

# Left Handed Beauty Therapists

Approximately 10% of the world's population are left handed, and for the most part, that 10% have been brushed off as the 'forgotten race'. In the past month alone I've interviewed three beauty therapists who happened to be left handers while hiring new staff for my salon, and that's what prompted me to write this article.

Throughout history, left-handedness was literally whipped out of you. If you've ever seen someone try to use their body in a way that is opposite to what is natural to them, you will agree that they look awkward and they certainly feel awkward too! Imagine trying to use a spatula with your opposite hand, it's easy to see how much of a struggle it would be. Left handers may need to work a little harder in this industry – But never fear, left can be right!

These days we are more accommodating, and being a lefty or a righty bares no impact on what career you can or cannot do. Because it isn't really a big deal anymore, left handed struggles can often be overlooked. Most of the time, right handers wouldn't even know there was a struggle to begin with! Accommodating to left handed beauty therapists needs to start at school so they can learn to perfect their technique from the beginning. My advice to all the left handed students is to speak up. You are there to learn so you need to ensure your teacher is aware that you are left handed! If you say nothing and struggle, the only career that will suffer is your own. It's better to make use of the opportunity while you are still in a learning environment; if that means receiving a little more help then so be it.

While most salon treatments are easily executed by left handed therapists, waxing is by far the most difficult treatment to learn and master. Manicures and pedicures can sometimes be a challenge; however simply switching the supplies/equipment to the other side of the table is often all that's needed for left handed nail therapists to work comfortably. Massage, tanning and facials will require little to no adaption. Waxing on the other hand (pun intended!) requires the entire waxing room to be flipped. Left handers work opposite to right handers, so they require a mirror image set up. Taking the time to get the room set up right will be worth it in the long run. While it might sound like a hassle initially, it's not actually that big of a task. Ensure you have a trolley on wheels so it can be easily moved around the room. Either turn the bed around or set the client up facing the other way by moving the pillow from one end of the bed to the other – simple as that.

Without an adjusted set up, 'mollydookers' aren't able to get their 'swing' and follow through happening, especially if they're confined in a corner. They often find their own bodies as a hazard, which can project a very awkward energy during a treatment, which is the last thing we want our clients to pick up on. Without being able to work to their full potential, left handed therapists will have a much higher chance of breaking hairs and lifting skin. They are also more likely to drip wax on the client, floor and trolley, from having to constantly walk around to the other side of the bed. Not only is this wasting precious time and making the job more difficult than it needs to be, it also amounts to more cleaning and an uncomfortable experience for the client. There is a certain elegance to waxing and it does not involve wax dripping all over the floor or client!

I often hear from managers who are frustrated with a left handed staff member whose technique is not up to scratch, however when I ask them if they have set their room up for a left hander, the answer is usually no. It is stressful enough for students when leaving beauty school to enter into the workforce - they don't need the added stress of their managers being frustrated over something that is actually out of their hands (pun intended again). As a salon manager or owner appointing new staff, you should always ask the person you're interviewing if they're left or right handed. Then when assessing their ability, give them the courtesy of a proper chance to show you their skills by adjusting the way the room is set up. They may be an exceptional therapist in every other way and so it's important to give them the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Looking back, I used to struggle to teach a left hander before I realised they needed a specific set up. It's really hard to mimic an action with the opposite side of the body, or with your less-dominant side. If you have a number of left handed staff, I recommend setting up a permanent left handed waxing room. It's your responsibility to provide a suitable working environment for your staff, and it's so easy to do. Personally, it makes me feel nauseous when I walk into a room arranged for a left handed beautician, for me the feng shui is all out, and the room feels completely 'wrong', as it should, because I am not left handed. At the end of the day a left handed room wouldn't/shouldn't feel right to me, just like a right handed room wouldn't feel right for a lefty. Allocating just one room to ensure all your therapists can work comfortably can make a huge difference. Let's make it easier for left handers and give them a real chance!

Lilliane Caron is Owner & Director of Caronlab Australia and Waxxxpress.

If you'd like to ask Lilliane for some advice on your own salon, email [info@caronlab.com.au](mailto:info@caronlab.com.au)