

5 Things to Know About Laser Hair Removal

The chore of shaving your underarms, legs and bikini is time-consuming and can even lead to irritation and ingrown hairs. Sexy, right? The siren song of laser hair removal is alluring and if you start now, you could be as hairless as Mr. Bigglesworth by summer. We caught up with two experts—cosmetic dermatologist and founder of 5th Avenue Dermatology Surgery and Laser Center [Dr. Paul Jarrod Frank](#), and Andréa Young, co-founder of [Beam Laser Spa](#)—to get the scoop on five things to know before you're hit with those laser beams.

Share the medications you're taking beforehand. Disclose everything from birth control to antibiotics. Otherwise, you could be turned away once you've dropped trou and are ready for your treatment.

Avoid waxing and topical retinoids. "Since laser works by targeting the pigment in the root of the hair, don't pluck, thread, or wax the area for at least eight weeks," says Young. For facial-hair removal, "it's best to avoid any topical retinoids such as Retin-A or Tazorac a few days prior, as this will sensitize the skin," Frank says.

Wear SPF. "Wear a high SPF sunblock on the area to be lasered, avoid sun exposure, tanning beds, spray- or self-tanners and avoid using harsh products on the skin," explains Young. "Skip any harsh exfoliation, since the skin will be a little delicate and sensitive after a laser session."

Be patient. Frank's safe-for-all-skin-types LightSheer Desire machine yields a permanent removal of the hair. "Although it always takes four to six treatments for results to be permanent, patients see dramatic results after the first treatment," he says. "Repeated pulses from the laser first eliminate existing hair, and then allow the laser's heat to penetrate the skin and direct energy into the hair follicles, preventing future growth." The LightSheer Desire's larger spot size allows for deeper penetration with fewer pulses, decreasing the likelihood of future regrowth, while also allowing for a faster treatment. Beam's Candela-Syneron technology yields a permanent reduction. Its gentle hair removal technology comes with both Alexandrite and YAG wavelengths, the latter of which allows for hair removal for all skin tones.

In this case, blondes don't necessarily have more fun. "Gentle hair removal treatments work best on hair that is *very* dark and *very* coarse," says Young. It doesn't work on fine, light hair, which means blondes, redheads, or those with gray hair will not get results.

Once you've endured your six sessions, revel in your smooth-limbed glory. Then, find something else to do while you're deep-conditioning in the shower.