



LOSE THE RAZOR - GO FOR THE LASER

Hey **Guys** - Learn from the **Ladies!**

BY LISA PANETTA

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Laser hair removal has become an increasingly popular cosmetic procedure for men

Women have explored and enjoyed the benefits of laser hair removal for many years now. They know the advantages and disadvantages of all types of hair removal and the joy of not having to worry about unwanted hair popping out at the wrong place and time. They know the freedom created by never worrying about having to take time out of their busy lifestyles to shave, pluck, tweeze, wax, thread, or apply lotions and potions.

Well guys, once again it's time to learn from the girls! Laser hair removal is not just for ladies anymore. Although traditionally men who would remove hair from their bodies were usually athletes such as swimmers and bodybuilders, hair removal for men – or “manscaping” – has become an increasingly popular cosmetic procedure for men of all ages.

Whether you want a cleaner look or feel, or you are just yielding to the desires of your significant other, there are several traditional and newer options to consider that can meet your needs. Though the most common areas for hair removal are the chest, back and unibrow, with the techniques available today if there's hair anywhere on the body it can be eliminated.

The use of laser for hair removal has been around for more than



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a decade. The technology has continued to improve, making it safer, more available (for more skin types and hair types), and more affordable.

Laser hair removal units that are truly efficacious are medical-grade devices that require an experienced technician working under a physician's supervision. Laser hair removal works by targeting the melanin in the hair, which is the dark pigment that gives hair its color. The hair root (or follicle) contains the most melanin. The intense energy produced by the laser is absorbed by the melanin in the root. This energy then destroys the root, preventing further hair growth in this area.

After each laser session you will see a change in the hair growth. The hair will either take longer to grow back, it will be finer (less coarse), or you might even see patches where there is no hair at all. Laser hair removal does not work on white or blond hair as there is hardly any melanin in the follicle. It is hit or miss with redheads depending on the amount of melanin and the type of machine used to treat.

The best candidate for laser hair removal is someone with dark hair and light skin. The darker the skin (or the higher the skin type) the more difficult the removal becomes as the lasers energy is absorbed by the melanin present in darker skin types. The choice of an experienced office, newer equipment and experienced technician is most important in darker skin clients as skin injuries and burns with permanent scarring are possible. The hair can be most effectively removed only while it is in its active growth phase (anagen).



Laser hair removal eliminates the five o'clock shadow

Since only about 20% of hair is in the anagen phase at any time it usually takes 5-6 sessions to complete a treatment. Depending on the areas being treated sessions are separated in intervals from 6-8 weeks.

There is some level of pain associated with each treatment. Topical anesthetic agents may be used along with analgesics such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen. As the hair thins out with each treatment the discomfort level seems to decrease, as there is less laser energy being absorbed. In general the results are excellent. In studies done at Harvard, using good technique with good machines set correctly in qualified candidates the overall results yielded an 89% permanent hair reduction. Over the years after treatment, due to aging, hormonal changes, medication effects, and illnesses, there are times when new hair growth

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LOSE THE RAZOR

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may occur.

The use of laser can eliminate ingrown hairs in the facial area, can treat and eliminate a condition called pseudo folliculitis barbi, and can help men regain self-confidence in body image. According to Olivia Arkin, senior medical laser technician at Advanced Laser in Roslyn, "We have had patients enjoy the beach (without a shirt) for the first time in their lives. We have also had great success in thinning out some extremely heavy beards where the clients prior to laser treatments had to shave twice daily. Additionally, we have seen guys who never removed their tee shirts while being intimate with their partner who now enjoy a new freedom and confidence."

Laser hair removal is not inexpensive even though pricing has come down greatly over the past few years. Depending on the area to be treated pricing will be anywhere from a couple of hundred dollars to about \$2,000 for a full back series. The center treating you should offer some form of "touch up" warranty for 6 months to a year following your last treatment. Remember, though, that once completed it is a done deal! There is no weekly or monthly maintenance required, and no recurring fees for treatments or supplies.

If you've considered laser hair removal at all, now is a great time to take action and be ready to show off clean, smooth skin this summer. Be sure you research the office providing the service. Check their reputation, their experience, their time in business. Take photographs before you start treatments and read all paperwork and contracts given to you thoroughly before signing.

The author, Lisa Panetta, is the manager of Advanced Laser of Long Island. She is a licensed esthetician, a specialist in medical laser therapies and hair removal. Lisa was one of the first Certified Aesthetic Consultants in the country.

IMAGE



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