



Ultimate hair removal

Cheryl Cole defends the tried and tested approach of electrical epilation over some newer methods

As an experienced holistic beauty therapist and training provider, I have often been asked by other therapists why I remain loyal to electrical epilation, despite the variety of other advanced hair removal methods available on the market. This is an interesting question and one every beauty therapist should ask themselves before paying out thousands of pounds on the latest 'innovation', promising permanent hair reduction and endless profit. I believe the following are self-explicit and compelling reasons why electrical epilation remains incredibly popular with therapists:

- it is effective on all hair types and colours;
- it produces medically proven results;
- excellent training programmes have been developed over the years;
- the equipment costs hundreds rather than thousands of pounds;
- the equipment is inexpensive to operate;

- treatments are short in duration;
- regular treatments ensure an income;
- trusting relationships are forged with clients, leading to other sales opportunities.

The key to success

As with all techniques, electrical epilation is not infallible. There are some therapists who do not perform the techniques effectively – keeping the current too low, or not inserting the probe correctly and therefore plucking rather than epilating hair. This can give both the client and the therapist the impression that electrical epilation is not effective.

However, this can easily be rectified by the therapist revisiting her technique or attending a refresher course. On the whole, successful and effective treatment is conditional upon the following:

■ The skill of the therapist

In my opinion, this is a key factor and

accounts for up to 80 per cent of a successful treatment. Electrology is a highly skilled procedure that centres around accurate probe insertion, coupled with the correct dosage of current over an appropriate period of time. This skill develops with time and confidence, but the therapist's true potential will evolve after training has ceased and results are witnessed in the salon. Only when you have seen a hair growth problem recede do you become assured of your skill and start to truly believe in the technique.

■ Frequency and regularity of treatment

This may sound obvious, but the client needs to make a commitment to attend frequently to achieve the initial clearance. Densely packed hairs cannot be removed within the same session without risking damage to the condition of the skin. However, it takes an epilated hair a number

Case study: Gender reassignment

Background: Mrs L contacted me via email, having searched for therapists on the FHT website, to introduce herself, as she wanted to establish if I would be happy to treat her. When we met I discovered that my client was physically male and undergoing gender reassignment to become female. As you can imagine, Mrs L presented with a heavy beard and moustache that required shaving twice a day and a heavy application of pan stick in order to maintain her desired feminine identity. Hormonal therapy had been started and she was having regular appointments with a consultant, regarding a permanent transition to the opposite sex. The hormones had changed Mrs L's musculature and had started to refine her shape, but it had little impact on her male pattern of hair growth. This was a great opportunity to prove the benefits of electrical epilation in an extreme case.

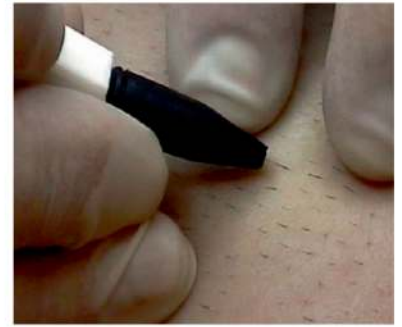
Treatment: The initial sessions made very little impact and we quickly decided to increase the treatment time from 15 minutes, through to 30 minutes, then eventually to an appointment of one hour. These increases enabled Mrs L to adjust to the current intensity – which was quite high due

to the nature of the terminal hair – and allowed me to assess the impact on the skin. I have galvanic electrolysis, blend and diathermy at my disposal, however we selected diathermy as our method of choice. This decision was brought about by Mrs L's preference and the need to clear the area as quickly as possible. Blend would be employed as the volume decreased, but our primary aim was clearance and control of the area.

It took several months of weekly appointments to gain control of the chin and upper lip (the first target area), after which we started work on the sides of the face. This process continued until we reached the final area – the neck. This was certainly the most sensitive area, for which Mrs L obtained a prescription of a pain relief cream.

I have been treating Mrs L for nearly three years. The facial hair growth is under control and treatment has progressed to her arms. Mrs L only requires occasional top ups on the facial areas and uses a tinted moisturiser for added colour. She no longer requires shaving or pan stick between sessions.

This stands out to me as the greatest test for the effectiveness of electrical epilation.



Demonstrating the correct insertion technique – the hair and needle become 'one'



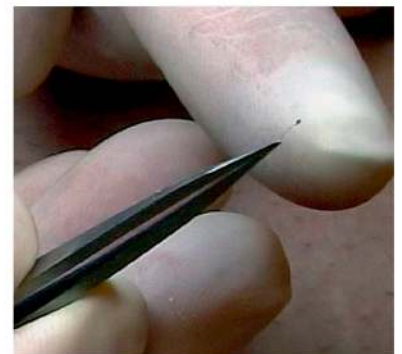
Hair effectively epilated without any traction to the skin

Case study: Epilation v facial waxing

Background: Mrs S had a dense growth of coarse, resistant black and white (glass) hair on the upper lip and chin. She had booked an appointment for waxing after I was recommended to her by a local hairdresser. It transpired she had been waxing and sugaring her lip and chin, which had only increased the number of hairs and accelerated the growth rate. I do not advocate facial waxing for these reasons and the fact that it can damage sensitive skin, so I explained the procedure of electrical epilation and its potential benefits. As of yet, I have not lost a client by refusing to carry out facial waxing; in fact as the results of electrical epilation become evident, I have gained the trust of such clients for life, as well as numerous referrals.

Treatment: We embarked upon weekly treatments of 15 minutes duration, initially concentrating on the upper lip area. Within a short amount of time, we were then able to extend the treatment area to encompass the chin without increasing the treatment duration. Mrs S was under very strict instructions not to depilate any hairs in between treatments, though shaving and cutting back were acceptable as the hairs had already been coarsened. However, in the early stages, it was imperative for Mrs S to remove any remaining or regrown hairs for her own confidence.

It took several months of weekly appointments until every hair was removed within a single session, such was the amount and rate of growth. She now comes for treatments once a month as her hairs are sporadic and greatly reduced. A couple of weeks ago she suddenly said out of the blue: 'Of all the things I have spent money on in my life, electrolysis is by far the most effective and worthwhile'.



Epilated hair in the anagen stage of growth, with root structure intact

Epilation extra

Electrical epilation is not restricted to unwanted hair on the face and neck. Other areas that can be successfully treated include the chest, underarm, tummy and bikini line.

Some ethnic groups are naturally more hirsute than others, and therefore longer and/or more regular treatments may be necessary to achieve results.

Properly carried out, electrical epilation remains one of the most effective hair removal treatments

of weeks to return. Once the hairs are cleared each session, it is imperative to maintain a regular time between sessions, dictated by the hair growth cycles. An indicator that the treatment is working is that appointments will naturally space apart and when treated correctly, will eventually cease.

Management of hair between treatments

If you fail to address this your client will not see positive results and may even stop booking appointments. Advise your client how to manage hair growth in between treatments in

a way that will not affect the overall programme (e.g. cutting back or shaving problem hairs). The case studies highlight why epilation is the ultimate answer for both the therapist and client.



Cheryl Cole has more than 26 years' experience as a holistic beauty therapist and is proprietor of the Cheryl Cole Academy. Her experience of epilation encompasses practical expertise, teaching, and examining. Cheryl runs a number of courses accredited by FHT. For more information, phone her on 01487 830971, or visit www.CherylColeAcademy.co.uk