

Esthetician

Facials, peels and hair removal. Licensed in under a year, then you build a client list.

TYPICAL PAY

\$45,330

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$30k to \$82k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 2 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Spas, salons, medical offices, resorts, self-employed

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma or equivalent** Grade 12
Most states require it, and a minimum age. Texas sets the minimum at 17 to apply.
- 2 State-approved esthetics program** 4 to 12 months
Hours are set by each state. Texas requires a 750-hour esthetician course at a licensed school. Other states run anywhere from about 600 to over 1,000 hours.
- 3 Pass the state exams** Weeks after finishing
A written exam and, in most states, a practical exam where you perform treatments in front of an examiner.
- 4 Get licensed and start working** Immediate
A temporary license often prints as soon as you pass the practical, so you can start while the card is in the mail.
- 5 Build a client book** 2 to 3 years
The first two years are about getting people to rebook. That book, not the license, is what you are really building.

Pros and cons

- + Licensed and earning within a year, for a few thousand dollars
- + Strong forecast growth and jobs in every town
- + You can rent a room and work for yourself early
- Low, uneven pay until you have a client book
- Evenings and weekends are the work, so your time off is not other people's
- Hard on your hands, wrists and back

Optional boosts

Advanced chemical peels. Laser and light treatments. Microneedling and body treatments. Lash extensions and brow work.

Good to know

The required hours vary wildly by state

Texas requires a 750-hour esthetician course. Other states set the bar lower or considerably higher, and a few require over 1,000 hours for the same job. There is no national standard, which is the single str...

A laser is usually not yours to use

In many states laser hair removal and similar light treatments are considered a medical procedure, so an esthetician can only perform them under a physician's supervision, or not at all. The rules change s...

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Skincare Specialists (39-5094.00)
Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation: apply for an esthetician license
California Board of Barbering and Cosmetology: applicants
National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/esthetician>



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