

What is the meaning of epilation?

Elaine Stoddart, Director of Education for Sterex Electrolysis International Limited, muses on the subject and meaning of the word 'Epilation' and the VTCT unit UB30B29

Hidden amongst the prolific and highly respected array of VTCT qualifications is unit UB30B29 'Provide electrical epilation treatments'. This is a vocationally recognised qualification focused towards those pursuing a career as an electrologist, with the potential to further these skills with additional courses in Advanced Electrolysis, Transgendered training, and Advanced Cosmetic Procedures.

The hair removal industry is worth £280 million and as 'students' and 'experts' in the field, it is imperative that we understand that 'epilation' is a word which encompasses a diverse group of treatments (permanent and temporary) thereby enabling us to make informed appropriate recommendations to our clients regarding their unwanted superfluous hair.

But what actually is electrical epilation? There is some confusion both in the consumer and professional worlds. Wikipedia states: "Epilation is the



removal of the entire hair, including the part below the skin. Methods include waxing, sugaring, epilation devices, lasers, threading, intense pulsed light or electrolysis". The Oxford Dictionary states: the removal of hair by the roots. Derivatives: epilate. Epilator noun Origin: late 19th century: from French épiler, from é- (expressing removal) + Latin pilus 'strand of hair', on the pattern of depilation.

From this we surmise that a number of hair removal procedures are grouped together each bearing little or no resemblance to each other and inexplicably, it appears that permanent and temporary methods are classified together. Articles written on 'epilation' can add to the confusion as they often only concentrate on just one of the epilation methods – usually the mechanical roller type hand held machines 'Epilators' and these articles give the impression that the method they refer to is 'epilation' per se. Rotary type 'epilators', marketed in 1986, are a temporary method which grab and pluck out the hair. They have become very popular in recent years and effectively taken ownership of the term 'epilator'.

Electrology Epilation is the only method considered permanent and the only method legally allowed to claim that distinction. Shortened to 'Electrolysis' it is, quite rightly, extremely proud of that fact. It is the only method that can work for all hair and skin types and colours. Further confusion reigns in the definition of the word 'permanent' where Laser and IPL, (also classified under 'epilation') are concerned. Statements were issued by the US Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) and eventually a standard was set of one year without hair growth in

the treated area since the last Laser or IPL treatment. If this proviso was met the term 'permanent hair reduction' was allowed to be used. Interestingly electrolysis complements Laser and IPL treatments and together they make the perfect combination offering speed of treatment with the added benefit of permanency.

How does Electrolysis epilation work?

Electrolysis is a progressive method of permanent superfluous hair growth



removal with results not immediate but taking a number of treatments. By causing controlled tissue destruction at the base of the follicle, electrolysis gradually weakens the hair to inhibit growth. A very fine needle or probe, about the size of an eyelash, is inserted into the individual hair follicle to the correct depth and the current of choice is discharged. This eventually destroys the blood supply which 'feeds' the hair starving it of nourishment and nutrients resulting in finer often lighter hair growth and eventual demise of the hair. The ability of the hair follicle to produce a hair is destroyed rather than the hair itself.

Each hair requires repeated treatments due to the fact that every individual hair has its own growing cycle. There are three methods of electrolysis available, Galvanic (DC), Thermolysis (AC) (known as Short Wave Diathermy), and the Blend method (DC + AC). Blend is the latest method and is offered by most beauty salons and clinics of today as a safe, effective, comfortable treatment for every client with varying hair growths.

What's in a name?

Electrolysis is a popular, stand-alone, modern, affordable treatment and with improvements in technology has

developed into a more comfortable and gentle treatment, even more effective and increasingly popular. It can be, and usually is, combined with the other methods of epilation to achieve the best possible outcome for the client. Each method of epilation can be taken in isolation for particular areas and when combined offer the client the most appropriate method for each specific area.

How to become an electrologist?

UB30B29 is taken as part of a Level 3 qualification in Beauty Therapy, or alternatively it can be delivered as an individual unit. The unit requires the learner to have a basic Anatomy & Physiology qualification and is often a popular additional skill for therapists, qualified medical practitioners, dentists, nurses and doctors.

As part of a Level 3 Beauty Therapy qualification in a FE college or private Academy, UB30B29 is usually delivered over 34 weeks. However, if taken as an individual unit, it can be offered on short courses, e.g. over 7 days, by leading electrolysis training provider Sterex Electrolysis International Limited. Unwanted hair causes much distress, as anyone who has suffered with it will understand and often brings with it a

sense of isolation, low self worth and poor self-esteem. It is often the case that electrologists are privileged to witness dramatic transformations in their clients once treatment is underway and results become apparent. Electrolysis can boost self esteem and give customers increased confidence.

Electrolysis is experiencing a massive resurgence in popularity because it delivers exactly what it promises – permanent hair removal. All electrologists need to recognise and embrace this electrolysis resurgence in popularity and ensure they have the best, up to date training and CPD.

For further information talk to the experts at Sterex

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The unit UB30B29 can be downloaded from the VTCT website by visiting the Qualifications section.