



BLUSH BASICS

Natural-looking cheek color, step by step

If you've ever wondered how to judge whether a blush's tint is right for your skin or when to choose a powder formulation over a cream or a gel, read on. *Martha Stewart Living* asked experts to demystify this cosmetic staple.

SELECTING A COLOR

"There is no one right shade," says Mary Curran, *Martha's* stylist and a hair and makeup artist in New York City. "A variety of colors can look good on the same skin tone." Colors that are wrong will be immediately obvious, appearing very light and washed-out, overly dark, or way too bright. The ideal shades will be sheer and natural—just enough to add some life to the face, but not enough that anyone can really tell you're wearing it. Don't be afraid to mix colors from time to time, Curran says. "Blend two tones together to give yourself a slightly different look, or to add the pop of a brighter shade to your usual pink for more drama at night," she says.



HOW TO APPLY

When you smile, the area of the cheek that puffs up is the apple," Curran explains. "That's where I want to apply color." From there, blend it along the cheekbones. For powder blushes, use a fan-size brush. (The one with your compact is a bit too small, which I make blush look splotchy," Curran says; reserve it for on-the-go touch-ups.) Apply creams and gels with fingers or a makeup sponge. Dampening the sponge will help cream blush go on smoother and give you more time to blend gel blush before it dries.

POWDER, CREAM, OR GEL?

Powder: "This is the easiest kind to use, and it works for all skin types," explains Kimara Ahnert, a makeup artist in New York City. **Cream:** If you have normal to dry skin, a cream blush can be a nice option. But if your skin is on the oily side, skip it: The blush will be absorbed too quickly, and the color will fade away. **Gel:** This is a good choice for normal to oily skin, but it's tricky to apply. "It dries very quickly, so you have to work fast," Ahnert says. Another caveat: "It doesn't move well on dry skin, and it settles into fine lines," she says.

PRODUCTS TO TRY

- Clockwise from top left:*
- MAC** Sheertone Blush in Tenderling (\$19); powder formula
 - PAULA DORF** Perfect Color Blush in Angel (\$32); cream formula
 - COVERGIRL & OLAY** Simply Ageless Sculpting Blush in Royal Plum (\$11); cream formula
 - SMASHBOX** O-Glow Intuitive Cheek Color (\$26); gel formula
 - BOBBI BROWN** Pot Rouge for Lips and Cheeks in Powder Pink (\$22); cream formula
 - LANCÔME** Color Design Blush in Chic Cassis (\$27); cream formula
 - LANCÔME** Blush Subtil in Bronze Glow (\$30); powder formula
 - MAC** Duo Fibre Face Brush No. 187 (\$42)



SPRINKLE IT ON Scientists say that, with a little flaxseed, we can hydrate our skin from the inside.

A study by German researchers published earlier this year in the *British Journal of Nutrition* found that women who took two-gram supplements of flaxseed oil daily had significantly reduced redness and skin inflammation and increased skin hydration.

"Flaxseed contains linoleic acid, which is needed to make ceramides," says Leslie Baumann, a dermatologist at the University of Miami, who was not involved in the study. "And ceramides help the skin hold on to water." She recommends eating flaxseed over taking supplements, although it's important to grind the seeds first so the body can absorb their nutrients. Try sprinkling ground flaxseed onto cereal or yogurt or baking it into breads.

Martha's pick



This hand cream is a multi-tasker—no wonder it's one of Martha's favorites. The lightly scented lotion contains broad-spectrum sunscreen, which helps prevent sun spots from forming on the backs of the hands. Glycerin in the formula keeps skin hydrated and soft. And a mix of antioxidants, including vitamins B₅, C, and E, protects against damage by free radicals.

CLARINS Age-Control Hand Lotion SPF 15, \$30, clarins.com

SUNSCREEN: STILL ON CALL, EVEN IN FALL



Sunscreen and summer are nearly synonymous, but what happens to those bottles of SPF when the days get shorter? "Don't put the sunscreen away," says Elizabeth Hale, clinical associate professor of dermatology at the New York University School of Medicine. During the warm months, UVB rays are strongest. Those sunburn-causing rays don't reach us as much during fall and winter, but UVA rays do.

"It's those deeply penetrating UVA rays—which can even go through glass and clouds—that contribute most to skin aging, wrinkles, brown spots, and the development of skin cancer," Hale says.

For this reason, it's important to wear sunscreen year-round and to choose a formula that provides broad-spectrum protection. (Check the label for good UVA blockers such as avobenzone, zinc oxide, and Mexoryl.)

In general, a single morning application to face, hands, and any other exposed skin should suffice. If you sit all day in an office with a very bright window or if you drive a lot, reapply every few hours, Hale says. If you jog or do outdoor sports, choose a thick formula that acts as a barrier against wind. And if you go skiing, apply as much sunscreen as you would at the beach.

PRODUCTS TO TRY

CLINIQUE Superdefense SPF 25 Age-Defense Moisturizer, \$43

KIEHL'S All-Sport "Non-Freeze" Face Protector SPF 30, \$19

OLAY Regenerist UV Defense Regenerating Lotion SPF 50, \$30

SEASONAL BEAUTY

SKIN strategies

Dry skin is not just uncomfortable; it is also weaker and more vulnerable to bacteria and allergens. "Adding moisture back in will help restore the barrier and keep skin healthier," says Amy Wechsler, a dermatologist in New York City. At this time of year, as humidity levels go down and our exposure to dry indoor heat goes up, skin needs increased help to prevent it from being sapped of moisture. Here's how to ensure that skin stays supple in the cold-weather months.

COVER UP Wechsler suggests adding an extra layer of moisturizer to exposed skin before venturing outdoors. To create a serious barrier against the elements (and prevent chapping and redness), use products that contain petrolatum, beeswax, or zinc oxide.

AVOID HOT SHOWERS Hot water dries out skin, so take only one not-so-steamy shower a day, and limit tub time. "If you really love baths, keep the water warm, not hot, fill it with bath oil to hydrate skin, and get out after 10 or 15 minutes," Wechsler says.

USE A GOOD MOISTURIZER According to Wechsler, there are several moisturizer ingredients worth seeking out. Her favorites include glycerin, hyaluronic acid, safflower oil, shea butter, olive oil, and sweet almond oil. Look for them on labels to make certain that you're buying an effective cream. For an inexpensive option, she suggests filling a spray bottle with safflower oil to spritz on skin.

SEAL IN WATER Apply moisturizer right after you shower. Damp skin acts like a sponge, soaking up moisture and retaining it.

PRODUCTS TO TRY

CETAPHIL Moisturizing Cream (\$14) contains glycerin and sweet almond oil.

NEUTROGENA Intensive Moisture Wrap (\$11) includes glycerin.

L'OCITANE Ultra-Rich Body Cream (\$39) is made with shea butter, glycerin, and sweet almond oil.



Text by Sally Wadyka