

# Chapter I4

## Developing a Practice

Now you've completed your training, and here you sit, epilator in hand, and no place to go. Just what business opportunities await you? Where should you work? With whom, if anyone, should you associate? How should you conduct yourself? These and similar questions must be answered before any of your skills can be put to use.

Up to this point, you have developed only the technical side of your chosen profession. There is yet another side to a successful practice, namely, *professional integrity*. Professional integrity is the most powerful tool the electrologist has for maintaining a harmonious relationship with her clients and attaining success in the profession.

Your professional integrity is a combination of three essential elements: 1) personal hygiene and grooming, 2) basic honesty, and 3) the appropriate attitude with your clients. These qualities are desirable in their own right, but in addition they serve to enhance your *professional integrity*. These qualities comprise the image the public has of you and your practice.

A genuine professional is what the public wants; and this must be communicated. Electrologists who are masters in technical skills are sometimes unsuccessful in practice because of their inability to properly present themselves. Professionalism in our field cannot be earned from advertising and promotion; the client-electrologist relationship is too intimate for that. Your professional image in electrology results only from genuine integrity. Developing your professional integrity requires earnest, and thoughtful effort.

**Personal Hygiene and Grooming:** Besides the normal routines of well-balanced meals, proper rest and exercise, you should also give particular attention to keeping your body immaculate and free from odors or strong perfumes. You should maintain clean and conservatively manicured fingernails. *Extremely long fingernails are out!* Long nails appear unsanitary. With long nails, you cannot properly wear your exam gloves. Long nails, especially highly decorated acrylic nails, interfere with your work and feel uncomfortable to the client. *People judge you by your appearance!* Which of these hands look the most professional?





Keep your hair carefully groomed and tastefully styled. Purple or green hair might be fun at the moment, but what are you communicating to your client? A shorter style is preferable to long flowing “locks” that might accidentally cascade onto the client’s face as you’re working. Avoid trendy hair styles that are extreme or “in” at the moment. If you have long hair, you might tie it back during working hours.



Make sure that your face is always fresh and clean and use light make-up; not heavy. Clothing must be neat, clean and properly fitted to convey a well-groomed appearance.

Because a good portion of your professional image involves physical appearance, wear a uniform rather than street clothing. It’s best to dress more

like those in the medical profession. Dangling earrings, multiple bracelets and large flashy rings should not be worn. High-heels are not appropriate.

**Honesty:** If an electrologist misrepresents her abilities to remove hair permanently, she is going to end up failing to perform as expected, thus losing both her client and her own self-respect. Experience has shown that ethical practices are, in the long run, the most profitable. Your initial consultation with the client should be honest and forthright ... on every issue; even the unpleasant issues. In a field where electrologist and client work in close cooperation over periods of months, even years, a relationship of mutual trust must be established.

**Professional Attitude:** Acquiring the proper professional attitude is a challenging aspect of establishing your identity as an electrologist. The electrologist is neither a doctor nor a beautician, even though electrology encompasses aspects of both of professions. As of 2021, electrology has been re-categorized as “allied health professional.” However, electrologists are not doctors. Yes, you will have clients refer to you as “doctor.” *But remember, the purpose of electrology is a cosmetic one ... not medical!*

The categories of allied health professional are growing. There are a lot of careers that now fall under the umbrella of allied health professional. Electrology and laser have been added to this growing list. Here are a few professions considered allied health professional.

**1. Anesthesiologist assistant.** Anesthesiologist assistants work with physicians to provide high-quality anesthetic care to patients. Because they need a solid background in biological sciences and a firm understanding of numerous medications, anesthesiologist assistants must obtain a master’s degree and proper certification. While nurse anesthetists perform similar functions, their education and training pathway is notably different. Earning potential: The median annual salary for anesthesiologist assistants in 2019 was \$112,260.

**2. Athletic trainer.** Whether they’re taping a sprained ankle or developing an injury prevention plan, these allied health professionals work to manage injuries and illnesses common among people who play competitive sports.