

HEALTH REPORT





► that mop up damaging free radicals and help preserve the skin's springy collagen stores. Green People's organic SPF30 Facial Sun Cream and Environ's Rad Antioxidant Sunscreen both have a powerful antioxidant/vitamin blend that protects skin and gives it a fresh glow. Pre-holiday, it is also worth trying Dr Murad's punchy Pomphenol Sunguard Dietary Supplement, which is full of pomegranate extract. According to research, one tablet per day can increase the SPF of topical sunscreens by as much as 25 per cent – but remember that you still need cream. I also highly recommend having Murad's brilliant Sun Undone Facial from the Urban Retreat spa in London when you get home. Packed with antioxidants and a heavy dose of vitamin C, it brightens and repairs blotchy skin.

The last thing to consider about sunscreen is how to apply it. According to the American Academy of Dermatology, the majority of us are using half the recommended dose. To recap: you need to apply a teaspoon of sun cream to your face and a shot-glass-size amount to your body half an hour before going in the sun, and reapply every two to three hours, which can be a real drag when you're trying to relax.

Coming to the rescue of lazy sun worshippers everywhere, Harley Street heavyweight Dr Luca Russo has recently launched a game-changing sun-protection range that contains unique wash-on technology. Dr Russo's Sun Protective Day Cleanser SPF30 is a must. You rub it on your face and wash it off with water like a normal cleanser, but it leaves a super-thin film of SPF30 – great for covering hard-to-protect places such as the upper eyelids – which is dispensed via microscopic, positively charged capsules loaded with broadband sunscreens that latch on to our negatively charged skin in a binding effect. It's a brilliant concept: be ahead of the game before you've even left the bathroom.

While we're here, let's take a look at the bathroom shelf; odds are there's a bottle of self-tan tucked away somewhere. Current statistics value the self-tan market in the UK at more than £100 million and growing. It's not just a female thing either; one in 10 men now admits to buying self-tan too. This is largely because in recent years 'fake' tan has been shedding its Tango-ed stigma, evolving and rebranding into the more appealing sounding self-tan. Rather than smudges, mud-coloured ►

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► palms, stained bed sheets and the musty smell of DHA (dihydroxyacetone, the chemical derived from sugar cane that causes a browning reaction with the amino acids on the skin's surface), self-tans have cleaned up their act with sophisticated new formulas that are far more user-friendly.

Leading this wave of innovation is the sultan of self-tan, James Read, whose studio in London's Harvey Nichols is packed year-round. Paler celebrities such as Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, Lara Stone and actress Lily James are among his recent clients, highlighting a move away from the Donatella Versace weathered-mahogany look to a fresher, sun-kissed glow.

'Self-tans are becoming far more bespoke,' says Read. 'It's no longer about one shade fits all. My tans are customised to clients' lifestyles and skin tones; the aim is credibility. This summer there was a huge trend for freckles on the catwalk, so I'm currently working on a new paint-on freckle pen (out in spring 2016) to make the tan look more believable.'

Bronze medals also go to Fake Bake's Signature Drops and the Sienna X tan from mobile beauty company CitySwish: a no-mess, no-fuss, home-delivery service that comes with a pop-up tanning tent, spray gun and some of the best beauty technicians in town (ask for Francesca).

Another home-visiting star is the wonderful InParlour, run by the charming and discreet Amanda Harrington, who concocts her own tan suited to you, which she applies with the finest of brushes.

There's also good news for those who prefer the DIY method. A new generation of gradual tans, which develop so gently you genuinely can't mess them up, are taking the fear factor out of changing your skin colour. For me, they are the tanning equivalent of baby Botox; effective yet subtle, there is nothing 'fake' about them. I religiously follow Read's tanning tips. Top of his list is rigorous exfoliation, before and after. Try Molton Brown's Ylang-Ylang Comforting Body Polisher, a scrub that leaves skin so soft you barely need a moisturiser. 'If you are really desperate

to remove a streaky mistake, soak a flannel in lemon and lime juice, microwave for a few seconds, cool and then rub over skin to strip the offending mark,' Read advises.

But there should really be no need to do this if you are using a brand such as Tan-Luxe's Face Illuminating Serum, a complexion-enhancing elixir of which you simply add a drop or two into your moisturiser to discreetly ramp up the colour. Its magic ingredient is raspberry-seed oil, which is not only hydrating but also cancels out any whiff of DHA. Better still, it doesn't clog pores or highlight blackheads.

So I'm heading off to the Maldives in a week's time and, as packing commences, I'm surprised to admit that there will be some new self-tan stowaways squirrelled away in my wash bag. Me, the original anti-tanner, has been persuaded by the charms of the new tans, and while I'll still be reserving my spot under the parasol, you probably won't need sunglasses to look at my skin.

THE BEST PRODUCTS TO GET THE GLOW

In Shower Gradual Tan, £14.50, St Tropez. Easy to use, minimal mess.

Radiance Pulse Golden Glow Booster, £26, Clarins. Bronze by adding this to body cream.

Nude Tan Powder, £38, DiorSkin. The most flattering brush-on bronzer.

Gradual Tan for Face and Body, £42, Aerin. A lovely-smelling and subtle self-tan.

SPF50+ Clear Spray, £13.99, P20. Ideal for sporty types, it stays put for up to 10 hours.

For Men Bronzing Gel, £35, Tom Ford. The ultimate man tan has an all-important matt finish.

Lip Protection SPF30, £6, UltraSun. With blackcurrant oil to prevent inflammation.

Beauty Coach, £118 (at SpaceNK), Netatmo. Genius gadget that tracks your sun exposure with a sensor bracelet.

Tan Perfecting Enzyme Peel Mask, £15, James Read. Essential pre-tan prep.

The Reparative Face Sun Lotion, £90, Crème de la Mer. Protects from UV rays and tackles existing damage.

MD Sun Visor, £40 (at SpaceNK), Goldfaden. Oil-free mist to spray over make-up, created by a Miami-based skin expert.

Super Soin Solaire Milky Body Mist SPF30, £83, Sisley. One of the best spray SPF's around.

Delicious Rhubarb & Rose, £25, Molton Brown. Non-greasy lotion that sinks into skin.

Perfect Colour Face Self Tanner, £30, Chanel. A flawless, non-streaky formula.

BRONZE AGE

BEAUTY EXPERT OLIVIA FALCON ZONES IN ON THE NEXT GENERATION OF TANNING FIXES THAT LEAVE OTHERS IN THE SHADE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ENRIQUE BADULESCU

LET ME START by introducing myself. I'm the shady lady sitting underneath that poolside parasol, expertly coated top-to-toe in several brands of factor 50. I guess you could call me the white sheep of a herd of sun worshippers. While I might be the lily-skinned family joke – my married name is Tanner – I'm also a beauty editor, so I know a great deal more about the science of sun worship than most.

It was a trip to the dermatologist's office about 10 years ago that officially ended my supine sessions in the sun. 'A tan is an SOS signal from your skin; it's a scream for help,' the doctor warned sternly. 'Rather than a badge of honour, tan lines are signs your skin is in serious crisis,' confirms my current dermatologist, Dr Rachael Eckel. 'When skin is exposed to the sun, it fights back by producing a pigment called melanin, which turns it brown. A tan is a sure sign that you have damaged your skin's DNA. Sun exposure also causes muddy-brown sunspots and inflammation, which triggers irregular collagen production, creating wrinkles.'

So why exactly are so many of us still crazy for a tan? 'It is still perceived as a healthy and glamorous thing, a bit like a pretty girl smoking a cigarette on the bonnet of a sports car,' says Dr Richard Barlow, a South African dermatologist who has a special interest in skin cancer. 'You only need around five bad sunburns to constitute a serious risk of melanoma.'

Barlow, who offers Mohs microsurgery, a very precise way of cutting out and examining suspect moles at his Chelsea clinic, goes on: 'While I think the Australians have got the message (sun protection is enforced there with statutory legislation), here in the UK we still seem to be a bit muddled. Generally, there is little awareness about the dangers of the sun, as it is not baking hot 10 months of the year, but there is growing concern among doctors that some people have gone the other way and protected their

kids so much there is a rise in rickets in children due to lack of vitamin D (a vital nutrient needed for healthy bone growth, which we get from sunlight).'

What's the doctor's prescription for a safe dose of sunshine? 'Undoubtedly a little bit of sun is good for you,' says Barlow, 'and you can't supplement all your vitamin D with pills, as there is a special form of the vitamin that needs to be metabolised in the skin; five to 10 minutes of sunshine two to three times per week is necessary for that. If you are heading off on holiday, lie out before 11am or after 3pm when rays are not quite so fierce, and always pack a broad-spectrum sunscreen.'

Now, to sunscreen. Forget about frying your skin – visiting a pharmacy can fry your mind, as sunscreen brands seem to multiply like gremlins every summer. Having tried pretty much every product on the market, my current holiday favourites include Sisley Super Soir Solaire Body Mist SPF30 (great

the ingredient that sits on top of the skin as a physical block to the sun's rays and which the industry standard usually sets between 18 and 25 per cent. Ouch.

There are two types of sun block. Physical ones, such as the aforementioned zinc and titanium oxide, are basically finely ground rocks that stay on the skin's surface and reflect harmful rays. Their downside is some formulas can feel gloopy and make you look ghostly white, which may be why Alba's people tried to be clever by reducing the content in their product. There are also chemical sunscreens. Originally formulated in the 1930s, these are more aesthetically appealing because they work under the skin to create a chemical reaction that makes sunlight less harmful to the cells, but they can be irritating and in some cases allergenic.

The good news is that in recent years there has been a considerable amount of fine-tuning to make sunscreen a lot more user-friendly. The advent of nanotechnology, a technique used in

IF THERE'S A CHOICE BETWEEN A SEXY CELEBRITY BRAND SUNSCREEN AND A BORING SCIENTIFIC ONE, I GO WITH THE GEEKS

protection for pale skin), and La Roche-Posay's Anthelios XL range for my kids. It contains thermal spring water, selium and a new ingredient called baicalin, a soothing antioxidant championed in Chinese medicine.

My first rule in selecting a sunscreen is that if there's a choice between a sexy celebrity brand or a boring scientific bottle, I go with the geeks. A recent case in point is Hollywood goddess Jessica Alba's The Honest SPF30, which caused a social-media furore when angry customers posted snaps of their sunburnt body parts (quite funny) and those of their small kids (quite horrifying). Reports say this could have been because of a reduction in the zinc oxide content to 9.3 per cent. This is

the most advanced skincare brands to shrink potent ingredients so they can be fast-tracked into the deepest layers of the skin, has also been employed in sunscreen to create more sophisticated textures that don't block pores or leave any tell-tale chalky residue. Just try the super-lightweight Exuviance Sheer Daily Protector SPF50 or Sarah Chapman's Skinesis Skin Insurance SPF30 and you'll see what I'm talking about. Indeed, the smartest suncare brands are morphing into a sunscreen/skincare hybrid, designed not just for a two-week holiday but to be worn every day as part of a regular skincare routine.

Antioxidants are vital ingredients to look out for. These are the good guys ➤