facial TREATMENTS
Facial treatments – theory and consultation

Electrical treatments are a large source of revenue for salons, and are very popular with clients. While therapists may argue that nothing is more relaxing than manual massage, electrical treatments are more effective for treating skin problems, figure problems and for deeper penetration of products into the skin.

You will learn about

- the benefits and effects of electrical treatments
- choice of equipment
- electrical therapies
- properties of electricity
- types of electrical facial treatments
- the facial consultation.

The benefits and effects of electrical treatments

- Stimulates the circulation, lymphatic flow and glandular activity
- Massages the face and body
- Heats the face or body
- For permanent hair removal
- Deep cleanses the skin
- Stimulates the muscles

Benefits of electrical current for beauty therapy treatments

- Long-term benefits with a long-term programme of treatments
- Better results on specific areas and conditions
- More effective than manual treatments
- Instant results can often be felt by the client e.g. relaxation, hair removal
- More penetrating than manual treatments
- Visible results in the skin’s condition

Remember

Any treatment using an electrical current, adapted to any of the machinery used with beauty therapy, will be more effective than manual treatments alone.
However, not all treatments are suitable for all clients.

**Choice of equipment**

This will depend on:

- the client’s needs and any contra-indications present
- the client’s likes and dislikes
- the area of the body to be treated – some equipment is suitable for the face, but would be impractical for use on the body
- the cost of a treatment or course of treatments
- the time constraints for a course to be fitted into a client’s lifestyle
- the skin type and body condition/shape and fat type
- the type of business the salon caters for, and the clientele’s requirements.

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**Electrical therapies**

Electrical therapies use a range of different currents and frequencies. To understand the differences in equipment, you will need to know:

- the type of current used and how it behaves
- how each piece of equipment works
- its benefits to the client
- its risk assessment and hazard potential
- how to use it most effectively for the client’s needs.

To appreciate these topics, you first need to understand the properties of electricity.

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**Properties of electricity**

**The atom**

All matter, whether a solid, gas or liquid, is composed of units called atoms. Every atom has a nucleus and an external or outer layer.

- The nucleus contains positively charged particles, or **protons**.
- The nucleus also contains **neutrons**, which have no charge.
- The outer layer contains negatively charged particles called **electrons**.
Each electron rotates continuously around the nucleus, always in the same orbit.

An atom has one of the following three characteristics:

1. Atom without electrical charge – when the number of electrons and protons is equal and therefore the atom has no charge.
2. Negative ions or anions – if the atom gains an electron, the number of electrons will be greater than the protons, so the atom takes on a negative charge. The atom becomes a negative ion or anion.
3. Positive ion or cation – if the atom loses an electron, the number of protons is higher, and the atom becomes a positive ion or cation.

All ions relate to each other according to the physical laws of electricity: the same charged ions repel each other, while opposite charged ions are attracted to each other. Therefore, two negatives repel one another, so do two positives. A positive is only attracted to a negative, and vice versa.

This theory of opposites attracting is very important in galvanic work, when the active ingredients in the gels and solutions used have active ions, and they are used to aid skin penetration.

**Electricity and electrical circuits**

An electric current is a flow of electrons passing through a fixed point in an electrical circuit per second, measured in **amps**. Electrons flow from negative to positive as they are negatively charged. The pressure required to drive the electric current around a circuit is measured in **volts**.

The amount of electricity an appliance uses depends upon how much work it is designed to do – called the power rating. This is measured in **watts** or **kilowatts**.

Resistance is anything in the circuit which slows down the flow of electricity. There is a balance – the voltage is trying to push the current around the circuit and the resistance is opposing it. The relative sizes of voltage and resistance decide how big the current will be:

- If you increase the voltage, more current will flow.
- If you increase the resistance, less current will flow.

Resistance is measured in units called **Ohms**, but they cannot be measured directly. They need to be calculated from the volts and amps. The relationship between volts, amps and Ohms is called Ohms Law:

\[ \text{Ohms} = \frac{\text{volts}}{\text{amps}} \]

For example, if the voltage of a lamp is 12 volts and the current flowing is 2 amps, the number of Ohms would be calculated as:

\[ 12 \text{ volts} / 2 \text{ amps} = 6 \Omega \text{ or Ohms} \]
Electrical circuits can be seen as:

- a voltage pushing the current round with resistance opposing the flow
- energy transfer.

Anything which supplies electricity is also supplying energy. Electricity comes from different sources:

- cells
- batteries
- generators
- solar cells.

The most practical source of electricity is from the generators at power station via the National Grid. Cells and battery-operated equipment will need recharging and are not suitable for small portable pieces of equipment such as blood pressure machines. Solar energy is unreliable in countries that do not have a regular supply of strong sunlight.

An electrical circuit transfers the energy to components such as lamps, resistors, bells, motors, and so on. These components perform their own energy transfer and convert the electrical energy into other forms of energy, such as:

- heat, e.g. hairdryers, kettles
- light, e.g. light bulbs
- sound, e.g. speakers
- movement, e.g. motors.

Series or parallel circuits

Circuits are classified as either: series or parallel.

A series circuit is all or nothing – the components are connected in a line, end to end, and they all share the electrical current going through them, so once one part is broken the whole series breaks down. Think about the lights on a Christmas tree. If one bulb blows, the whole line of bulbs goes out, and it is a process of elimination to find out which one has gone. This is not very practical and, generally, few things are connected in series.

In a parallel circuit each component is separately connected to the supply. This type of circuit is sensible to work with, as removing or disconnecting one component of the circuit will not disrupt the whole circuit. Household electrics are run this way, so you can switch everything on or off separately.

Where does electricity come from?

Electricity is generated in power stations throughout the country and is distributed through the National Grid to local electricity substations, where the electricity is converted to a lower voltage for use in factories, businesses and homes. Factories require very high voltages (33,000 volts), whereas small businesses such as your salon will receive a 240-volt supply. In urban areas, the 240-volt supply comes into individual premises through underground cables beneath the street. The supply cable enters the building underground and arrives at the meter, fuse board, or circuit breaker, where usage is measured, and once the meter is read, electricity bills can be calculated.

Most electrical equipment in a beauty salon runs from the 240 volts coming through the wall sockets (mains electricity), and the machine will convert it into the type of current it is built to provide, e.g. faradic, high frequency or galvanic. The exceptions to this are the bigger electrical units, which require a higher voltage, such as saunas and steam cabinets. They require a greater supply than 240 volts and have to be connected.
using a special consumer unit, by the installation company. The local electricity supplier will have to be informed and special rates of payment will be required – a sauna, shower unit and spa may need more than double the amps/volts normally available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Measured in</th>
<th>Symbol used</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electric current – a flow of electrical charges called electrons</td>
<td>Amps, using an ampmeter</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Named after the French electrical pioneer, André-Marie Ampère</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure needed to drive current (driving force)</td>
<td>Volts, using a voltmeter</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Named after Alessandro Volta, the Italian inventor of the battery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power used to run equipment</td>
<td>Watts and kilowatts</td>
<td>W and kW</td>
<td>Named after James Watt, who invented the steam engine (1000 watts = 1 kilowatt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance which slows the current down</td>
<td>Ohms</td>
<td>Ω</td>
<td>Named after Georg Ohm, another electrical pioneer. Often referred to as potential difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternating current (AC) flows in one direction, then in the reverse direction in the circuit. One complete back and forth is called a cycle</td>
<td>Hertz (one Hertz = one alternation per second)</td>
<td>Hz</td>
<td>Named after a pioneer in sending and receiving radio waves, Heinrich Hertz. Mains electricity has a frequency of 50 Hz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of electricity terms

**Effects of an electrical current**

An electrical current is able to produce:

- chemical change
- heat
- sound waves
- magnetic fields
- light rays
- mechanical movements (kinetic effects)
- changes of matter from one state to another, e.g. water to steam through heating.

All of this is put to good use within the beauty salon equipment for the benefit of the client. An electrical current adapted for use on or through the body is able to:

- help improve skin function and appearance
- stimulate glandular and cellular activity in the region being worked upon
- improve the tone, functioning and appearance of the muscles
- provide relaxation to the tissues through heating them
- stimulate the systems of the body to encourage better functioning, that is the lymphatic system, circulation, cell reproduction and growth and repair.
Within beauty therapy, these electrical currents can be further broken down into categories of pattern, and the equipment can be adapted to alter the pattern to suit the client’s needs, especially if it is a course of treatments and the body is getting used to the pattern and needs a little extra stimulation.

**Types of electrical current**
- A current which flows in one direction only is a **direct current (DC)**.
- A current which alternates its directional flow is an **alternating current (AC)**.

### Effects of electricity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effects of electricity</th>
<th>Type of equipment</th>
<th>Effect on the body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heating</td>
<td>Sauna, steam units, infrared heat lamps, spa pool, foam baths, showers, paraffin wax heaters</td>
<td>Relaxes the muscle fibres and raises body temperature; induces perspiration and therefore cleanses the skin; rehydrates the skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical</td>
<td>Galvanic treatments to the face, galvanic body treatments, galvanic hair removal</td>
<td>Deep cleanses the skin; forces substances into the skin; treats cellulite; removes hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnetic</td>
<td>Mechanical massage units such as G5 vibro mat and Pifco units for facial massage. (The coil within the motor makes the head cause a circuit break and so the head taps the skin)</td>
<td>Stimulating massage movements encourage the skin’s functions, glandular activity and desquamation of the dead epidermal cells; also helps soften and relax the muscle fibres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light waves</td>
<td>Electro-magnetic waves used in infrared lamps and ultraviolet lamps</td>
<td>Warms the tissues, preparing them for other treatments such as massage or used as a counter-irritant – soothes the nerve endings; encourages production of melanin within the skin to produce a tanned skin, healing and helps with vitamin D production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinetic effects</td>
<td>Kinetic = movement, so muscular contractions caused by a faradic machine are classed as kinetic</td>
<td>Helps build tone and strength within the muscle fibres. May also have other benefits such as improvement in posture and confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound</td>
<td>Audio-sonic machine</td>
<td>Sound waves penetrate deep into the tissue for relaxation of the muscle fibres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Types of current**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of current</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Wave form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Galvanic</td>
<td>Constant and direct (DC) – has no break in the flow of electrons</td>
<td>Voltage on/off Time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued on next page)
Types of electrical facial treatments

The next pages show a general breakdown of facial treatments, and their role in client care.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Uses and client needs</th>
<th>Suitable skin type/body type</th>
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</table>
| Steaming (facial unit) | A heating element is used to boil the water, creating moist heat, i.e. a jet of steam from a nozzle.  
  • Used to warm the tissues of the face, upper chest or back.  
  • Helps open the pores, and cleanses the skin.  
  • Warms the facial muscle fibres and relaxes them, making other treatments after steaming very effective. Very good prior to comedone extraction, but be careful to time the treatment, as if an erythema occurs too strongly, it may contra-indicate other treatments. | Most skin types, except where contra-indications present. Timing of treatment can be adjusted to suit skin type |
| Infrared lamp          | An infrared light bulb is fixed into a fitting with a swivel arm on a stand, making it easy to place the lamp into a suitable position.  
  • Used to create extra blood flow, which generates heat for the skin and underlying tissue. Muscle fibres will soften and it can be used effectively on any part of the body. But can only treat small areas at a time, due to the limited arc of light from the lamp. Can be used on the face, chest or upper back – time the treatment, as if an erythema occurs too strongly, it may contra-indicate other treatments.  
  • Can also be used on the face with a hot oil mask. | As above. Where used with hot oil mask, dry skin only                                                       |
<p>| Brush cleansing        | A brush-cleansing machine has a motor, which rotates a hand-held head that can have a variety of brushes inserted into it. The speed of the rotations is adjustable to suit the client’s needs and preference, as is the direction of the revolution – clockwise or anticlockwise. Brushes of various thickness and stiffness will alter the treatment effect, as will the accompanying products used with the machine. Most water-based products are suitable, from basic foaming facial wash used to cleanse the face, back or congested chest area, to cleansing grains and specialist creams for particular skin problems. The effect of the treatment is one of exfoliation and stimulation to the skin and circulation. Can also be a useful tool in the removal of peels or masks from the face. | Most skin types, except where contra-indications present. Product use will be determined by skin type or problem |
| Facial scrub           | An exfoliant can be applied prior to most facial electrical treatments and is most convenient if the client does not have the time to have a steam treatment. The product is applied using the hands, in small circular motions, and then removed with sponges and warm water, once the entire face and neck have been covered. Some manufacturers provide mitts or facial sponges with a rough surface to enhance the exfoliation, so always follow manufacturers’ instructions. | As above                                                                                                     |</p>
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<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Manual massage</td>
<td>Using the hands, the tissue is manipulated in a series of movements for the neck, upper back, head and face. Can be stimulating or relaxing depending upon the movements used, but the most sought-after treatment outcome is for removal of tension nodules within the muscle fibres and total relaxation of the mind and body.</td>
<td>Most skin types, except where contra-indications are present. Timing and use of product/massage medium during treatment can be adjusted to suit skin type.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-sonic</td>
<td>Deep penetrating sound-wave emissions used on any condition where deep massage helps, e.g. fibrocystic nodules, or tense muscle fibres, of the upper back. This is a small hand-held device and therefore only suitable to treat small areas in one treatment: not suitable for a whole body massage, as it would be too time consuming and not cost-effective. When using on the face, it is most comfortably applied over the therapist’s fingers, so they absorb some of the sound waves. The facial structure does not have the depth of muscle tissue to absorb the sound waves that the body has, and it is not as relaxing directly on the skin.</td>
<td>Most skin types, except where contra-indications are present. Not suitable on fine-featured clients with very delicate facial contours – it may be uncomfortable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percussion vibrators</td>
<td>A hand-held smaller version of a G5 machine (see Body treatments – theory and consultation, page 328) with a smaller motor and therefore not as deep in its effect on the tissues. Has small detachable heads to provide a variety to the massage movements, but generally, the unit tends to produce a tapotement effect. Only suitable on smaller areas, such as the shoulders and neck area. Some clients find it uncomfortable on the face, while others enjoy it.</td>
<td>Most skin types, except where contra-indications are present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacuum suction</td>
<td>This machine uses a pump to create a vacuum within an attached cup, which picks up the tissue. Can be used either: • to glide to the lymphatic nodes, in a single movement, or • to create a pulse within the vacuum, for extra stimulation. Vacuum suction promotes the face’s lymphatic and circulatory systems, thus helping the removal of toxins from the area. It is desquamating; it stimulates glandular activity and improves the general skin texture. Very relaxing facial treatment, and can replace manual massage as part of a routine: many clients find it very soothing and drop off to sleep!</td>
<td>Check for contra-indications, as treatment will not be suitable for all skin types, especially thin or fine skin with a tendency to bruise easily. Also, will not be comfortable on thin, bony clients or clients with older, crêpey skin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect high frequency</td>
<td>Often called a ‘Viennese massage’, indirect high frequency involves creating a circuit of current, flowing through the client via a hand-held glass rod, called a saturator, connected to the machine. The therapist’s hands make contact with the client and the current is discharged through her fingertips, as she is massaging, creating warmth in the area. This deep massage will improve a dry skin, relax the tissues and help increase a poor or sluggish</td>
<td>Most commonly used on dry or fine skins, as the medium used is oil which will help the glide of the treatment and lubricate the skin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued on next page)
Facial treatments – theory and consultation

Other treatments for cleansing, healing, moisturising and exercising

Direct high frequency
Using a high-frequency machine, the current is transmitted into a glass electrode, which is in direct contact with the skin. Light circular motions then disperse the current. This is a drying germicidal treatment, ideal for a seborrhoeic skin, one that is congested or has blemishes.

**Galvanic**
A galvanic machine uses a direct constant current for both face and body work, and the results depend upon the method of use and the gels and products used. The current has to create a circuit flowing through the client, either by using rollers with a connection in the client’s hand or a pad under the shoulder, or by the use of body pads, to complete the circuit.

Can be used in two ways:
- **Desincrustation** – removes the incrustation, i.e. the excess sebum, and gives a deep cleansing to the skin.
- **Iontophoresis** – introduces beneficial substances into the skin, to rebalance and rehydrate the skin, or to get active substances to stimulate the body’s systems, which aids lymphatic drainage.

**Microcurrent**
A modified direct, low-frequency current which is used on its own for lifting of the facial contours and in conjunction with a galvanic current for skin improvement. Can help with fine line reduction, stretch mark minimising and scar reduction, and deep cleansing.

**Faradic**
Using a surged and interrupted current, a faradic machine can stimulate muscular contractions on both the face and body. It is often referred to as passive exercise, and you can actually see the muscles contracting under the pads, with no effort on behalf of the client – the client is lying still on the couch.

The pads for the face are smaller than those used in body work, so it is possible to target specific muscle groups for improvement in tone and suppleness. Treatment is ideal for double chins, dropped jaw line and cheekbone definition.

### Types of equipment

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<td>Most commonly used on oily, congested or acne skin types, to the face, back of chest area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galvanic</td>
<td>A galvanic machine uses a direct constant current for both face and body work, and the results depend upon the method of use and the gels and products used. The current has to create a circuit flowing through the client, either by using rollers with a connection in the client’s hand or a pad under the shoulder, or by the use of body pads, to complete the circuit. Can be used in two ways: Desincrustation – removes the incrustation, i.e. the excess sebum, and gives a deep cleansing to the skin. Iontophoresis – introduces beneficial substances into the skin, to rebalance and rehydrate the skin, or to get active substances to stimulate the body’s systems, which aids lymphatic drainage.</td>
<td>Most skin types, except where contra-indications present. Desincrustation – for oily skins or skins in need of a deep cleanse; Iontophoresis – for a dry skin or to rebalance the skin or just to improve the skin texture</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The facial consultation

As you work through this section, refer closely to all the information you learned in Professional basics.

Facial record card

The facial consultation begins with you and the client talking through the record card. Below is a typical completed card.

Keys to good practice

Whichver pieces of equipment you choose as the most suitable for the client’s treatment plan, always follow the five golden rules:

1. Complete a full consultation.
2. Complete a contra-indication checklist.
3. Carry out thermal and sensitivity tests.
4. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions.
5. Test the equipment on yourself before using it on the client.

Remember

Although most equipment used would be classed as electrical because it works from mains electricity, in beauty therapy equipment is also grouped according to the effect it has on the body. Electrical treatments are those which send an adapted electrical current through the body such as galvanic current, microcurrent, high-frequency and faradic treatments. Equipment that has an external effect only on the body is called a mechanical treatment and includes G5, vacuum suction and small massage equipment such as audio-sonic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal details</th>
<th>Medical details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of client:</td>
<td>Name of doctor:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Jane Jones</td>
<td>Michael Springfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address: 2 The</td>
<td>Practice address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farthings, Faith</td>
<td>The Surgery, 1 Sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill, Canley,</td>
<td>Avenue, Canley, Oxford OX19 3XY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford OX19 7PQ</td>
<td>Tel. no: 091834 923456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daytime tel. no:</td>
<td>Present medication:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>012345 67890</td>
<td>Anti-inflammatory for IBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home tel. no:</td>
<td>Anti-histamines for allergies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>091834 567834</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of birth: 13/10/50</td>
<td>Past medication: Contraceptive pill for 20 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of pregnancies: 3</td>
<td>Allergies: Dogs, cats, most animal fur; eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of children: 2 aged 16 and 18 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation: Nursery teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Lifestyle:** Quite busy with work and family, and husband in a demanding job

**Sleeping pattern:** Not always good

**Smoker (yes/no)/no. per day:** No

**Alcohol units per week:** 0–10

**Diet:** Client is trying to lose weight and is on the Weightwatchers programme, so she is recording all food and drink intake, which is very healthy. A good ration of fruit and vegetables and the client is drinking 2 litres of water per day, which is very good for the skin

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**Client's general health:**

Client is trying to lose weight; with the Weightwatchers programme and so her eating habits are healthy, and the weight loss is slow, but good. The client does like to unwind with a glass of wine with her meal in the evening, and is going to the gym twice a week. Her job is quite stressful – not the children, but the paperwork is heavy and they are going through an OFSTED inspection, which is more stress. The client feels it is affecting her sleep pattern, which is disturbed at the moment. More relaxation would be a good thing, the client feels.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facial condition — please ✓ if present and use comments box</th>
<th>✓</th>
<th>Comments box</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Muscle tone scale 1—3**  
(1 being poor; 3 being good) | For: Chest area 2  
Neck 2  
Jaw line 2  
Cheek area 3  
Eye area 3  
Forehead 3 | Client’s muscle tone is good for her age (54). Chest, neck and jaw would benefit from some facial faradic stimulation and home exercises, but the facial contours are good, and the eye and cheek area is lovely – great cheekbones! Elasticity good – skin springs back quickly. |
| **Skin colour and tone** | Warm, pink and healthy looking, no yellow present and in good condition. Client’s colouring: pale blonde with pale, fair skin. |
| **Skin texture (lines present)** | Fine – soft and smooth, with no obvious problems, and only fine lines visible around eyes. |
| **Skin damage (broken capillaries, etc.)** | Small dilated capillary on left nostril – caused in childbirth, client would like to have it cauterised – refer to our electrologist |
| **Pigmentation areas (any sun damage or loss of pigmentation)** | Small pigmentation around the hairline – very faint, as a result of pregnancy and hormonal changes. Hardly noticeable, and client has hair in a fringe |
| **Pores (fine, large, comedones, blocked, pustules, etc.)** | Fine and clear. No shine, matt and dry to the touch. |
Once you have filled out the client's record card, place it on the trolley for additions during the treatment, and you will be ready to begin the facial observation. You should note any adaptation of treatment necessary should the client have a small contra-indication which is not a barrier to treatment.

The client may also have questions for you, for example ‘What can I do about my open pores?’ or ‘Why does my face itch when I put on moisturiser?’. This will open up the consultation and you will have created a trusting atmosphere where the client feels able to say exactly what his or her concerns are and what he or she is most conscious about, allowing you to give professional advice.

The facial observation

When you are confident that no contra-indications prevent the client from having the treatment, you should invite the client on to the couch in readiness for the skin analysis. The positioning of the client is the same as for manual facial treatments. The client should be cocooned within the bedding, with only the face showing, turban on, and jewellery on the trolley in a bowl. The client should feel warm and secure.

An electrical facial consultation is very similar to a Level 2 consultation/observation, except that your treatment recommendations will involve electrical equipment, so try to be meticulous and thorough. You will need to see the skin in its natural state, that is without make-up – if a client is adept at make up application, then the true condition of the skin could be hidden.
Client modesty

For the female client

- Tights and half-slip may be kept on, but shoes should be removed.
- Bra straps may get oily and should be dropped off the shoulder, or the bra may be taken off altogether, especially if the bra has a metallic strap adjuster. Metal is a good conductor of electricity, and the client may find there is an accumulation of current, and a stronger sensation under the metal, if she keeps her bra on.
- If the client chooses to push her straps down on to the top of the arm, there is still a danger they will get massage medium on them, as you will be going halfway down the upper arm with your movements. Encourage the client to remain topless, but with a small modesty towel around the bust area, which she may wish to keep with her at all times.

For the male client

- Since facial massage includes the upper back and shoulders, the shirt or T-shirt should be removed, and the client’s chest covered with towels and/or blankets to prevent his upper body getting cold.
- Most male clients are not as sensitive to current as a female, as their skin is slightly thicker, but the current is attracted to the moisture in hairs, so if the client is hairy, he may transmit the current quite well!
- Metal facial piercings should be removed, and if the body is pierced, cover with a plaster, where appropriate.

Skin analysis

Once the client is comfortably positioned on the couch, and you have washed your hands, you will be ready to begin skin analysis (for information about the skin, see You and the skin, page 187).

Ask the client if he or she would prefer to have his or her eyes covered with cotton wool rounds, or if the client would just like to close them.

Look closely when doing a skin analysis. Use a magnifying lamp to illuminate the face, and study the facial contours, jaw line, chin, nose, cheeks and forehead. You are looking for:

- the skin’s general condition
- pore size
- any area of shininess
- dry flaky patches
- comedones or blocked pores or papules
- skin problems, e.g. acne rosacea or acne vulgaris
- the contours of the face – any loss of elasticity or dropped contours
- dilated capillaries
- the colour and texture of the skin
- areas of pigmentation.
What you see is very important, and you need to use your consultation skills to confirm verbally with the client exactly what you have seen and how this may affect the client and the treatment plan. Questions such as ‘How long have you had a broken capillary on your nose?’ will lead into a discussion as to whether the client regards it as a problem, if she is conscious of it, and would like to have it treated, or if she is happy because it is covered with make-up and does not bother her.

When looking at the skin, you can also talk about the client’s current skin care range, and how happy the client is with the results. For example:

- Is she using a regular exfoliant to help slough off the dead skin cells?
- Does the colour look a little flat and dull?
- Would the skin benefit from having the circulation stimulated, bringing oxygen and nutrients to the cells?
- Are the current products drying out the top layers of the skin?
- Does the skin look plump and full of moisture, or dehydrated and dry, with lines?
- How firm is the jaw line? Is the client developing a double chin?
- How much water is the client drinking every day to keep the skin clear and healthy?

Manual examination of the face

Most of the information gathered on the record card is from questioning the client and observation of the facial skin condition, but you will also need to feel the skin’s texture, warmth and contours. This will be done when carrying out the superficial and deep cleansing routine – your fingertips will alert you to rough patches of skin, moles and raised areas of skin, which may not be visible but can be felt.

A cold face will often indicate poor circulation, or a hot face may be a sign of the client’s age, and the onset of the menopause, which often affects body temperature regulation. In fact, hormones are one of the key factors in the skin’s behaviour, along with diet, water intake and environmental aspects and product use. (To refresh your knowledge of factors that influence the skin, see You and the skin and Related anatomy and physiology.)

Be aware that the client may be very adept at applying make-up, so the skin might look flawless and there may be no visible problems. However, with make-up removed, your light massage technique during cleansing, may tell a different story. Feel for cysts, raised moles and indentations. You are also feeling the firmness of the tissue, whether there is good muscular support, if the skin feels firm to the touch and springs back easily when manipulated. Older skins are less springy because the supporting collagen fibres begin to weaken, resulting in the skin and underlying tissue feeling a little slack. (For a full breakdown of skin types and questions to ask the client, see You and the skin.)

Another factor affecting the contours of the face is if the client has had extensive dental work done, or has recently had dentures fitted – this affects the gums, cheek muscles and jaw line, especially if the client is not yet comfortable with new teeth. If this is the case, avoid any heavy pressure along the lower face, as it will be uncomfortable for the client.

Once you have completed the facial examination, you are ready to discuss and then carry out facial treatments with the client’s permission.