

V O G U E

SUN DAYS

While slip, slop, slap may be routine among Australians, sun protection remains one of the most mystifying, complicated and fastest-moving areas of beauty. Remy Rippon asks the experts for their tips on covering up.

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B E A U T Y



Myth busters

Opinions on sun protection are just that: opinions. Here, the real experts separate fact from fallacy.

THE MYTH: ALL SUNSCREENS ARE CREATED EQUAL

THE REAL DEAL: Sunscreen regulations may take the crown for the least sexy topic in beauty, but that's not to say they should be dismissed. Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is strict when it comes to regulating sunscreen, meaning the products sold in Australia are among the best globally (to be sure, look for the 'Aust L' licence number, which means it has passed testing). Dismiss anything less than SPF 30 (this means it should block over 96 per cent of UV-B rays), and apply a liberal application of SPF 50 cream when stepping outdoors, particularly in summer. Broad-spectrum protection, meaning the sunscreen is also effective against UV-A rays, is paramount. "There needs to be specific broad-spectrum ingredients within them, such as octocrylene, octinoxate, octisalate, Tinosorb S and Uvinul A Plus, that are not only broad-spectrum but also photo-stable," says Tracey Beeby, global education ambassador for Ultraceuticals.

THE MYTH: SUNSCREENS LAST FOR YEARS

THE REAL DEAL: You wouldn't eat rotten veggies, so you should apply the same principle to all your beauty products, particularly one as important as sunscreen. Fun fact: if the main use for the product is sun protection, the TGA dictates that it must clearly indicate a used-by date. It's usually six months from the date of opening, but remember to check the dates seasonally and toss anything that's passed its expiry. Foundations or tinted moisturisers spiked with SPF but may not fall under the category of 'sunscreen' and therefore might not indicate expiry, so be sure to swap them out each year. The rule of thumb: if it's borderline, bin it.

THE MYTH: I DON'T BURN, I ONLY TAN

THE REAL DEAL: Of the experts interviewed, the response was unanimous: any form of tan is an indication of trauma and damage to the skin cells, even if redness or burning isn't visible. "External or superficial burning does not need to be present for the skin to have been damaged. UV-A rays, which are not felt as heat, are a prime example of this. These rays penetrate deeper into the skin, and while they do not superficially burn, they are responsible for most of the damage that is done with UV exposure," says Beeby. And the sun doesn't discriminate. "No-one is completely safe from the detrimental effects of the sun – anyone of any skin colour can suffer from

skin cancer," says Emma Hobson, education manager for the International Dermal Institute and Dermalogica. The takeaway? DIY your bronzed glow with a faux tan.

THE MYTH: I ONLY REALLY NEED TO PROTECT MY FACE

THE REAL DEAL: While our complexions are the most exposed to light and, in turn, the sun's rays, the most common mistake people make is slathering SPF only on their face. "It's equally important to protect the rest of the body as it is your face: skin cancer and its associated lesions can appear anywhere on the body and frequently do," says Hobson. Meanwhile, areas apart from the face that show the visible signs of ageing – hands, arms, décolletage and even knees – should also be well protected. "The skin on the body is also equally affected by the ageing process of the sun," says Hobson.

THE MYTH: SUNSCREEN GIVES ME BREAKOUTS

THE REAL DEAL: Okay, this isn't exactly a myth. Heavy sunscreen formulas, while affording effective protection, also have a tendency to cause a slew of skin issues, such as enlarged pores and breakouts. "Avoid vegetable oils such as jojoba and sesame oils in sunscreens, as these can clog pores," says Richard Parker, founder and director of research and development at Rationale, a brand at the forefront of sunscreen innovation. At risk of stating the obvious, only use a facial sunscreen on the face, as general body sunscreens are usually heavier. Hobson recommends a fragrance-free formula that's "compatible with your skin type and condition". A thorough double-cleanse in the evening will maintain glowing skin, sans breakouts.

THROW SOME SHADE: Cover all bases with these protective shields.



Invisible Zinc Facial Moisturiser SPF 30 UVA-UVB, \$35.



Ultraceuticals Ultra UV Protective Daily Moisturiser SPF 50+, \$74.



Rationale Beautiful Skin Luminizing Superfluid SPF50, \$85.



Dermalogica Pure Light SPF50, \$97.



Mecca Cosmetica To Save Face SPF 30 Mineral Gel Cream, \$38.



Feel Good Inc. Sunscreen Lotion SPF 50+, \$25.

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The D word

Are we getting enough vitamin D? Are we getting too much? Dermatologist Dr Belinda Welsh, from Victoria's Complete Skin Specialists, decodes the debate.

"Over the last few years, the vitamin D debate has led to confusion when it comes to balancing sun protection and the need for vitamin D, which is important for healthy bones. We can confidently say in Australia, during the summer months, when the UV index is often 3 or above, most adults produce sufficient vitamin D as a result of normal day-to-day outdoor activity. Generally, sunscreen use should not put people at risk of vitamin D deficiency. It is in the winter months that sunscreen is not needed

and some outdoor time is helpful to keep vitamin D levels in the healthy range.

"If you have good vitamin D levels over summer, your body can rely on this store for one to two months, so for most people, if their levels drop over winter, it can be corrected when UV levels are higher. With our high rates of skin cancer, sun protection and prevention remains a priority, even for those with vitamin D deficiency. If needed, oral vitamin D supplementation remains a good option."

BRONZE AGENTS: Faking it is the best policy when it comes to tanning. Here are the formulas to take you there.



St. Tropez Gradual Tan Plus Sculpt And Glow, \$36.



James Read Coconut Melting Tanning Balm, \$50.



Model Co Self-Tan Dry Body Oil, \$20.



St. Tropez Self Tan Express Bronzing Face Sheet Mask, \$13.

Turn back the clock

We know that sunscreen protects the skin, but what if the damage is already done? Here, the ingredients to reverse the after-effects of sun exposure.

1. LEARN TO LOVE TOPICAL RETINOIDS

Whether your skin is sun-damaged or not, any diligent skincare regimen should include some form of vitamin A, like tretinoin or retinol. "They can partially reverse skin changes induced by sun exposure," says Michelle Hunt, cosmetic and laser dermatologist and fellow of the Australasian College of Dermatologists, adding that topical tretinoin has even been shown to improve the overall appearance of sun-damaged skin, reducing fine lines, hyperpigmentation and skin laxity. A word of warning: retinoids actually increase sun sensitivity, so only use one in the evening and wash it off come morning, before applying sunscreen.

2. APPLY ANTIOXIDANTS

"Antioxidants like vitamin C, E, and B3 work by trapping free radicals, thereby reducing inflammation," says Hunt. "They help to protect the skin from UV-induced cellular damage."

3. KNOW YOUR ACIDS

Cell turnover is one of the most fundamental actions of healthy skin, and ageing is accelerated when it starts slacking off. Alpha-hydroxy acids (or AHAs) aim to counteract this by "improving skin texture and reducing the signs of ageing by hydrating the skin and prompting shedding of dead skin cells from the outer layer of the skin", explains Hunt.

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