from ankle to knee and then ripped it off in one swift pull. All I remember is my scream and all the women staring at me... I crawled out of there with only half a leg waxed. It was red and bruised and so was my ego. I swore I would never ever be waxed again. Can you imagine if the Brazilian had been in vogue back then? Ouch!

Years later, in my 30s, I gave it another go at my own spa. This time I was in control and knew what I wanted my clients, and myself, to experience. I wanted them to remember their waxing experience more for its relaxation than for the pain. The key to this is the presence of a

caring and proficient professional in a relaxing atmosphere, such as playing soft music, an eye pillow when appropriate and dim lights besides the light needed to illuminate the waxing area. We do whatever it takes to divert the attention of our clients from their waxing service and to make them feel comfortable.

First time clients

Certain events must come before a successful waxing experience. For example, the person making the appointment for a first time client must set up the service by asking certain questions, giving preappointment instructions and providing relevant information to the client. First time clients require much more time on the telephone.

The waxing explanation involves the therapist asking which areas are to be waxed. The therapist also explains the type of wax used and how that particular wax works. We use green eucalyptus wax for the eye brows, face, underarms and bikini, and strip Brazilian honey wax for the large areas. It's best for the client to fully understand the procedure before coming in.

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Be efficient but caring, speedy but gentle, confident but comprehensive. Your attitude and efficiency will determine whether the client will trust you enough to return.

For skin preparation, the first time leg waxing client is instructed to heavily moisturize the area for several days before the appointment. Moisturizing allows the wax to work more efficiently and prevents wax breakage. For underarm wax services, they must stay away from strong deodorants for three days, preferably using only a salt based splash or a natural rock deodorant.

The client coming in for a facial waxing will be told she must be off retinoids for five days and off AHAs/BHAs for three days, as well as any other harsh skin care products for three to five days prior to the appointment.

The front desk person explains the length of hair requirements for bikini and underarm waxing to ensure the client is prepared for a comfortable waxing service. They are instructed to trim the area with scissors to about ¼ to ½ inch, but not more than that—it must be long enough for the wax to remove but short enough for an efficient and comfortable service.

When they call to make a waxing appointment every new client should be asked if they are sensitive to waxing. If the client says she has responded to waxing at prior services, the information should be included in the appointment notes for the esthetician.

Waxing release form

Every client at every appointment is asked by the esthetician to read and sign a waxing release form. This form states the contraindications of the service and then the esthetician discusses and evaluates the client's responses on the form according to whether the waxing is appropriate. Every client must sign the form before being waxed, as a waxing injury can become a liability that can cost much grief and can be financially taxing. The form protects us from that occurrence and reminds the clients of the do's and don'ts of waxing. We keep the forms for 30 days, then dispose of them.

The esthetician also determines the client's Fitzpatrick Classification and may suggest a lightener to be applied nightly, based on this determination, to prevent any possibility of postwax hyperpigmentation.

Repeat clients

The more time the person who takes the appointment and the waxing professional spend with a new client, the better the appointment results are. An educated waxing client is a good client—she won't jump off the bed and run out with only

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half of one leg waxed! She will also be a great future client, returning often to be waxed, and will know what is expected preappointment and treatment during the service.

To prevent complications be sure to sell your clients suitable products to use before and after the appointment. These problems are the downside of waxing. The least troublesome is redness, as it fades quickly. Other problems that occur after a waxing service include folliculitis or red bumps, follicular pustules or infection in the follicles—usually after back waxing a man—and pseudofolliculitis or ingrown hair. Some people even develop bruises after waxing. Be sure to provide home care prewaxing products to your clients to prevent the possible side effects of waxing.

A gentle scrub possibly with lactic or glycolic acid and antioxidants and soothers but always with salicylic acid is a great pretreatment product to help prevent all of these problems. The lipophilic property of salicylic acid allows it to move through the oil in the follicle and encour-

ages the oils, bacteria and cell debris to evacuate the area during pretreatment, sloughing of the cells on the follicle walls. Instruct the client to use the product by gently scrubbing the to be waxed area nightly for a week before the waxing. If the client forgets, using it morning and night for three days before the appointment may do the trick. There is also a product that can be applied and left on the to be waxed area every night for a week, or morning and night for three days prior to the service. These products and in-service protocols can help prevent postservice irritations.

The procedure

The new or regular client should be ready for the service, relaxed and trusting. He/she should have prepared well for the treatment ahead of time. When the client comes in check the release form, discuss it and request the client's signature, then lay it aside and prepare the area to be waxed. While you are setting up talk to the client about other matters—an approaching vacation, home improvement, whatever. Just keep talking, be relaxed and be confident that you will help the client forget what you are doing and he/she will enjoy the service.

Continue to talk, but assess the area for direction of hair growth, any ingrown hairs or abrasions. If you see ingrown hairs, tell the client and use the tweezers to remove the hair from the follicle.

Now, apply a thin layer of oil on the entire area that is to be waxed and rub it in to moisturize the skin thoroughly so the wax will work well. Note that waxing dry skin can cause wax breakage. In the underarm and bikini areas, talc can be used to control the moisture. Now apply the wax and perform the waxing in a neat and orderly manner. After each pull, place your hand firmly on the area, with pressure for a time. This aids in suppression of any sensation that may be experienced. Be efficient but caring, speedy but gentle, confident but comprehensive. Your attitude and efficiency will determine whether the client will trust you enough to return.

After the service

Once the area has been waxed and cleared of hair, apply the oil again. This product should combine innovative ingredients to prevent ingrowing hair, reduce hair regrowth and heal inflamed or reddened skin. It should also restore elasticity to

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the roughed-up pores and encourage their healing, while removing leftover wax. Now, apply a cool towel followed by a cold compress to wash away the oil residue and the remaining wax with it. If there is anything a client hates, it's to walk around with their panties or clothing sticking to them. Rub away the wax and then spray on a healing, soothing, antibacterial product.

Now, roll cool, soothing beauty globes on the waxed area, using the appropriate size. For

an added prevention for people who routinely have redness or welts, an ice pack can be applied for three minutes—usually on the eyebrows, the upper lip or the face. Ice packs should not be applied directly onto the skin to prevent skin discoloration or cold burn.

Waxing can be hard work but it also involves social interaction. While waxing, you can discover so much about the client and bond with him/her. After all, you could be waxing a very intimate body part. Make light of it and have fun. With bikini waxing, you can even become an artist with all of the new, creative designs.

The waxing service is ageless. A person can be waxed from puberty until they have no hair on their body. Once waxed, they will wax forever if the service is performed properly. Note that waxing has multiple purposes: Many older women with no hair wax their legs to remove winter scaliness. I find the technicians that do the best waxing have the largest clientele, as these clients trust their esthetician to do everything on their face and body.

The waxing service is so important to spas and individual estheticians that most will target having at least 30 percent of their business coming directly from waxing services. Some spas are hiring professionals who specialize in waxing—waxologists—and are dedicating rooms to the service. The use of excellent beds that move up and down is advised so the technician is not injured by doing so repeatedly all day long. Comfort for the client is an important consideration for waxing services if these rooms are to become booked solid. Know that if you have the procedure down and your waxing clientele is growing, you already have the baseline for your successful practice in skin care. ■

Bella Schneider, an esthetician with more than 30 years of experience, is CEO and founder of La Belle Day Spas and Salons in northern California and of 5 Star Formulators, Palo Alto, CA, a worldwide distributor of esthetic products and technology. Due to her passion for the industry she also founded the Center for Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced Esthetics to provide advanced skill and success training to estheticians. To contact 5 Star Formulators, call 888.200.3977 or go to www.5starformulators.com.

