



Hand moisturisers and sunscreens

In order to best protect and preserve your hand's skin quality it is advised that a hand moisturiser and broad spectrum sunscreen be utilised daily. Hands often show a higher degree of photoageing than other areas of exposed skin, most likely due to neglecting to apply sunscreen and leaving hands exposed to UVA while driving.

Hand moisturisers

Hand moisturisers provide the hands with a day-to-day reparative effect. Dry skin has the appearance of unhealthy skin, is prone to disease and best kept moisturised. Skin is more easily wrinkled when dry but more supple and youthful when moist. Dryness is a sign of ageing, or more particularly photoageing, therefore the use of moisturisers becomes a necessary camouflage as the years pass. In order to be effective, the use of a hand moisturiser must be repeated at least daily to maintain this altered appearance.

Healthy skin has an innate barrier function that allows it to survive in a world full of environmental insults such as chemicals, potentially invading organisms (such as bacteria, viruses and fungi) and sunshine. In order for the skin to remain in optimal health it forms a slightly acidic and structurally solid barrier which still allows it to communicate with the outside world (for example our sense of touch) and to provide a perfect water balance to the skin and the body as a whole. Many times it is the breaching of this skin barrier that produces a dry cracked unhealthy skin and this is what moisturisers seek to address by rebalancing this delicate barrier.

Sunscreens

Sunscreen is the most important anti-ageing cosmetic that you can utilise. It allows the skin the luxury of time to repair itself without continued sun-produced injury. There are various bases for sunscreens suitable for specific skin types. Non-comedogenic (non-pimple forming) sunscreens exist for acne patients, more moisturising bases exist for those with dry skin, while waterproof and high protection sunscreens suit people who enjoy an active, outdoors lifestyle.

There are some basic rules that should be followed when using sunscreen.

1. Put enough on. Most studies suggest that only 25 to 50% of the required amount of sunscreen is being used by people applying it to their bodies. A complete application of sunscreen should be 30g (1oz). There is a teaspoon rule for sunscreen application which suggest half a teaspoon each for face and neck, right arm and left arm and a full teaspoon amount each for the front of the body the back of the body the right leg and the left leg.
2. Apply the sunscreens 15 to 30 minutes before going out into the sun and reapply to expose sites 15 to 30 minutes after Sun exposure begins. If there is vigorous activity that potentially removes a sunscreen this needs to be reapplied every two to four hours.
3. Remember that UVB has a definite peak in summer and in the middle of the day and it is this wavelength that the SPF rating is measuring. UVA is more deeply penetrating and ageing and is not stopped by cloud cover or window glass and is present all day long and through most of the year. Broad-spectrum sunscreens should be used whenever possible

There are two main types of sunscreen available:

Physical sunscreens - are effective against a high portion of the ultraviolet and some visible and infrared radiation. They can be made from a number of agents but most commonly zinc and titanium dioxide are used. These sunscreens were once characterised by their visibility to the naked eye but recent advances in technologies means that often they are now elegant, virtually invisible, high protection sunscreens.

Chemical sunscreens - are those most utilised. For many years these sunscreens only really protected against UVB with little effective UVA protection, this was only achieved with physical sunscreens. There are many recent advances providing very good long range chemical blockers that are effective against the UVA wavelength. When a sunscreen protects against both UVA and UVB it is termed broad spectrum, and it is these broad spectrum sunscreens that should always be utilised.

Sunscreens in makeup - shouldn't be relied on. Unfortunately, the SPF of suncreening agents in cosmetics is not always stated and it cannot be assumed that the makeup will protect you unless two criteria are met: that the SPF is indicated with sufficient value, and that it is broad spectrum. Ideally sunscreen is best applied under your foundation as the application, when mixed into a makeup, does not usually supply effective protection.