

AT-HOME BUT AT WHAT COST?

Laser hair removal pros can lead, even as the at-home device market grows.

OVER THE last decade, at-home intense pulsed light (IPL) or laser devices have become speedier, sleeker and smarter, advertising improved results through advanced features such as in-built cooling, area-specific attachments and app integration. If all consumers have to do is set a reminder instead of an appointment, where does this leave hair removal clinics?

Practitioners know professional hair removal treatments create more consistent results with fewer risks from misuse, including hyperpigmentation, skin irritation, burns or eye injury. The challenge lies in communicating this value to clients tempted by promises of visible hair reduction in 12 weeks, compared with a structured series of in-clinic sessions delivered over six to 12 months.

“Convenience, affordability, and the appeal of do-it-yourself solutions drive interest in at-home hair removal devices,” explains Alana Van Der Schouw, Head of Education at Clear Skincare, Australian Skin Clinics and SILK Laser Clinics. “People want hair removal on their own schedule without visiting a clinic.”

Many at-home devices promote visible results, not total clearance, after an initial 12-week series, following a schedule that coincides with a person’s hair growth cycle. In-clinic treatments may take longer to produce visible results, but they tend to synchronise more effectively with the anagen phase of the hair growth cycle, creating optimal long-term outcomes.

As the at-home device market expands, laser hair removal practitioners should prioritise education to demonstrate the clear limitations of at-home options.

“At-home devices are less powerful than professional lasers and work slower,” says Alana. “They cannot guarantee permanent results or treat all skin types safely.” However, it is important to address these points with curious clients without sounding defensive, dismissive or denigrating.

Stick to the facts. At-home devices are convenient, but they lack the power, energy output, personalisation and efficiency that clinical devices possess. This can result in delayed progress, faster regrowth, inconsistent hair reduction and increased ongoing maintenance.

DIY users also sacrifice professional treatment planning, aftercare and risk minimisation. Since laser practitioners undergo training and work within a regulated industry, they play a crucial role in managing contraindications, adverse reactions and treatment expectations.



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Then there is the cost. At-home devices range from around \$100 to nearly \$1000 but are limited in what they can achieve. Without clinical treatment planning, it is almost impossible to determine whether even the most expensive device will work effectively on a person’s skin and hair type.

Clinics remain essential within the broader hair removal market. Alongside growing interest in at-home devices, the role of practitioners remains valuable in guiding clients through their options and delivering results that at-home counterparts cannot compete with. ■