Men's legs and shaving

Dear Alice,

I'm an 18-year-old guy, and I'm thinking about shaving my legs this summer. Basically my legs seem too hairy for my liking and it makes them feel less clean to me. Is it strange to feel this way? I've wanted to try this for a while, but have been worried about what others' reaction will be. Would people think I am totally strange or would they even take notice? I've heard that cyclists and swimmers often shave their legs in preparation for competitions? what kind of reaction does that draw? Thanks for any advice you can give.

Answer
Dear Reader,

To shave or not to shave... this is the question. When it comes to removing body hair, whether it's on top of your head, under your arms, or on or between your legs, there's no incorrect decision because the act is naturally reversible. If you shave your hairy legs today, and it doesn't make you feel any "cleaner" tomorrow, rest assured, the hair will return. Similarly, let's say you shave your chest hair and discover that, without it, you look similar to a plucked chicken. Squawk not, your feathers will eventually grow back.

It is true that bikers, swimmers, runners, and other athletes have been shaving for years as a tactic for improving their speed; but, more and more, pop culture has jumped into the game as well. Take a look at some male-oriented sports and fashion magazines: there's plenty of beef, but where's the hair? So, since hairless models are in vogue, it's doubtful that you will become a shaved-legged laughing stock at this summer's beach parties and barbecues. And yes, you may even discover that few notice your nakedness, as many guys have very little hair on their legs, arms, chests, etc. from the get go.

Be aware that everyday shaving may leave you with a prickly, bumpy surface, rather than the silky, smooth skin you see on TV. This can be a hair-raising experience for some, but again, stay tuned because your hair will be right back. You might consider trimming your body hair, instead of going for the totally bare look. Waxing, where a professional uses wax to pull out your hair, can leave you smooth longer, but may be more costly and painful than shaving. Finally, laser hair removal is an option for long term hair removal, albeit the most costly.

Whether you remove your hair is your decision. There is little harm in trying, since you can bet your body hair will grow back sooner or later.

Alice!

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