

## How Do The Porn Stars Get So Smooth? Secrets of Pubic Hair Removal

By Michael Castleman

These days, the vast majority of women—and men—in porn have smooth-shaved genitals, or close to it. What's shaved always looks very smooth. Silky smooth. Baby smooth. And if you've ever tried to duplicate that "porn smooth" look, *impossibly* smooth. What's the porn stars' secret?

"I wish I knew," says Fair Oaks, California, sex therapist Louanne Weston, Ph.D., who blogs for WebMD.com. "But I'll tell you one thing: There's a surprising amount of interest in pubic hair removal. The column I did on it got more responses than anything else I've ever written—and not just from women. Many men are also very interested in shaping or getting rid of their pubic hair. I was surprised at all the interest."

### From Hirsute To Hairless: Pubic Fashion Through the Ages

It's not easy to track the history of pubic presentation. Ancient Chinese, Greek, and Roman erotic art generally depict genitals—both male and female—with only a little pubic hair, if any. Did the ancients remove it? Or did the artists simply not include it? Art historians are silent on the subject.

Verifiable pubic fashion dates from the mid-19th century invention of photography. Compared with today's crotch close-ups, surviving erotic photos of nude women from the Civil War era tend to be demure. They show naked breasts and buttocks, but often not the pubic area. However, in those that show frontal nudity, the amount of pubic hair varies from lush (a "full bush") to none ("bald").

Early pornography, the "blue movies" filmed from around 1900 through World War II show a similar range of pubic hair in both men and women, from bushy to bald, with most of the men and many of the women on the bushy side.

But in recent decades, there has been a clear trend in the sex media toward bush wacking. “If you track *Playboy* and *Penthouse* over the years,” explains Palo Alto, California, sex therapist Marty Klein, Ph.D., “you see full bushes through the 1970s, then from around 1980 through the present day, a steady trend toward less and less pubic hair.”

“I was a *Penthouse* model in the early 1980s,” says retired porn actress Kelly Nichols, “and I posed with a full bush. I also had a full bush in my films. No one in adult entertainment shaved back then. Now everyone does.”

“For many years, I’ve been a lifeguard at a pool at a large university,” writes a woman contributor to one of the many Web sites devoted to pubic shaving, “so I see a lot of naked college-age women in the shower and locker room. Over the years, there’s been a trend toward pubic trimming and shaving. Most college women these days keep their pubic hair trimmed short. And it’s not uncommon to see them completely shaved.”

Is pubic shaving a real trend? Or simply a momentary fashion statement? No one knows. But Betty Dodson, Ph.D., a New York City sex educator and producer of “Viva La Vulva,” a video celebrating the beauty of women’s genitals, thinks pubic trimming and shaving are here to stay: “We have changing ideas about what’s public and what’s private. Nudity is less private than it used to be. When women’s clothing began showing bare arms and legs in the 1920s, leg and underarm shaving followed soon after. Not all women shave their legs and armpits, but most do. And now that nudity is more public—nude beaches, routine nudity in film, and the enormous amount of exhibitionism and porn on the Web—I’m not surprised to see a trend toward pubic shaving. It’s a way of saying: I’m into showing it off, so I’ll really show it off by removing the hair. I think the bald look is probably here to stay.”

If anyone should know how the porn stars get so smooth, the producer of “Viva la Vulva” should. Does she? “Honey,” Dodson says, “I have no idea.”

While some view the smooth look as sexy, others view the trend toward pubic hair removal as possibly sinister, a “Lolita” fixation by male pedophiles who fantasize sex with young girls and want grown women to look like them. It’s possible that such proclivities play a role in some people’s lust for pubic hairlessness, but the evidence suggests otherwise. People who post on Web sites devoted to pubic shaving never mention any fascination with underage youth. They just love the smooth look—and not just on women, on men as well:

“I’m a 40-year-old woman, married for many years. Our sex life was getting a little boring, so as a surprise one night, I shaved my genitals. I’m not going back. I am so happy with my bold, out-there vulva. It looks beautiful. I love to look at my labia. Without the hair, they invite touching, caressing. And since I shaved, my husband is continuously aroused. Sex is great again. I love how my naked vulva feels when we fuck, and when he gives me oral sex. Now, when I see a woman with a bush, I feel sorry for her. Why hide it when it’s beautiful?”

“I am a 38-year-old married man. I’ve shaved my balls for five years. I don’t shave the hair above my cock, but I keep it trimmed short. My wife also shaves her pubic hair—all of it. Hairlessness feels so different from having a bush. It keeps me thinking about sex all day. I like the look as well. And I love fucking with both of us shaved. It feels much closer and deeper. The best part is when I feel my bald balls nestled up against my wife’s bare pussy lips. I’m so glad my wife shaves. I think the vulva and labia are beautiful. Why hide them under all that hair? Dare to go bare!”

“I absolutely love gazing at, touching and licking my fiancée’s shaved labia. She is simply stunning when shaved! It is hard to describe how arousing a newly shaved pussy is.”

It’s clear that many lovers enjoy hairless genitals. But what’s the best way to accomplish it? Several options are available: razor shaving, waxing/sugaring, electrolysis, tweezing/plucking, and depilatories. Here’s an introduction to each approach:

## **Razor Shaving**

Every summer, many women shave the “bikini line” around their upper thighs and lower abdomens to keep unsightly hairs from poking out of their bathing suits. It’s a short step from there to shaving the vulva, or for men, the penis and scrotum.

On Web sites that discuss the joys—and hassles—of baldness below the belt, razor shaving rules. Very few people even mention other options. Shaving is easy, convenient, cheap, and can be done at home, most easily in the shower.

One happily razor-shaved woman posted this: “I recently shaved my pussy as a surprise for my boyfriend. Our sex was incredible. I love the feeling of being shaved and enjoy touching my soft lips. Of course, to stay smooth, I have to shave almost every day and use a quality shaving cream and razor. I follow with a cold water rinse and then use baby oil or a good moisturizer. Those little red bumps stay

away if you take the proper precautions. I intend to stay shaved. Sex has never been better.”

Other people, however, aren't so enthusiastic. Another post: “I need to find a better way than shaving. For me, it's just too itchy and painful.”

“Shaving can be a real hassle,” Dodson explains. “Many women find that it irritates the vulva. Or that it gives them ugly red razor bumps. Or that the area itches unbearably as the hair grows back. Or that they get painful ingrown hairs.”

Razor bumps are the most common complaint among public shavers. They're ugly and they itch. The bumps develop because razor shaving leaves hair with a thick blunt end, instead of the fine tapered end of unshaved hair. Some shaved hairs get cut below the skin line. As they grow out, those blunt ends irritate the hair follicle walls, causing inflammation and bumps.

Ingrown hairs develop similarly. They begin with hairs cut below the skin line. As they grow out, the blunt end gets caught on the follicle wall. Instead of growing out, it curls over and becomes ingrown.

A few products claim to prevent razor bumps and ingrown hairs. The one with the most testimonial support is TendSkin ([www.tendskin.com](http://www.tendskin.com)). According to one post: “TendSkin after-shave works very well for me. It almost entirely eliminates razor bumps and ingrown hair.” The manufacturer claims the product lubricates the follicles, preventing blunt ends from snagging and causing inflammation.

Ex-porn star Nichols, who is now a Hollywood make-up artist, concurs: “TendSkin definitely helps prevent razor bumps and ingrown hairs.”

## **Waxing/Sugaring**

Based on an informal tally of Web site posts, after razor shaving, waxing—and sugaring, which is similar—are the second most popular approaches to going smooth in the nether region. Waxing has become a celebrity fad with several movie stars talking about their “Brazilian” wax jobs—most of their pubic hair removed, with just a little tuft remaining (a “landing strip” or “welcome mat”) as a surprise under a thong bikini. But few people committed to pubic smoothness recommend waxing or sugaring.

Waxing can be performed at home with kits available at pharmacies. Or it can be done by state-licensed aestheticians. Waxing involves applying a thin layer of

warm wax to the target area, and then applying cloth strips. The wax dries, encasing the hair in it. Then you or the aesthetician yanks the cloth off—and the hair comes with it. Waxed hair grows back after a few weeks. One San Francisco salon charges \$75 for complete pubic waxing.

Sugaring is similar, except it uses a sugar solution instead of wax.

“Waxing was torture for me,” says Cheryl Greene, a clinical sexologist in Berkeley, California. “I had my bikini line done once—and once was enough. Never again. But my daughter gets her legs waxed regularly and has no problem.”

According to the California State Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), licensed aestheticians may wax any part of the body. But some aestheticians have reportedly told clients that pubic waxing is illegal. It is not, but apparently they feel uncomfortable doing it. People in other states should check with their DCAs.

Is waxing the porn stars’ secret? “No,” insists Nichols, the ex-porn-star-turned-make-up-artist. “If you can stand it when the hair gets pulled off, waxing is good for the occasional tropical beach vacation. One waxing and your bikini-line or all your pubic hair is gone for the week you’re away. But the problem with waxing is that you have to start with fairly long pubic hair or there’s not enough down there for the wax to grab on to. For best results, you have to let your hair grow out pretty bushy between waxings, and people in porn can’t do that. They need to be smooth all the time.”

## **Electrolysis**

Electrolysis is usually used to remove a small number of unsightly hairs, for example, on women’s upper lips. But it can be used to remove pubic hair, and it claims to remove hair forever.

However, electrolysis takes a great deal of time, patience and money. Electrolysis kills one hair at a time. It can take months, even years to depilate large areas, such as the genitals. A state-licensed electrologist inserts a fine needle into the hair follicle, zaps it with electricity, which kills the follicle. Then the electrologist tweezes the hair out and it doesn’t grow back...usually.

Electrolysis is supposed to be permanent—but may not be. Sometimes the first zap doesn’t kill the follicle and hair grows back, necessitating repeat treatment. Electrolysis can also be painful. And it’s expensive—on the order of \$50 per half

hour, which means that for a person who's furry between the legs, complete pubic hair removal could easily cost \$1,000 or more.

But electrolysis is not popular for pubic hair removal. Few people who post messages on bare-genitals Web sites use it.

In California, a licensed electrologist may remove hair from any part of the body, including pubic hair. However, some may decline to work in the genital area. Outside California, check with your state DCA.

### **Tweezing/Plucking**

Tweezing is commonly used to remove a small number of hairs, for example, in the eyebrows. Most people consider it too time-consuming and painful for large areas such as pubic hair. On the Web sites devoted to pubic hair removal, tweezing is rarely mentioned, but occasionally, someone touts it.

“My wife’s vulva is silky smooth, but she doesn’t shave. She plucks it. Now this might seem extreme, but shaving got to be such a chore (stubble, rashes, nicks) that she resorted to plucking. It takes a lot of time but she has no more coarse stubble or rashes or razor burn.”

### **Depilatories**

Depilatory creams dissolve hair chemically. They work well for some people. But most find the chemical ingredients too irritating for sensitive genital skin. Few people who post on pubic-shaving Web sites use them.

### **And Now: The Porn Stars’ Secret**

All right. No more beating around the you-know-what. I asked four present and former porn actresses how they get their vulvas “porn-smooth.”

The four actresses include Nichols, who quit acting in the mid-1980s, but who continues to work on porn productions as a make-up artist; longtime X-rated star Nina Hartley, who discusses pubic hair removal on her Website ([www.nina.com](http://www.nina.com)); Adajja, a working porn actress; and Gina Rome, who recently retired after six years of porn acting to become a film editor. Nichols, Adajja, and Rome were interviewed by phone from their homes in the Los Angeles area.

All four agreed that the porn stars' secret is *no secret at all*. Just like the vast majority of people who post on bare-genitals Web sites, they all shave with razors. All four insist that they have never waxed, sugared, tweezed, or used depilatories, or electrolysis.

"I just shave," Adajja says. "I've never used anything but a razor. Everyone I know in adult entertainment does what I do. They just shave."

## How To

To get a porn-smooth pubic shave, the stars recommend:

- Wet your pubic hair before shaving it. "Warm, wet hair is easier to shave," Rome explains. "I always showered before shaving. Many porn people do their shaving in the shower." Hartley soaks in a hot bath.
- Use a fresh razor. Hartley uses hers no more than three times before switching to a new one. Adajja uses hers only twice: "I go through a lot of razors, so I use cheap Bic twin-blades." The best razor, Nichols says, is the three-blade Mach-3. "Like the commercials claim," she explains, "with three blades, there's a noticeable difference in smoothness over a twin-blade razor. The commercials are talking about men's faces, but three-blade razors also work best on the pubes."
- To just *look* smooth, shave in the direction the hair grows. "The problem," Adajja explains, "is that pubic hair rarely grows in just one direction. I have clumps that grow one way and clumps that grow another. So I shave spot-by-spot to get a close shave."
- To look and *feel* smooth, shave in all directions. "If you just shave in the direction the hair grows," Nichols explains, "you can look smooth, but when you run your fingers over the area, or when a lover touches or licks you, the skin feels rough. To feel smooth, go with the grain and go against it, too."
- Take your time. Careful, spot-by-spot shaving can be time-consuming. Taking your time also helps prevent unsightly shaving cuts.
- Shave frequently. Most people in porn, the stars say, shave daily.

- Used TendSkin after shaving. It helps prevent razor bumps and burn and ingrown hair.
- To treat razor bumps, use Visine eye drops. “If there’s any porn secret to pubic shaving,” Nichols says, “it’s Visine. You put it on, and the bumps disappear like magic in about five minutes.” Visine is an astringent. It helps relieve the inflammation that cause razor bumps.
- Wear loose underwear and clothing. A shaved vulva or scrotum chafes more easily than one covered with a soft cushion of pubic hair. Avoid tight clothing that binds.
- Experiment. See what works best for you. Rome preferred shaving cream and a moisturizing lotion afterward. Adajja uses soap and no moisturizer. Try various skin care products.

In addition to careful daily shaving, the porn stars I interviewed all share one other attribute that contributes to their smoothness—pubic hair on the fine and sparse side. “I’m just not very hairy down there,” Rome explains, “and what I have isn’t very coarse. I think that’s true of many of the women in adult entertainment. That kind of hair is easier to shave.”

But fine, sparse pubes and careful daily shaving don’t exempt porn stars from the hassles other people experience with razor shaving of the genitals. “I’ve seen many women on porn sets with razor bumps and ingrown hairs,” Rome says. “But you don’t see it in the video. A woman can touch herself and examine herself very closely, and feel any irritation, and see the bumps. A lover can do the same. But even for close-up shots, the camera doesn’t get as close to the genitals as you do yourself, or as close as a lover gets, so in porn videos, the people may look smoother than they really are.”

“Video cameras don’t pick up the little razor bumps you or your lover can see and feel,” Nichols explains. “But cameras do pick up really red, angry-looking bumps. That’s why I always carry Visine—for quick bump removal on the set.”

“I’m surprised people think porn stars have some big pubic-shaving secret,” Adajja said. “It really doesn’t take much to become ‘porn smooth.’”