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## Best Methods and Marketing Strategies for your Electrology Practice

### Part 3

by Jeana Giordano, L.F.S., C.C.E.

According to a study in the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology, electrolysis has a success rate of approximately 93 percent. Have you ever wondered about an appropriate way to expose myths and share helpful news regarding electrolysis to build your practice? Before we discuss marketing options to grow your clientele, let us first address methods that can refine your skills, setting you apart as a seasoned practitioner among the 93 percent success rate. It is essential to success to know what modality best suits the client's needs. The choice of modality depends upon the experience and preference of the operator. Many practitioners customize treatments, utilizing a combination of modalities for best results, depending on the area being epilated and the coarseness of the hair.

Electrolysis is the practice of electrical epilation through a fine disposable and sterilized probe alongside unwanted hair. During this process, electric current passes through a needle that is inserted into the hair follicle and chemically changes the salt and water/body fluids in the follicle to produce sodium hydroxide, commonly known as lye. Being caustic, lye kills the cells in a localized area by chemical decomposition. An effective insertion destroys the root and optimally the hair does not grow back. The probe should be inserted into the natural opening of the hair follicle; proper insertion does not puncture the skin. Care should be taken to insert the probe at the same angle that the hair is growing out of the skin – Not only does this insertion technique achieve better results, it is likely to be more comfortable for the client.

There are three modalities used in electrolysis: galvanic, thermolysis, and blend. Each modality has its own merits. All three methods, when properly performed, can be

effective at destroying the hair matrix cells – leaving follicles incapable of growing hair. In selecting the best modality, many factors, such as an appropriate duration of treatment and determining hair type, will come into play. Electrolysis works effectively for all hair types – be it fine, heavy, or coarse.

After examination of the location of the area, face, body, and type of hair to be removed, a skillful electrologist should also take into consideration the condition of the skin, the client's individual health concerns, along with the discomfort threshold of the client. It is important to find out if they are a first-time client. The professional can then make an informed decision as to what method may best suit their client's individual needs. For all three modalities, the professional selects a metal probe (needle) that must slide easily into the hair follicle. It should be the same diameter as the hair shaft or smaller. The probe is typically 50 to 150  $\mu\text{m}$  (0.002 to 0.006 inches).

### Galvanic

The original electrolysis modality is named after Luigi Galvani. Galvanic electrolysis was first reported in the medical text by ophthalmologist Charles Michel in 1875. He used this treatment to remove ingrown eyelashes in his clients. The galvanic method, which utilizes direct current, creates lye in the follicle. The probe becomes the cathode – the electrode from which a conventional current leaves a polarized electrical device. Sodium hydroxide (lye) formed at the cathode, by the process of chemical electrolysis, kills the hair matrix cells. Modern galvanic epilators automatically adjust the voltage to maintain constant current. Of the three modalities, be aware that galvanic electrolysis is slower and normally used on coarse hair.

# Medical Hair Removal, Inc.

## Thermolysis Method (Over-Heating)

Thermolysis uses the short wave current (also called alternating current or high-frequency current). During thermolysis, the probe is inserted to the depth of the dermal papilla or hair matrix. Heat is created in the follicle and coagulation destroys the target area. The intensity and duration of the electricity should be started according to the hair thickness and then gradually increased until the hair slides out easily. If the client experiences discomfort, the settings can be lowered. Thermolysis is also known as radio frequency, or diathermy. A thermolytic epilator is fundamentally a radio transmitter. Thermolysis works by heating the hair matrix cells to about 48 degrees Celcius (118 degrees Fahrenheit), causing electrocoagulation. This high-frequency current brings about the coagulation, thus destruction of tissue.

## The Blend

Developed by Arthur Hinkel in 1948, the blend modality uses both radio frequency and direct current. It also combines the use of both electrolysis (direct) and thermolysis (alternating) currents simultaneously, or sequentially, to destroy the target area, by both coagulation and chemical reaction.

## Marketing Strategies

Happy clients and their positive word-of-mouth testimonies and subsequent referrals will add to business growth. Rule number one: Remember excellent customer service is the lifeblood of any business. Some customer service practices to consider are:

- Answer your phone or hire someone to be available during working hours.
- Do not make promises unless you can keep them – reliability builds relationships.
- Listen to your clients and show you care. Take time to answer questions and offer information.
- Deal with complaints – be helpful even if there is not an immediate profit in it.
- Give a little extra – a coupon, a beverage, a pillow for comfort, or even a genuine smile.

A referral program to grow your client base can be used via different platforms, both digitally through social media websites; also utilize traditional marketing resources such as reciprocal, neighborhood marketing, and marketing to new clients through incentives that benefit existing clients. Current clients can become brand ambassadors providing a stream of new clients. Always ask for referrals from satisfied clients. Join local networking groups and organizations. Remember, good old-fashioned word of mouth remains a tried-and-true marketing tactic.

Optimize referrals with an incentive rewards program. An example of this type of marketing tool could be 10 percent off the current clients' next three treatments for the referral of a new client, or one free treatment with the referral of a new client.

Always remember to increase traffic by making the most of social networks. Tweet your heart out! Twitter offers a getting started guide where how to promote your business on their platforms is taught to newcomers. If you have a website, post testimonials from happy clients. You can also build a responsive opt-in e-mail list to facilitate and run contests and giveaways via your website.

Create your own blog and use it to build an audience of people who would be interested in your services. (Creating a blog is not as complicated as creating a website.) Blog to expose myths because common misconceptions grow from false myths. Be a catalyst for change and shed light on inaccurate myths!

## Inaccurate Myths

**Myth –** An electrolysis treatment is very painful. Electrologists are aware that one client may not experience any discomfort while another may find it challenging to tolerate treatment in a specific area. Pain thresholds vary and a client's tolerance is hard to predict. Clients report sensations from mild tingling to pain. Unfortunately, there are electrolysis practitioners who have poor skills and they are one reason that clients believe that treatments either hurt too much or do not deliver long-term results.

**Myth –** Home electrolysis gadgets are just as effective as professional electrolysis. Hand-held devices with a probe are

advertised as effective and easy. However, considering the extremely poor success rate, combined with unwanted possible complications like re-growth, scarring, and infection, chances for permanently removing unwanted hair long term with a home gadget are poor to say the least.

**Myth –** Laser hair removal is superior. Laser treatments are quite different from electrolysis, Lasers cannot treat hair that lacks pigment such as gray hair and deliver limited results for blonde and red hair color.

You have knowledge and a valuable skill, which should allow you to take advantage of event and symposium marketing. Speak to groups and offer information as a complimentary service at appropriate events such as health fairs and wedding planning events.

Collect business cards to begin a contact list. Notify your database of upcoming speaking engagements in which you will be participating. Pass out business cards, featuring an incentive offer to drive new clients through your door.

Libraries frequently allow qualified individuals to offer an informative seminar for the benefit of community education. As you are offering a complimentary service, there is normally no fee to hold a seminar at a life-learning class held at the public library. Partner with a licensed facial specialist and offer tips on skin care, anti-aging, and hair removal. Answer questions and expose myths.

Reciprocal marketing – perhaps there is a nearby dermatology office, hair salon, or non-competing spa that does not offer electrolysis that would allow you to place your business cards in return for you allowing theirs in your facility. Do not rely on one marketing tactic; always use a mix of marketing strategies.

Electrologists are regulated differently from state to state. The Society for Clinical & Medical Hair Removal (SCMHR) is a medical hair removal certification body and professional society. The Society for Clinical & Medical Hair Removal provides certification for professional electrologists and laser hair removal technicians, acting as an information support organization for legislation on electrolysis, as well as hair removal.