

Why Men Are Bleaching and Waxing Their Butts

Guys are looking to get rid of their hair down there. And by "down there," we mean wayyyyy down.

BY CARRIE WEISMAN AUG 1, 2018



Enrique Ramirez is a licensed esthetician. He's been working in the salon industry for nearly two decades. Over the years, he's provided a lot of different services to a lot of different people. But more recently, he's been receiving inquiries from a specific demographic regarding a very specific service. More recently, he's been getting straight guys asking about bleaching their butts.

For those who aren't in the know, anal bleaching is a cosmetic procedure designed to lighten the color of the skin around the anus. (Porn, as well as the Kardashians, have been credited with helping to popularize the trend.) And while the procedure may seem extreme, not to mention costly (at his spa, the service costs \$110 per session), the trend of below-the-belt grooming is not limited to his NYC-based clientele. And by "below the belt," we mean *way* below the belt.



SCREENGRAB VIA FACTS/YOUTUBE

It's not necessarily news that men are spending more time and money on their appearance. According to the International Spa Association, the number of men who indulge in spa treatments has shot up 29% since 2005. It's also not particularly surprising that their grooming habits extend to the downstairs area as well: the influence of (again) porn has prompted many guys to wax or shave their balls, and a survey by the skincare brand Nivea for Men found that 79% of men of all sexual orientations admitted to shaving "below the neck" at least once a month.

What is surprising, however, particularly to straight guys who have been taught to be squeamish about anything butt-related, is that guys are apparently taking their razors backdoors. The Nivea for Men survey also found that almost 10% of guys regularly shaved their butts, and 24% admitted to having hopped on YouTube in search of instructions for how to do so safely. And they're willing to enlist professionals to do the honors.

In 2004, Jodi Shays opened Queen Bee Salon & Spa. By 2015, she had so many male customers showing up she decided to open up a second salon for men. Today, the Shays Lounge has locations in both Southern California and Seattle. And two of the most popular services they provide just so happen to revolve around the rear. The Butt Reynolds removes all hair from "the base of the back to under the cheeks including

"I even get girlfriends and wives calling in to book their partners for this service."

This backdoor grooming may come down to one simple explanation: it feels nice. “Some people enjoy the feeling of analingus and anal sex with bare skin, and many people enjoy the hyper-sensitivity that sometimes happens to the skin after waxing or shaving,” Anne Hodder, a multi-certified sex & relationships educator based in Los Angeles, tells *MensHealth.com*.

But it also might be for the same reason why guys shave their scrotums because they (incorrectly) think it'll make them look bigger: sheer vanity. “I think anal [grooming] is becoming more accepted among men because women are more open to trying new sexual experiences, and they want their men to be groomed,” Ramirez tells *Men's Health*.

Statistics surrounding sex acts are notoriously hard to pin down — and that applies doubly when you're talking about stimulating the prostate, the small, nerve ending-packed, highly sensitive walnut-sized gland between the bladder and the rectum. But Ramirez may be onto something, in that butt play appears to be on the rise among straight men. Prostate massager sales have increased by 56% over the past five years, and the sex toy retailer LELO found that 71% of straight men in a relationship say they're open to the idea of prostate massage.

Pegging, a sexual practice in which a woman performs anal sex on a man by penetrating him with a strap-on dildo, has also officially made its way into mainstream culture. It made a cameo appearance in the comedy hit series *Broad City* in 2015 and in *Deadpool* the following year.

“Guys love getting fucked because it's stimulating the exact same nerve as the penis — the pudendal nerve, which enervates the anus, the perineum [aka taint] and the genitals,”



If pop culture holds a mirror to what goes on in our bedrooms, it seems safe to say that heterosexual anal play is officially on the menu, and with that has come a new set of grooming rituals and expectations.

“Women want to try it, and men get addicted.”

But while the stigma surrounding certain sex acts may be slowly disappearing, there are other factors keeping men (not to mention their butts) out of salons. Because the majority of estheticians are female, and the job requires them to spend time alone with their clients, “there are a lot of estheticians that won’t do waxing on men,” Shays explains. “There are a few guys [who have tried] to ruin it for the rest. But they usually end up leaving the spa on the other end of our shoe.”

There’s also the fact that, well, there’s really no good reason to wax your ass, even if butt play is on the menu. As Hodder explains, pubic hair exists in large part as a protective barrier, and that applies to the hair around your butt and perineum (the patch of skin between your scrotum and your anus) as well. Waxing or shaving without properly prepping beforehand can put you at risk of developing a rash or an infection.

That said, if you *do* want a baby-smooth butt, it’s best to leave the hair removal to the professionals. And if you don’t care about your hair down there either way, but you’re interested in finding the elusive “P-spot,” there’s never been a better time to try it out. (Plus, the toys we’d recommend to get you started.)

“I’d say over the past three years men have become a lot more comfortable with this kind of thing,” says Shays. “I don’t know if TV, if it’s the media, or what. But guys just seem more comfortable with it.”