

MAN REPELLER

How I'm Paying for Laser Hair-Removal (Even Though I Can't Really Afford It)

Amelia Diamond | MAY 11, 2017

I'VE GOT THIS DOWN TO A SCIENCE CALLED DENIAL

Everyone always says to me, “Amelia, you are so lucky that your hair is so thick. You’re like a horse.” I accept the compliment and smile because yes, I am lucky. This equine mane not only allows me to bond with wild mustangs, it also retains the scent of every restaurant I’ve ever been in. More than anything, it means I hit the jackpot with fat-follicle’d parents. But no good gene ever goes unpunished. For every superfluous strand that grows on my head, at least three sprout on my legs.

I am always shaving. When I’m not shaving, I’m complaining about how I need to shave. Where I don’t shave, I wax, which means I’m in a constant state of dreading something. Both are imperfect solutions if you prefer to be as hairless as a tooth, as I do, and are worsened by a propensity for being lazy, which I am. Shaving leads to razor burn, ingrowns, 5 o’clock shadow, a debilitating fear of goosebumps and time spent in the shower that I just do not have. Waxing *also* leads to ingrowns, requires diligent scheduling and an awkward week of growth (thus defeating the whole “hairless” point, no?), plus it hurts. In all my years of waxing, it’s never not been brutal. The last time I got waxed, feet in the air and fury swirling through my body (at the woman ripping hair out of my skin, at myself for paying her to do this, at my inability to accept that my unique and individual physical manifestation of a human female includes hair in places other than the head, brow and eyelid), I decided to put an end to the torture and invest in some laser beams.

Laser hair-removal is blindingly expensive. It's so expensive that a lot of places make you go in for a consultation to discuss the price, as though laser hair-removal were a long-term relationship breakup and estheticians "owed it to you" to "tell you to your face." (I was recommended six sessions per area, not including touch-ups — we'll get to the math in a second.) It works by using a heated laser to damage hair follicles which, over time, reduces growth. The laser targets hair pigment, so the general understanding is that the lighter your skin tone and the darker the hair, the better.* As a white cactus, this makes me an ideal candidate. If I could take a time machine back to 2001 to tell my younger self, "Girl, one day you will be thrilled your legs look like mayonnaise that black a cat rubbed up against," I would. I wonder what the older me will wish she could come back and say to my current self about the amount of money I have spent so far in total.

After the following disclaimer, let's talk numbers.

**No matter your skin tone or hair color, go in for a consultation. Different places will have different answers, different lasers, different recommendations. Dr. Paul Jarrod Frank, Cosmetic Dermatologist, uses the LightSheer Desire Laser on his patients. The industry's "Gold-Standard," he says, "has been clinically proven to safely and effectively treat all skin types for both women and men."*

I'm just going off of what my esthetician repeats to me each and every time I see her. Each and every time.

Once it was decided that I'd go forward with this irresponsible financial decision, I prioritized which areas I'd laser first. While lasering, you're to avoid sun exposure on the treated area. I'm a rule-follower, so this eliminated any hopes of doing legs until September, which meant armpits and my nether regions were up first. As I wrote above, I was recommended six sessions per area, five weeks apart. I began at the top of March and have an August graduation date.

Which leads us to the money convo.

Armpits, considered a small area, are the cheapest option: \$55 for a single session; \$279 for a package of six. Brazilian, a larger area, is \$129 for a single session, \$649 for a package of six. Legs, a giant area (?), which I'll start from thigh to ankle in September because I am *not* one of those people who "doesn't have to shave above the knee," are \$270 for a single session, \$1,379 for a package of six.

They tell you about the single session (which doesn't really help anyone, because who gets lasered just once?) to make you *think* you're getting a deal. I committed to blasting the follicles of my armpits and my Brazilian topography into oblivion, which came out to \$928 total.

Because the laser center where I go to have money singed off my bank account is as accommodating as my desperation will allow, they let me pay half that during session one, and half during second two. That's \$464 *twice*, spaced five weeks apart — strategically planned with with rent and payday in mind.

Because I can't handle a \$464 hit twice in five weeks on body hair, emotionally, I split *that* up between two cards: debit and credit — \$232 — and do the tip (\$30 — because \$928 divided by six sessions is \$154.6) in cash.

Legs are going to be harder: \$1,379 total for six sessions. Split twice, that's \$689.50, five to six weeks apart. That's \$344.75 on my debit, \$344.75 on my credit card and a \$45 cash tip if I do a full 20%. When September comes, that means saving an extra \$225.5 for two months so as to not feel the burn. I don't know if you remember my money diary, but that means I need to sit at home and not move for a week. To answer your other question, yes, I am still trying to become responsible, so here's what I've given (or am working on giving) up:

Manicures: I can DIY them.

Haircuts: It's almost the summer. This is the one area on my body (besides lids and brows) where I welcome hair growth.

Cabs: This is a work in lazy/late process but I, my friends, am doing a lot more walking.

Two or more drinks on weeknight dinners: I really only need one, if that.

No appetizers: Just eat the free bread.

Mid-day snacks: I'll bring an apple instead and chug water. I don't need a \$5.00 kombucha.

Skipping workout classes: I get charged when I miss a class and used to suck up the loss. No more in the name of being slick like a baby seal.

Plus, I keep selling stuff from my closet.

I am probably the only person in this industry getting lasered who is actually paying for it full price. Many places offer press discounts. Some will offer free sessions if you're reporting on the matter. Me? I'm writing about this because it's the only thing I'm talking about to anyone who will listen. It is life-changing. I am obsessed. I didn't have to shave my armpits until the middle of the fourth week after my first session, and that was just your usual day-old stubble.

That said, SATORI LASER ON 14TH STREET IN MANHATTAN, FEEL FREE TO THROW ME A BONE. Horse mane and eyebrows aside, I would like to enter summer 2018 as a fully hairless cat.