



burn out

Ignore the influencers – there is nothing cool about “natural” tanning, says *Stephanie Darling*.

First, a harsh truth. A tan is a physical and biological response to DNA damage from ultraviolet radiation – end of story.

The trend on social media of promoting physical tan lines resulting from sun exposure is alarming, to say the least. On TikTok and Instagram, young creators are sharing their “tanning optimisation routines”, including a “when to flip over” guide, depending on the daily UV index.

This UV index was developed as a guide to discourage over-exposure to the sun and warn about the most damaging times for skin. Now there are apps telling users when to go out in the sun to get the “best” real tanning results. Instead of slip, slop, slap (with SPF50+ sunscreen) it has become baste, roast, burn, turn. Last year, an investigation found that tanning beds, often located in private homes, were being advertised on social media despite a ban on their commercial use being in place in NSW for a decade.

Dermatologist Dr Ritu Gupta is concerned by the social media trend. “Every tan is a sign of damage to the skin cells,” she says, “and the end point can be melanoma and death. Don’t die for a suntan. How about embracing a peaches-and-cream complexion?”

Of course, there are myriad safer ways to bring a glow to your skin, regardless of the weather, including fake tans from brands such as St. Tropez, Three Warriors and Bondi Sands that will give you a suntanned look without the skin damage. For an even quicker fix, try a bronzing gel or powder that doesn’t need time to develop and will wash off in the shower.

Jimmy Coco, who has been working his fake-tan magic for over 20 years, including with the Kardashians, hails the mood-boosting power of a fake tan. As client Kylie Jenner once said on the podcast *Therapuss with Jake Shane*, “Sometimes I think I’m depressed. Then I get a spray tan and I’m like, ‘I was just pale.’”

To achieve a flawless fake tan, prepare properly by exfoliating and waxing or shaving 24 hours before application, focusing particularly on dry areas like elbows, knees, ankles and feet. On the day of the tan, steer clear of moisturiser, body oil, deodorant and perfume as they can affect the absorption of the tanning product. And if you are tanning your face, go make-up free, as cosmetics can create a barrier.

Beginners should opt for a light to medium colour; you can always build it up by layering several coats. Follow the post-spray instructions, washing off with lukewarm water in the timeframe suggested (generally two hours) and avoiding soap as the “tan” will keep developing for up to 24 hours. Pat your skin dry, don’t rub.

Finally, to get a longer-lasting tan and minimise skin damage, moisturise daily with a tan extender. Our favourite is Coco & Eve Firming and Tan Prolonging Peptide Body Oil (\$50).



ask STEPH

What is the latest nail fashion?

Shiny, milky short nails are on trend.

Get this look – and nails that last about three weeks – with a BIAB (Builder in a Bottle) e-file manicure finished in a barely there shade. In

Sydney try Sindoba, and in Melbourne visit Zoe Beauty Bar.

Send questions via Instagram, @mrssdarling.

the LOVE list



Lips really feel the winter chill, so here are three products – a repairing peptide treatment and a pair of pigmented oils – to help keep them in good shape.

Dr. Dennis Gross Derminifusions Plump + Repair Lip Treatment in Pink, \$53.

M.A.C Lipglass Cushion High-Pigment Oil in Honeysuckle, \$40. Clarins Lip Comfort Oil in Cherry, \$52.