

steps to healthy sun-kissed skin

We asked skincare experts to give us their golden rules for enjoying the sun while protecting our skin

DOUBLE UP YOUR PROTECTION

A sunscreen with a high sun protection factor (SPF) is a must, but focusing solely on the number can lull you into a false sense of security, warn our experts. 'Traditionally, SPF has measured protection against the UVB rays that cause burning and skin cancer, but UVA rays can damage DNA and are a major contributor of skin ageing, so it's essential to choose products that protect against both,' says consultant dermatologist Dr Nicholas Lowe (drnicklowe.com). Recent EC guidelines have clarified sunscreen labelling, making it easier to choose a product that offers all-round protection. Look for a standardised UVA/UVB logo (which follows a guideline ratio for UVA protection of one-third of the UVB) and an indication of whether the product provides low (SPF 6-14), medium (15-29), high (30-49) or very high protection (60+).

TRY:

- **Dermalogica Extra Rich Faceblock SPF30**, £30.35 (dermalogica.co.uk). Nourishes dry skin while providing UVA and UVB protection.
- **Garnier Ambre Solaire Clear Protect Spray**, £12.99. Protects without leaving white marks.
- **Ahava Sun Protection Anti-Ageing Moisturiser**, £21.50 (ahava.co.uk). Defends skin with sunscreens, Dead Sea minerals and vitamins.

MOISTURISE YOUR SKIN

According to skincare professionals, what you apply to your skin once the sun sets is crucial to maintaining the appearance and minimising the damaging effects of a tan. 'Aftersuns are specifically formulated to intensely hydrate, prolong and enhance the way your skin looks with a tan,' says Sally Penford of the Dermal Institute. 'Their high concentration of antioxidants is designed to regenerate your skin and offset damage caused by the sun.' And it's for this reason that Dr Lionel de Benetti, head of research and development for Clarins, believes that aftersun should be thought of as a prescription.

'For maximum benefits apply immediately after sun exposure and, like a course of medical treatment, use regularly and finish the tube even when you're not spending any more time in the sun,' he says.

TRY:

- **Clarins After Sun Moisturiser Self-tanning Action**, £15.66 (020 7307 6700). Replenishes and adds radiance to sun-exposed skin.
- **Liz Earle Sun Shade Botanical Aftersun Gel**, £12.75 (lizearle.com). Contains high levels of vitamin E to counteract sun damage.
- **Nivea Sun Regenerating Aftersun**, £6.95. Cools, hydrates and repairs skin.

SUPPLEMENT YOUR DIET

'When taken orally, antioxidants such as beta-carotene and lycopene have been shown to build up the skin's tanning pigments and protect against UV rays by neutralising the free radicals that occur during sun exposure and cause DNA damage in skin cells,' says nutritionist Naomi Beinart, who prescribes dietary supplements to minimise sun sensitivity and help the skin develop a tan.

Another supplement advocate is Dr Leslie Baumann, dermatologist and author of *The Skin Type Solution* (Bantam), who believes that, like a healthy diet, regular doses of 'sun pills' boost the body's antioxidant levels and can strengthen its immunity to the sun. 'To make a real difference to the way your skin reacts to the sun they must be taken at least two weeks before and then daily throughout your holiday,' she says.

TRY:

- **Solgar Astaxanthin Complex**, £12.69 (solgar.co.uk). An antioxidant-rich marine extract that reduces the inflammation that leads to sunburn.
- **Imedeen Tan Optimizer**, £37.68 (imedeen.co.uk). Helps develop a long-lasting tan.
- **Rodial Skinny Beach Sticks**, £49 (rodial.co.uk). Boost the colour of tanned skin and protects against damage from free radicals. ☛