

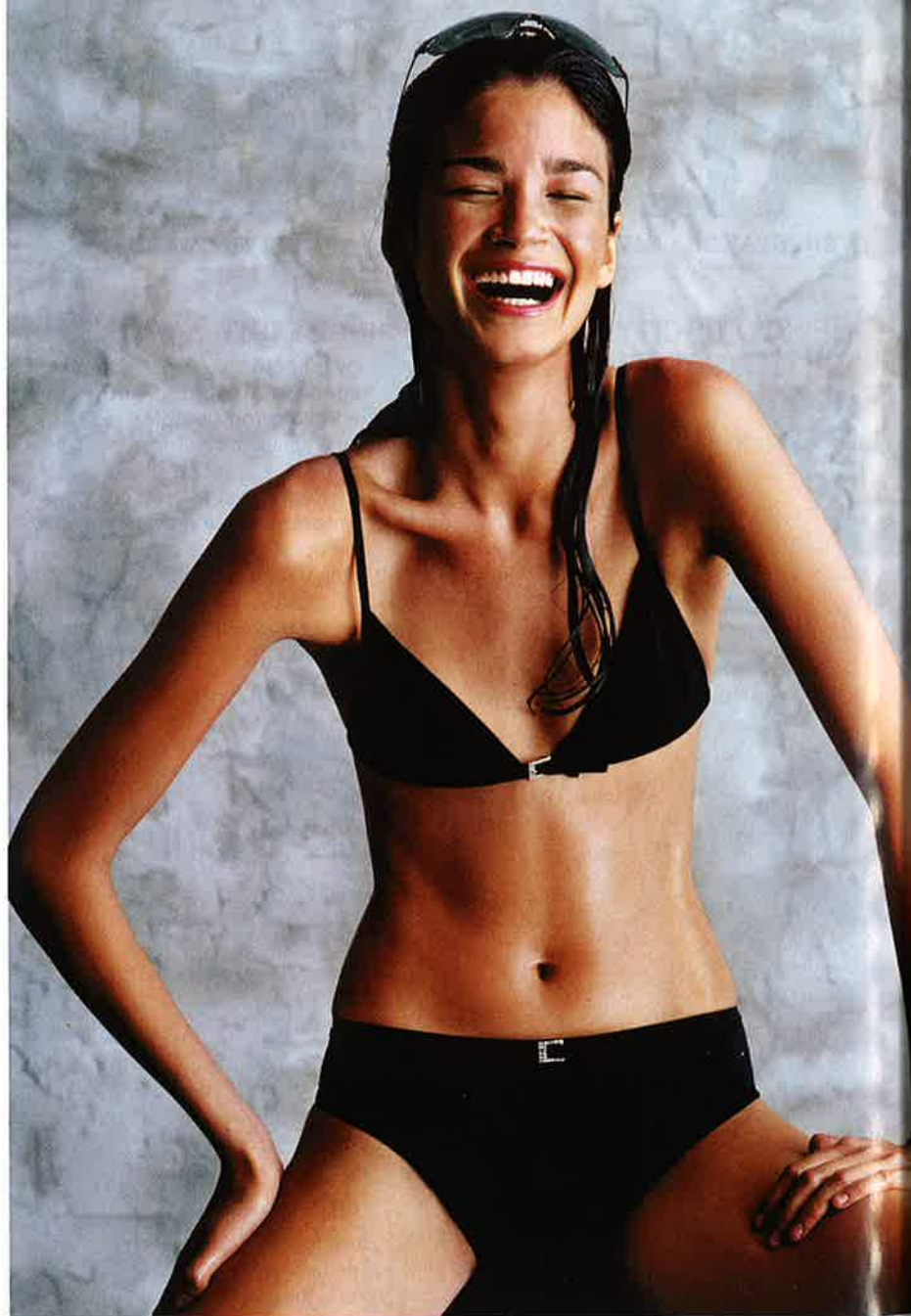


## Ready, Set, Summer

Bikini season cometh. We asked leading skin experts for their best tips for erasing spots, marks, streaks, and blemishes. **By Hannah Morrill**

# Body Special

**D**rink water. Eat right. Think positive thoughts. If we had a dollar for every time we heard a celebrity or model coyly suggest this prescription for keeping in shape, we'd buy a private island—and escape such chimerical fluff forever. The truth is, no one thinks or drinks their way to firmer biceps. Behind every famously taut, toned, and smooth-skinned body, there's a cadre of experts tightening flab, zapping fuzz, and eliminating bumps, lines, and puckers. And now we've brought that team to you. We asked leading dermatologists, aestheticians, and waxers to spill their best tips for tackling every blemish from the neck down. No sugarcoating, no smug assertions, just real, valuable advice. How's that for a positive thought?



## ***Hair Removal***

*Before Cindy Barshop founded Completely Bare 14 years ago, bikini waxes were simply not discussed outside of the treatment room. Four spas, several products, and a zillion services later, she shares her defuzzing secrets.*

**For the bikini line...and beyond:** Use a hard, stripless wax at a reputable spa or salon. Book your appointment when your hair is at least a quarter of an inch long—otherwise the wax can't grip well and the results will be patchy.

**For arms and legs:** Soft wax

ripped away with cotton strips is quickest. Avoid the sun and exfoliate on the days leading up to your appointment—dull, sun-damaged skin can look uneven and inflamed after waxing.

**For underarms:** Shaving is ideal unless your hair is particularly coarse. Do it in a steamy shower to soften the hairs, and never use a dull razor. Draw the blade against the grain for the closest shave possible. (A thin lather of translucent soap will reveal the direction of hair growth better than a frothy shaving cream.) Afterward, be sure to dry your razor thoroughly—it will last longer.

## **TIP:**

*Exfoliate before moisturizing. Even the most potent hydrators can't penetrate dead cells, so use a gentle scrub once a week.*



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**For slower regrowth:** Applied twice a day, a moisturizer with hair inhibitors can slow growth by 50 percent. Clinical studies found that Capislow, an ingredient in No! No! Smooth Skin Care After Treatment Cream and Completely Bare Don't Grow There, slowed the anagen (active) phase of growth.

**To treat ingrowns:** Exfoliating 48 hours before and three days after waxing removes dead cells on the skin's surface, allowing hairs to push through freely. Chemical exfoliators with a large concentration of alcohol can be too irritating, so look for one that pairs mild sloughers with soothing ingredients, like aloe and soy (both found in Sally Hansen Zero Bumps Bikini Spray). A dab of salicylic or glycolic acid can prevent ingrowns and free those that have already formed.

**Between laser appointments:** Shaving or using a depilatory cream removes hair on the surface, but won't disrupt the anagen phase targeted by a series of laser treatments. Choose a depilatory kit with a plastic shaving blade, like Sally Hansen Simply Smooth Hair Remover Creme, which minimizes the time the powerful chemicals sit on the skin. But to avoid irritation, hold off on using it a week before and a week after treatment.

## Body Acne

*In the humidity of New Orleans, body acne is hard to avoid. Dermatologist Mary P. Lupo, who practices there, erases bumps and blemishes on every inch of the body and knows what really works: not voodoo, but the right skin products.*

**Use a medicated body wash daily.** The back and butt harbor more bacteria than the face, and when you sweat—which everyone does, all day—pores open, swell, and clog. Add the friction of tight clothing, and what you end up with is unbecoming bacne and buttne. Zapping bacteria cuts the process off at the start. For the best results, try a mousselike formula with 10 percent benzoyl peroxide, like PanOxyl. It absorbs quickly and won't overdry the skin.

**Turn an acne spot treatment into a weekly peel.** Spot treatments don't prevent future outbreaks. Instead, apply a 2 percent salicylic acid product all over, and allow it to fully dry before rinsing off. Lupo recommends formulas with glycerin, which won't leave the skin parched. (She likes Philosophy's On a Clear Day Oil-Free Acne Spot Treatment.) Use just once a week to prevent unnecessary irritation.

**63%**  
OF WOMEN THINK  
THAT THE BACK  
IS THE WORST PLACE  
TO GET ACNE.

—allure.com poll

## Sun Spots

*They may take decades to appear, but according to dermatologist Susan C. Taylor, who founded the Skin of Color Center at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center in New York City, sun spots can take just a few minutes to remove with targeted treatment.*

**First, they must be diagnosed.** Sun spots are flat, brown collections of melanin pigment produced by cells called melanocytes. They won't fade on their own like some freckles, and they aren't black or irregularly shaped like malignant melanomas.

**They're also preventable.** Sun spots have only one cause: sun exposure. A daily slathering of SPF 30 or higher on the face, chest, and backs of the hands can prevent new spots. When heading outdoors (beach day!), smooth on SPF 30+ a half hour before exposure, and be sure to reapply every two hours.

**Brightening creams take time.** Prescription creams containing 4 percent hydroquinone fade dark spots in 4 to 12 weeks (or more). Two percent versions, such as Ambi Fade Cream, are available over the counter; they're just not as speedy.

**Freezing is fast.** For about \$200, liquid nitrogen—applied by a dermatologist—destroys spots on contact. The treated area scabs over, flakes off, and fades

## Body Beautiful

Feeling more pale, dry, and flabby than taut, tan, and glow-y? These products help ease the transition into swimsuit season. —RENEE TRILIVAS



**Espa Skin Brush (\$29).** Sweep the cactus-fiber bristles over your legs, arms, stomach, and chest before you shower to buff away rough patches.



**Tom Ford Neroli Portofino Body Oil (\$70).** Laced with fruit oils, this luxurious moisturizer absorbs beautifully, leaving skin silky, not greasy. And it smells like crisp citrus and orange flower.



**Tracie Martyn Resculpting Body Serum (\$98).** Natural ingredients like amino acids and seaweed extract give sagging areas a welcome—if temporary—lift.



**Nivea Touch of Renewal Lathering Body Scrub (\$5.99).** One of our favorite body washes now has exfoliating beads, turning even the quickest shower into a skin-buffing spa experience.



**St. Tropez Everyday Spray (\$35).** The superfine mist coats hard-to-reach spots for a believable, streak-free bronze in just three days.



**Prtty Peaushun Skin Tight Body Lotion (\$36).** Like a tinted moisturizer for the body, it camouflages imperfections for a realistic glow—and won't stain clothing.



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within about a week. However, nitrogen can darken spots on Asian and Mediterranean skin and produce white marks on black skin, so the doctor should do a patch test first.

**Lasers work for large areas.** Intense Pulsed Light or the Q-switched Nd:YAG laser are efficient for densely speckled zones like the décolletage. Most spots will vanish after one session, which can cost \$400 or more; some require a second pass.

## 45%

OF WOMEN SAY THEY  
WOULD ONLY GO  
NAKED IN PUBLIC FOR  
\$1 MILLION. —*allure.com* poll

### *Red Bumps*

*Forty percent of the population has a genetic predisposition to keratosis pilaris (KP), the gritty red bumps often found on upper arms and thighs. The condition is so common at dermatologist Doris Day's New York City office that she's developed a surefire course of treatment to keep KP on the DL.*

**It's controllable, but not curable.** When the skin's keratin proteins form hard plugs at the hair follicles rather than shedding normally, KP is born. While you may eventually outgrow the condition, there's no permanent solution.

**Avoid harsh scrubs.** Abrasive ones can inflame the already sandpapery bumps. Glycolic acid cleansers, such as Glytone Exfoliating Body Wash, gently dissolve the dead cells that bind the plugs.

**Switch your moisturizer.** An alpha hydroxy acid (AHA) cream, like Am-Lactin, loosens keratin buildup while it moisturizes. Most people notice smoother skin and less redness after three to four weeks.

**A visit to the doctor could help.** A series of chemical peels over three to five months can suppress KP almost completely. Vitalize Peel has a particularly potent blend of AHA and retinoic acid and costs about \$200 per treatment.





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## Stretch Marks

*There may be no guaranteed way to prevent unwelcome red or white streaks, but Howard Sobel, a New York City dermatologic surgeon and the founder of DDF Doctor's Dermatologic Formula, says you can minimize them with a few effective skin strategies.*

**Don't yo-yo.** Staying within 25 to 30 pounds of a base weight decreases the chances that stretch marks will form.

**Treat them early.** Marks start out red and become white over time. No matter what course of action you take, you'll have much better luck if you treat them when they're fresh.

# 32%

**OF WOMEN SAY THEY ARE HAPPIER WITH THEIR BREASTS THAN ANY OTHER BODY PART.**

—*allure.com* poll

**Moisturizers are a temporary fix.** Lotions and body oils encourage cells to retain water, which plumps the skin. This helps improve the look of stretch marks and can also minimize, but not prevent, their formation during pregnancy.

**Retin-A targets red streaks.** Applied twice daily for two to six months, a 0.1 percent prescription retinoid can improve the appearance of new stretch marks by more than 50 percent by boosting collagen and elastin regeneration. However, such regular Retin-A application will temporarily irritate the skin. Over-the-counter retinols may help as well, just not as much (and definitely not as quickly).

**Lasers are even better.** A Vbeam laser increases and remodels collagen and elastin in stretch marks and decreases inflammation, the cause of surface redness. Four to six treatments at \$300 to \$500 a session will drain color from red marks and make white marks less opaque by nearly 100 percent.



## How to Lose Five Pounds Fast (Or Look Like You Did)

### Subdue Your Sweet Tooth

Cut sugar-alcohol sweeteners from your diet. Low-carb foods like mints, protein bars, and even gum can contain sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, and lactitol (check for “-ol” ingredients on the nutritional label). Since they're not fully absorbed in the blood, they can ferment in the large intestine—a major cause of bloating.

### Stand Like a Dancer

Burr Leonard, founder of the Bar Method, a workout based on dance conditioning, says correct posture is slimming. “So many women stand with their shoulders rounded, which shortens the torso and thickens the waist,” she says. Instead, keep your chest lifted, your shoulders square and aligned with your hips, and your abs drawn in.

### Adjust Your Fit

“Your clothes should feel tailored, not painted on,” says stylist Estee Stanley, who dresses Jessica Biel and Lea Michele. Avoid pants that are too skinny (they accentuate the hips and thighs), high-waisted (they stunt the upper body), or cropped (they make you look shorter). Choose blazers and cardigans that hit just below the hip, and dresses or skirts in fluid fabrics.