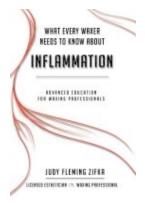
WHAT EVERY WAXER NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT

INFLAMMATION

ADVANCED EDUCATION FOR WAXING PROFESSIONALS

JUDY FLEMING ZIFKA

LICENSED ESTHETICIAN 🖎 WAXING PROFESSIONAL



A valuable resource for waxing professionals who want to better understand why inflammation occurs during hair removal and what they can do to suppress it. Not only does this book contain the most modern theories in inflammation, it also provides numerous techniques that can be used in the waxing salon with little or no investment. With this information, a waxing professional can increase their business revenues, and build a loyal client base.

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Introducing Inflammation

very waxer needs to understand inflammation because it is something we create in nearly every client who comes to us for hair removal. The process of removing multiple hairs at once almost always causes the skin to turn bright pink or red for a few minutes or a few hours. This is inflammation, and it is universally disliked by our clients. The faster we can get rid of it the happier they are.

Since waxers are the ones creating inflammation, it makes sense that waxers should also be experts in how to treat it. After all, we see inflammation every day in all types of bodies and all kinds of skin. There are very few professions that offer a better opportunity to observe the causes and effects of inflammation than waxing.

And yet, despite our intimate relationship with inflammation, most waxers have a surprisingly limited understanding of it. If we were taught anything at all about inflammation in school, it was probably the same ideas that were being taught 40 years ago. There have been some amazing discoveries in the past decade, and it's time to bring our understanding into a new light. I hope this book does it for you.

For the past 12 years I have been experimenting with how to reduce the inflammation I create when I wax my clients. During my days in beauty school I received little or no education on this topic and so, out of necessity, I am self-taught. That is, in many ways, an advantage because I began my journey without

preconceived ideas of what causes inflammation. I approached my research with an open mind and compared everything I read to what I actually observed.

My goal in the beginning was simply to understand what is happening when the skin of my clients becomes red and how I could make it go away faster. I had lots of ideas to try out, and with an active clientele I also had a steady stream of guinea pigs willing to try my experiments. As a result, my waxing studio became something of a research laboratory where I investigated inflammation.

In time, I developed techniques that proved very successful in reducing the amount of redness (inflammation) that my clients experienced. My clients were pleased and so was I, but I was also a bit confused because some of the methods that produced the best results were nearly opposite of what I had been taught. It was quite a dilemma. I couldn't argue with the results of my experiments so I had to challenge what I had been taught.

It became my mission to understand inflammation and I poured myself into it. By day I waxed clients, and by night I researched every medical field I could think of to find clues that would explain what triggers inflammation and why it was responding so well to my unorthodox techniques.

"Not everything we have learned about inflammation is true."

In the course of these efforts I discovered some surprising things. For instance, I began with a somewhat naive expectation that if I dug deep enough I would eventually find that someone had already figured all this out and my questions would be answered. Instead, the deeper I dug the more I realized that it hadn't been figured

out yet. The scientific world knows a lot of things about inflammation, but knows very little about how hair fits into the picture.

Because of my work as a waxer, I already knew that an important relationship exists between hair and inflammation. I only needed to look at the skin of my clients to see evidence of it. And yet, I found very little discussion of this relationship in my review of scientific literature. It seemed as though no one was paying any attention to the inflammation caused by hair removal, and it meant that a lot of valuable information about inflammation had not yet been explored.

I was also surprised to discover that one of the most fundamental ideas we have been taught about inflammation is simply not correct. In particular, we have a misunderstanding of how blood flows through a vessel that is dilated because of inflammation. It's a small error, easily over-looked, but it explains why some of my most successful treatments were contradictory to what I had been taught.

At first I found it inconceivable that this error had not been recognized before. And yet, there it was. By making this one small correction in the description of how blood flows through an inflamed vessel, my working model of inflammation suddenly became more complete and accurate.

How did I know that my description of inflammation was more accurate than the traditional one? Because making this one correction presented a completely new set of options for treating inflammation and they worked on virtually every client, including a few doctors and nurses who became believers when they saw the results.

It's not easy to convince people that a long-held belief is actually false. If there is a fundamental error in our understanding, why hasn't it already been recognized by medical researchers? How could a waxer discover something that doctors and researchers have not?

To answer that question, let's first release any assumptions we may hold that people in the beauty industry are not as smart as those in the scientific fields. We are all just

people who have chosen a profession to focus upon, and there is nothing about one's chosen profession that automatically infers intellectual superiority or inferiority. There is no reason that a waxer cannot make observations about inflammation that are not obvious to others, especially when they have such a unique opportunity to view inflammation that researchers don't have.

"Waxers are in a unique position to understand inflammation."

For most people, body hair is a superficial part of being human, an insignificant remnant of our ancient history. But for a waxer, body hair is the primary focus of our work and everything needs to be explained from the perspective of hair. If you think body hair has no value, it makes sense that you wouldn't expect it to provide valuable answers. But when you see hair as important and explain inflammation from that perspective, it reveals many secrets that have been previously overlooked. It turns out that hair is much more important than it has been given credit for.

Hair is important to waxers, and we work in conditions that researchers can only dream of. We don't need government grants or volunteers to study inflammation because people willingly pay us for what we do. We aren't bound by rules of ethical treatment that requires most researchers to work only with laboratory animals and then extrapolate their conclusions to humans. Waxers work exclusively with humans and we do it without violating any ethics. The observations we make do not have to be extrapolated.

A waxer works with clients that represent a wide variety of ages, skin color, hair color, and sensitivities. We witness a diversity of responses that researchers would find difficult to duplicate. Waxers operate in a world where hair is important and inflammation can be studied in ways that are not available to traditional researchers.

As I conducted my research in the waxing salon, I tried to remain true to the principles of scientific investigation. I started with observations and then asked questions. Why does removing hair cause such a rapid inflammatory response? What causes some people to react more than others? How can I reduce this response? When is the best time to intervene? What else can we try?

To answer these questions I had to step into many different branches of science and read hundreds of technical papers, some of which contradicted each other. The work presented here represents thousands of hours of research into neurology, immunology, evolutionary biology and many other branches of science. Thankfully, I had a good background in the sciences before I became a waxer, so I was not intimidated by the complexity of the research.

I did become tired, however, of the scientific jargon that most research papers use. It began to feel like they were using a language designed to prevent most of us from understanding what they are saying. Their science may be good, but their communication is not.

My goal is to share the results of this research with you in a way that is easy to understand and yet still accurate. I want these ideas to be understood by everyone, not just those with a science background. This requires that I sometimes leave out the finer details of how things work in an effort to simplify a subject that is actually quite complex.

Despite this goal of simplicity, care has been taken to make sure that the explanations are accurate. The details I have omitted do not materially change our understanding of the processes I describe. If a reader wants to learn more details about any of the subjects covered here, an extensive list of resources is provided in the Bibliography.

Within this book you will learn about much more than just inflammation. You will learn about neurology, embryology, and immunology. You will learn how stress affects inflammation, and how our blood flow changes as vessels dilate and contract. The world of human biology opens up in new ways when it is explored from the

perspective of hair. You may find that many of these ideas have practical applications in your life outside of the waxing studio, too.

This book is divided into two sections: *Theory* and *Techniques*. The *Theory* section covers the fundamental principles of hair and inflammation. This is where new ideas are introduced and discussed. The *Techniques* section is where these new ideas are put into practice. This is where you will learn exactly how to incorporate these ideas into your waxing business.

You can improve your waxing skills right away by using the ideas in this book. You can be comfortable knowing that they are reliable, tested, and supported by evidence from outside research. But what is truly great about these ideas is that they cost little or nothing to implement. They don't require you to purchase a product or invest in a piece of equipment or pay a franchise fee. The only investment you have to make is a small amount of time and a large amount of understanding.

I encourage you to try these techniques in your waxing practice and see for yourself what kind of results you can get. Even if you implement only one or two of the ideas in this book, your clients will notice and rave about how nobody takes care of their skin like you do. When you demonstrate your understanding of how to treat inflammation, you are demonstrating your expertise as a waxer. Expertise is what every client wants, and your efforts will be rewarded with loyal clients and word-of-mouth referrals that will keep you busy for as long as you care to work.

What is Inflammation?

e all know that waxing causes the skin to turn red. A lot of people, including our clients, do not think of this redness and irritation as inflammation because they think inflammation is only associated with infection. This is not correct. Inflammation is one of the most basic responses of our immune system, and it can occur for a variety of reasons. Infection is one reason and waxing is another. They both cause inflammation because inflammation is a universal and primary response of the immune system.

"Inflammation is caused by irritation."

In simple terms, inflammation is a response from the immune system that causes skin to become red, hot, swollen, and tender. This is what we see immediately after hair is removed by waxing. The skin becomes red, individual follicles become swollen, and the area is temporarily tender.

Inflammation is produced by our immune system as a response to irritation, and there are many types of irritation we can experience. Waxing creates irritation because we over-stimulate the hair follicle nerves when hair is forcibly removed. Friction, bruising, and cuts also cause irritation because tissue is being damaged. Insect bites, bacteria, and parasites are also irritating because they are invaders into our system. All these sources of irritation are capable of triggering the immune system and causing inflammation. Inflammation is therefore present in a wide range of health conditions.

When inflammation comes on quickly and lasts for a short period of time, such as what is experienced with waxing, it is called *acute* inflammation. In medical terms, acute means short duration and *chronic* means long duration. Waxing produces acute inflammation, but not chronic inflammation. The redness of inflammation lasts for a few minutes or a few hours, depending on the client.

"The redness of inflammation is caused by vasodilation."

When skin is inflamed and becomes red, the color of the skin is caused by something we can't see — *vasodilation*, or the dilation of blood vessels. All of the symptoms we associate with inflammation — the heat, the color of the skin, the swelling, the tenderness, the buildup of fluids — are because blood vessels have dilated under the surface of the skin.

Almost everything that happens during inflammation is controlled by vasodilation, and so when we talk about controlling inflammation we are really talking about controlling vasodilation. This important fact will guide many of the treatment methods we develop.

If inflammation is controlled by vasodilation, then we have to ask what controls vasodilation. It is our immune system that controls vasodilation, so when we talk about controlling vasodilation we are really talking about controlling our immune system.

"Vasodilation is controlled by the immune system."

When we think about the immune system, we don't usually think of opening and closing blood vessels as one of its major functions. Instead, most people think the immune system's major function is to fight off germs and infection because that's the part of our immune system that advertising talks about the most.

For the vast majority of people, almost everything they know about the immune system has come from advertising and it is an incomplete picture. The germ fighting powers of our immune system are important, but regulating the blood flow by opening and closing vessels is much more important from the perspective of waxing, because this is how inflammation is controlled.

If we want to have an accurate understanding of inflammation we must first have a better understanding of the immune system. This requires that some of our preconceived ideas must be dropped so we can explain inflammation as it truly exists. In the next section we will refine our definition of the immune system and put it in terms that are meaningful to a waxer. In the process we will see that the immune system is not as complex as we might have believed.

The Immune System ~ Maintaining a State of Balance

he immune system is not complicated when you realize that everything it does is an attempt to keep us in balance. It has no motive other than that. It just wants to keep us in balance, and every action it takes is in response to something that has taken us out of balance. Too hot, too cold, too fast, too slow, painful, and broken are all unbalanced conditions that are addressed by our immune system. It's true that the immune system fights off infections and heals damaged tissue, but those actions fall under the larger umbrella of keeping us in balance.

"Homeostasis is the attempt to maintain balance, and every individual has their own unique balance point."

The attempt to stay in balance is called **homeostasis** (*ho-me-oh-STAY-sis*) and it is a force that governs all biologic systems, and certainly the human system. Every living

thing has limits on what conditions it can tolerate and homeostasis is the attempt to keep a biologic system within those limits.

In humans, the nervous system is responsible for monitoring the conditions of our body. When conditions reach a certain limit, or threshold, a nerve sends a signal to the brain. The immune system, which is controlled by the nervous system, relies upon these signals to tell it that a threshold has been crossed and action needs to be taken. When a signal is received that our system is out of balance, the immune system tries to make corrections that will bring us back into balance.

Depending on which threshold has been crossed, our immune system makes a counteractive response that attempts to bring things back into homeostasis. If we are too hot, the immune system will try to cool us down. If our heart is pumping too fast, the immune system will try to slow it down. If a vessel is punctured and we lose blood, the immune system will coagulate it so it stops leaking. If bacteria invade, the immune system will try to neutralize them. If cells are damaged, the immune system will try to repair them.

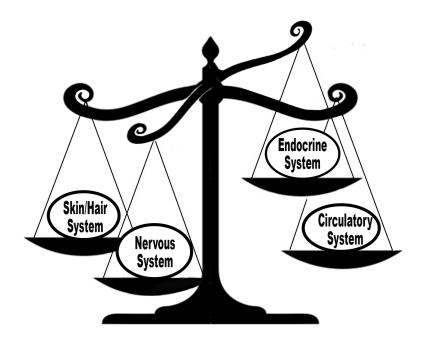
Whatever problem we encounter, our immune system always tries to restore homeostasis and bring us back into a state of balance. And the immune system does this all day, all night, every day, for our entire life.

All humans share similar thresholds of tolerance for various conditions, but each person has their own individual threshold. What one person can tolerate, another person may not. Each of your clients will have different thresholds they can tolerate. We can make some educated guesses about people, but it is ultimately up to each individual to learn what their personal thresholds are because no one else, not even doctors, can assume to know one's limits.

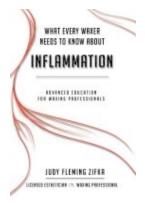
The techniques that will be presented in later sections take advantage of the fact that our immune system is always trying to maintain balance. We help that process by adding or subtracting things from the environment of inflammation so that homeostasis can be achieved faster.

To help the immune system restore balance, we've got to first know which systems are out of balance. Only then can we know what needs to change to restore balance. Fortunately, there are only four fundamental forces that control whether the immune system is creating inflammation or suppressing it. Once we are aware of these forces, we can help the immune system and improve the way our clients respond to inflammation.

Therefore, the first thing we need to understand are the basic forces that govern the immune system. I don't want to make the immune system complicated by getting caught up in the details of how our biochemistry makes it all happen. What we need is a fundamental understanding of the forces that direct the actions of inflammation. Once we understand the basic forces that control our immune system, it becomes much easier to recognize what actions we can take that might help to restore balance and reduce inflammation.



The Immune System is balanced by four basic systems



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