

**Contemporary Issues in the Fashion Industry: BUF 4700**

**Critical Paper #1**

**Dr. Sutton**

**Carlos Contreras**

Sugaring Then, Sugaring Now, Sugaring Forever

Estheticians could perform hair removal in several ways. Shaving and chemical creams are used in depilation to remove the hair shaft from above the skin's surface. On the other hand, epilation eliminates hair from the root, allowing for more prolonged hair regeneration. Plucking, threading, and waxing are all epilatory techniques, but the ancient art of sugaring (Lim et al., 2016) dates to ancient Egyptian times. Humans have performed hair removal for over thirty thousand years and hair removal technology have progressed throughout the decades from rudimentary instruments to modern laser treatments (Fernandez et al., 2013). However, many do not know who, what, when, where, why, and how it all started.

Sugaring was introduced to the world by the ancient Egyptians as a hair removal method, possibly due to a desire to improve hygiene among those living in the Middle Eastern desert climate or for cultural and religious reasons (Sherrow, 2006). It is hard to imagine being very

hairy on days when the sun would radiate throughout the day and cause so much discomfort.

The ancient Egyptians required a remedy to cope with the growth of hair on their bodies, so they made a paste by mixing precise amounts of sugar, lemon juice, and water, then heating the concoction until it reached an amber hue then letting it cool to a suitable temperature (Tannir & Leshin, 2001). The mixture was then applied to growing hairs and removed by placing a cloth on it and pulling swiftly in the opposite direction to ease removal. Sugaring was quicker, more cost-effective, less painful, and more effective to exfoliate the skin, making it smoother, suppler, and stubble-free. Sugaring minimized the risk of skin damage and scarring associated with other techniques such as shaving and hot waxing. It was distinct from waxing in that it merely clung to the hair and could be used to remove hairs as little as 1/16 inch efficiently, whereas waxing needed hairs to be 1/4 inches or longer (Tannir & Leshin, 2001). Now it should be no surprise why the ancient Egyptians made sugaring their favorite hair removal method, with some historians claiming Cleopatra herself used the technique when she was the queen of Egypt.

As of late, the natural beauty industry is on the rise because the consumer is becoming more aware of the types of chemicals that companies are putting in their products. Recently, cultural standards have prioritized using more natural components, and this ancient Egyptian approach corresponds well with these beliefs (Lim et al., 2016). Cosmetics control regulations in

the United States have not been significantly modified since 1938, and the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) has relatively little monitoring of the cosmetics business (Wischhover, 2018).

As unbelievable as it may appear, beauty companies manage themselves for the most part.

Sugaring is popular among consumers since it is a safe and organic alternative to standard waxing, and the paste itself tastes like zesty cotton candy and is delicious (Penrose, 2022). While it is 100% natural, this is not the only reason the technique is trendy nowadays. Once the coronavirus pandemic began, people started to look for at-home beauty routines. There is nothing easier than going into the kitchen to get some sugar, lemon juice, and water. One does not need the help of someone else to do this on themselves correctly, so it is no shocker that this was the go-to during the pandemic. A final sugaring trick is to keep recycling the same paste until it no longer holds together. At first, one might reuse the paste four to six times, but if they reach an intermediate level, they may reuse it up to ten times (Hussein, 2021). It is hard to understand why it has taken this long for sugaring to catch on because no harsh chemicals are involved, and it is not a one and done as it is eco-friendly and reusable.

In short, sugaring is a beauty practice that has been trending recently with historical roots that a typical user is unaware of, but they should know how far the practice has come.

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