

Removing and Lightening Hair Using Temporary Methods

Learning Objectives

On successful completion of this unit the candidate will be able to:

- explore the temporary measures for removing unwanted hair
- examine the types, structure and functions of different types of wax

Hair removal is one of the most popular treatments at a beauty salon. In this unit, we will discuss various ways of temporarily removing unwanted body hair, disguising it and temporarily lightening darker hair on various parts of the body.

Depilation is a procedure that involves the removal of unwanted body hair, especially through sugaring and waxing. Depilation is popular as a salon treatment because it provides an efficient and quick way to remove unwanted hair from large and small areas.

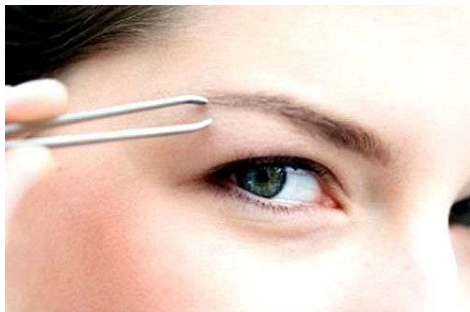
Temporary Measure

Depilatory Waxing

In depilatory waxing procedure, cold or warm wax is applied to the treatment area in a way that the hair gets embedded in the wax. As the wax is removed, the hair gets removed from the roots.

Plucking

Plucking is a hair removal process that involves grasping hair from very close to the skin's surface. The hair is to be plucked in the direction that it is growing. The process is most suitable for small areas, such as the face.



Threading

Threading involves using a thread that is rolled over the section from which hair has to be removed, in a way that the hair gets caught in the thread and is removed.



Cutting the Hair with Scissors

Scissors are the most appropriate tools to be used while trimming hair close to the skin's surface. Hair trimming is a short-term measure and special skills, as needed for plucking or threading, are not required.

Shaving

Shaving is also used to remove hair on the skin's surface. In this process, a razor blade is stroked across the skin where the excess hair lies.

Depilatory Cream

In this procedure, a strong alkaline chemical cream is applied on the hair. The hair would then be removed after five to ten minutes. This method is appropriate for all kinds of skin.

Wax Depilation

In the wax depilation process, wax is used to temporarily remove hair from the body and face. Both the roots and visible hair are removed with this method. Before starting the procedure, you must ensure that the client is not allergic to the products being used or sensitive to the technique. This can be done with a patch test in which a small quantity of wax can be used on the skin. If the skin reaction occurs during the next 48 hours, the procedure should not be carried out.

Several different kinds of wax are available and can be classified based on their working temperature.

Type of Wax	Working Temperature
Hard and hot hard depilatory wax	It functions best between 48-68 degrees
Soft and warm depilatory wax	It functions best between 40-43 degrees

Cream depilatory wax		It functions best between 35-43 degrees	
Organic wax		Differs	
Cold wax		Does not require heating	
Treatment	Warm Wax Minutes	Hot Wax Minutes	Sugaring Minutes
Half leg	30	30	20-30
Full leg	50	60	55
Underarm	15	15	15
Half arm	15	15-20	15-20
Full arm	30	20-30	20-30
Top lip	5	5-10	5-10
Chin and throat	10	20	15-20
Top lip and chin	15	15-20	15-20
Eye brows	15	10-15	10-15

Types of Wax

Warm Wax

This type of wax is a soft and thick liquid, used at comparatively lower temperatures—approximately 43 degrees. Warm wax can vary in colour from light or amber brown to honey. This type of wax does not set; instead, it stays soft at body temperature. It sticks to hair efficiently and is quite quick to use. Warm wax can be used to remove even the really short hair, around 2.5 mm. It is suitable for use on arms, legs, the bikini line, underarms and the face.

Hot Wax

Hot wax needs longer time to heat in comparison to warm wax. Using hot wax takes longer, nearly double the amount of time that a warm wax takes. The right temperature for it is approximately 50 degree. Additional care should be taken so that accidental burns can be avoided. It is best for use on shorter and stronger hair, as it contracts around the hair shaft grasping it quite firmly.

Cream Wax

Cream wax includes ingredients like azulene and moisturisers, which condition the skin. The soothing effects of azulene make it more appropriate for very sensitive skins.

Cold Wax

Cold wax is ready-to-use wax that is spread with a clean spatula. It is removed with muslin, cellophane or paper strip. Cold wax contains a natural rubber solution mixed in a volatile solvent. When the wax is applied, the solvent evaporates from the skin and leaves the rubber behind that the hair is embedded in. The rubber is then pulled off and thrown away.

Sugar Wax

Sugar wax hair removal can be done using two different methods—strip sugar and sugar paste. In this method, sugar is applied on the skin in the direction of the hair with the fingers. Pure sugar is the main ingredient in sugar wax. Other natural ingredients like lemon are also added.

Possible Drawbacks for Various kinds of Wax

Hot Wax

- Hot wax has to be kept in working temperature constantly. This can be quite time consuming if the wax becomes overheated and then needs to be cooled down.
- This wax type mustn't be applied to the same section twice because it may cause skin burn.
- Hot wax can cause slight skin reactions because it is not appropriate for sensitive skins.
- Hot wax is suitable only for long hair growth.

Warm Wax

- Warm wax is difficult to remove in one go.
- Strips have to be used with warm wax and this can add to the treatment's cost substantially, if not used carefully.
- Warm waxing carries the risk that loose skin cells can become looser during the procedure, causing hair follicles to be open for infections.

Cold Wax

- Cold wax is not appropriate for longer hair.
- Cold wax may be applied accidentally to the beauty therapist, which can involve more pain.

Preparing for Waxing Treatments

The Consultation

A treatment plan generally depends on the following consideration:

- The section that requires treatment.

- Skin sensitivity and type.
- Reactions to previous similar treatments.
- The kind of hair growth, such as thick, coarse, long or thin.
- Is this the first treatment or a consecutive one?
- The outcome of the patch test.

The sections to be treated must be studied in good lighting to assess if any of these conditions exist:

- Bruising;
- Open skin infections;
- Skin disorders or diseases;
- Very thin skin;
- After heat treatments such as steam bath, sauna or infra-red;
- Eye infections or cold sores; or
- Unidentified lumps.

Preparing for the Waxing Treatments

- You will need protective covering for the couch.
- Use a paper couch roll over the plastic sheet.
- Place the couch initially in an upright position, so that the client can sit comfortably.
- Use a pillow that is covered with a towel, protected by couch roll.
- You will also need two bins with bin liners—one for general waste and the other for a wax waste.
- Talcum powder.
- Disposable gloves.
- An antiseptic cleaner according to the skin type.
- The heating unit chosen for the wax type and sufficient wax product.
- Paper or fabric strips that meet the requirements of the manufacturer for the wax you have selected.
- A pair of sterilised tweezers and scissors.
- Suitable disposable applicators, such as wooden spatulas.
- After wax oil or lotion.
- Cotton wool and tissues.
- Leaflets with aftercare that the client can take home.

Preparing the Client

- Use towels for protecting the clients' clothes.
- Apply pre-wax cleansing lotion on cotton wool to wipe the section.
- Use a record card to note down any visible bruising to avoid any complications later.
- If the client has greasy skin, use astringent lotion to wipe it thoroughly.
- Wash hands thoroughly.

Warm Wax Application

- Use a spatula to apply the warm wax in the direction of the hair growth.

- Wax should always be removed in the opposing direction to the hair growth.
- Testing the wax first is very important and should be done on the inner wrist. If the temperature feels comfortable, you can then test it on the client's skin on the section that is to be worked upon.
- Dip the disposable spatula in the wax and remove the excess wax on a side of the container.
- Hold the spatula at a 90 degree angle and apply wax in the direction of the hair growth.
- The wax that is applied to the skin should be approximately the width of the strip.
- Press the paper strip or fabric firmly and rub it down a few times in the direction of the hair growth to bond the hair to the wax. Always remember to leave a small part at the end of the strip empty to hold the strip for removal.
- Use your non-working hand to stretch the skin for minimum discomfort.
- Hold the flap in a very firm manner, removing it against the direction of the hair's growth.
- Each strip may be used several times until it becomes too full of wax and does not pick up any more hair.
- Then work on all of the section being treated in a logical sequence.
- Once the waxing has been completed, check the area carefully for any stray hair still left. Use a pair of sterile tweezers to pluck them out.
- Once the entire skin area is clear, apply the after-wax lotion.

Wax Application for Legs-Warm and Hot

- Warm wax is generally used for skin treatments on the lower leg. This is known simply as the half-leg treatment and takes approximately 20-30 minutes.
- Start by cleansing the section to be treated.
- Seat the client on the raised couch, asking them to place both legs straight out before them.
- Starting with the leg closer to you, begin the wax spreading systematically.
- Apply three spatula sweeps, each of which goes from right below the knee to the ankle where the hair growth ends.
- Lower the couch and ask the client to turn over. Follow the same procedure on the back side of the leg.
- Wax should not be applied to the back of the knee as this section does not have hair.
- Remove the wax from the bottom upwards.
- Repeat the process for the other leg.

You must remember that the direction of the hair growth is different on the back of the legs. Instead of being top to bottom, it is from the outside to the inside of the calf muscle. As you work with the procedure, follow the direction of the hair's natural growth.

Remember:

A very common mistake in half leg waxing procedures is trying to work at too big an area at one time over the calf muscle, without sufficient support to the surrounding tissues. This makes the treatment too painful for the client.

Full Leg Treatment

A full leg wax treatment may take approximately 40-50 minutes. The same procedure has to be followed for a full leg wax as was followed for a half leg. You must observe the hair growth's direction very carefully. Do not spread the wax on very large areas at one time. Always provide support to the skin on the thighs while removing the strip because the tissues of this section can get bruised quite easily.

Step by Step Hot Wax Treatment for Lip and Chin

Top lip waxing takes nearly five minutes, a throat and chin wax nearly ten minutes, while a chin and lip wax may take nearly fifteen minutes.

- Start by cleansing the upper lip section properly, making sure that the skin becomes completely grease free.
- Petroleum jelly should be applied onto the lip, right up to the lip line. Before a wax application on the client, you must test the wax on your forearm. To patch test the wax, drop a little wax on the working area to assess if the temperature is suitable for the client.
- Apply a good layer of the wax on the upper lip area. Request the client to smile softly to help the skin to stretch.
- Use the same technique used with the wax strip. Flip one side of the wax up and grip it firmly. Remove the wax patch, pulling it against the direction of the hair growth.
- The wax lotion should be applied at the end of the procedure.

Step by Step Hot Wax Application for the Underarms

- Request the client to lie on her back, with both hands being placed behind the head and elbows being flat on the couch.
- Use couch roll to protect the clothing.
- Stretch out the under arm as flat as possible.
- Use cotton wool with pre-wax lotion to cleanse both under arms. The area should be dry, clean and grease free.
- Use a small quantity of talcum powder to absorb any perspiration. It also helps to make the hair more prominent on the skin.
- Test the temperature of the wax on your inner wrist.
- Conduct a patch test of the wax close to the area to be treated.
- Apply the wax, using a small strip to grip firmly.
- As the hair growth direction under the arms is circular sometimes, consequently, the wax application would also have to be circular.
- Build a wax layer by pressing on the hair. As the wax gets cooler and sets, it becomes ready to be removed.
- You may need to stretch the area, for which you can ask the client for help with their free hand.
- The strip will be removed by gripping the free end very firmly, pulling against the hair growth direction.
- Wax lotion should be applied on the treated section.
- Use a clean tissue to remove excess cream.

Sugaring

Hair removal with a sugar paste is called sugaring. The sugar paste contains sugar, water, oil and citric acid, along with a few other natural ingredients. Because these ingredients are all natural, there is no health threat in this procedure. The mixture can be used as a paste or as strip sugar. This sugar paste sticks to the hair, not the skin, so the sugar can be re-applied to the area being treated.

Step by Step Sugar Depilation

- After cleansing the area, apply talcum powder in the form of a light dust to the area.
- You should also apply talcum powder to your arms to make sure that they are free from grease.
- Apply the sugar paste on the skin with your fingers.
- The paste should be spread on the hair in the direction of the growth.
- Start flicking the end of the paste inwards, in the direction of the patch like in-waxing, but leaving it on the skin.
- Keep working on the paste until it turns into a small ball, and then remove it.
- The treatment will be completed with a cooling treatment spray that is to be applied to the area. Then apply a soothing cream.

Strip Sugar

- Strip sugar is similar to warm wax.
- Warm the wax until it turns into a liquid form.
- Use a spatula to apply the wax in the direction of the hair growth.
- Use a clean strip and remove the wax, pulling against the direction of the hair growth.

Aftercare and Advice

Advise the client to follow the aftercare guidelines for salon treatments during the 24 hours following the treatment.

- Do not wear tight clothes.
- Avoid taking a hot shower or bath.
- Do not use body lotion, deodorant or perfume on the treated area.
- Do not touch the treated area.
- Avoid using antiseptic or other similar products on the area.

Lightening Hair /Using Bleach Techniques

Bleaching the hair lightens it and disguises unacceptable facial hair. Bleaching products are usually available in cream and powder forms. These are mixed together and then applied immediately on the section to be treated. The effect of bleach lasts approximately four weeks.

Skin Tests

- Mix a small quantity of the bleaching product and apply some to the inner arm, nearly on a 25mm square. In case of an allergic reaction, the product must be removed immediately.
- Leave the product on for 10-25 minutes and then remove the bleaching product, using cotton wool dipped in cold water.
- Check the section during the next 24 hours for signs of itchiness, swelling or redness.
- Note down the result of the skin test on the client's card.

Preparing the Client for the Treatment

- Use clean towels to protect the client's clothing and a head band to protect their hair.
- The area should be cleansed properly, checking for signs of infection or broken skin. Treatment should not be provided unless a patch test was completed 24 hours earlier.
- Ensure that the section is grease free because the grease would form a barrier to the hair lightening products.
- The manufacturer's instructions should be followed while mixing the bleach product. A small quantity of the paste should be applied on all the area being treated. In case of facial bleach, avoid applying the product too far into the nostrils as the client may inhale it.
- Wait for the time recommended in the manufacturer's instructions.
- Use damp cotton wool to remove the paste.
- Provide homecare and aftercare instructions to the client.

Aftercare and Advice

- Apply a soothing moisturising agent after the treatment.

The following advice should be offered to the client:

- Avoid using makeup during the next 4-6 hours.
- Avoid exposing the skin to the sun during the next 24 hours.
- Never re-bleach within 24-48 hours.
- Do not use highly-perfumed products during the next 24 hours.

Remember:

- The manufacturer's instructions should always be followed for the mixing and application procedures.
- Do not exceed the time prescribed for processing. Instead of guessing, always use a clock.
- Do not leave the client unattended while the bleaching process is taking place.
- Do not apply bleach after a hot shower or bath as the pores are open.
- Wear protective gloves.

Suggested Further Reading:

- ✓ *Lasers and Lights: Procedures in Cosmetic Dermatology Series (Expert Consult)(1999),*
By George J Hruza, Matthew Avram
- ✓ *Hairdressing: A Coursebook for Level 3, 4 (2004),* By Stephanie Henderson-Brown,
Catherine Avadis