

GO FOR A SAFER REAL TAN

There's no such thing as a safe tan – but for those of you who still can't resist going for gold, here's the best advice for damage limitation

Q How can I get a safe tan?
A Dermatologist Daniel Creamer, of King's College Hospital in London, says: 'I can't advise anyone on how to get a safe tan, because there's no such thing. Any

suntan means that the skin has been damaged. And there's no safe amount of time you can spend out in the sun. If you wear an appropriate form of sun cream and the right clothing and you don't get a tan, then that's relatively safe. But everyone should avoid the sun between 11am and 3pm. If you're willing to take a chance

and get a tan, just make sure you don't burn, as this is the highest risk factor for causing malignant melanoma, the most dangerous type of skin cancer.

Q How can a cream let me tan without burning?
A Sun filters block two types of rays: UVB and UVA. UVB rays cause burning and melanoma, and it's protection from these that is measured by SPF ratings. UVA rays give a tan as well as causing wrinkles and other non-melanoma types of skin cancer. The adverse effects of UVA can take years to show up, but anyone who tans a lot can expect to become familiar with the leathery look.

Q Is there any point using an SPF of more than 16?
A Twice as many harmful rays can get through an SPF 16 cream than a factor 32 sunscreen. So even if you don't burn, your skin will suffer twice the amount of damage.

Q How much sunscreen do I need to cover my body?
A A good handful. SPFs are calculated on the assumption that you'll cover yourself very liberally. Sun products aren't cheap, which is why it's tempting to be stingy with them, but when you consider the damage your skin could suffer, it's well worth the cost.

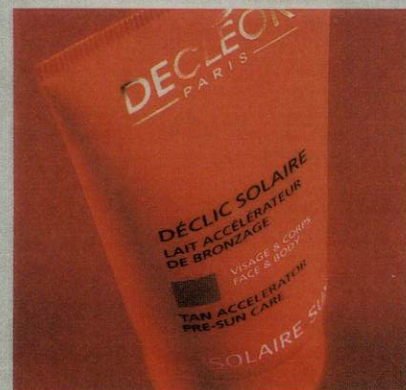
Q How do I know my skin type?
A Choose the description that best suits your skin:
Very fair: Always burns, never tans.
Fair: Burns easily, tans with difficulty.
Medium: Burns and tans equally.
Olive: Tans easily, rarely burns.
Dark skinned (such as Asian): Rarely burns.
Black skinned: Almost never burns.

Q How long can I stay in the sun?
A This depends on your skin type and how much protection you're wearing. One way to gauge it is to remember that at the

height of summer in the UK, people with fair skins burn within 10 minutes. It's up to 45 minutes for people with medium complexions, and up to one and a half hours for olive skins. The closer you get to the equator or the higher the altitude, the faster you'll burn. So if you're on holiday in Africa, you'll burn faster than you would in, say, Torquay. If you use an SPF 15, this means it takes your skin 15 times longer to burn than it would with no protection. If in doubt, wear the highest possible factor. Sun protection products aren't supposed to encourage people to stay out longer in the sun, the point is to reduce the damage you incur while you're out there.

Feature: Alex Tate. Still-life photos: Jonathan Russell Reed

BEST BUYS UNDER THE SUN Here's our pick of the cleverest new tanning products



Decleor D  lic Solaire Tan Accelerator, £16 for 75ml. Apply for five days prior to sun exposure to boost the skin's melanin production and help promote a longer-lasting tan.



Sun Sense Ultra Protection, £10.95 for 200ml. Some people suffer an unpleasant skin reaction to the common sun lotion ingredient PABA. This water-resistant lotion is both PABA- and lanolin-free.



Sun Swipe Sunscreen Towlette, £1.99. When you're on the go, forget lugging around a bottle of suntan lotion. Now you can get head-to-toe sun protection in one handy waterproof, PABA-free wipe.



Piz Buin Oil-Free Sun Lotion, £10.69 for 200ml. Great for oily backs and chests, this oil-free, water-resistant sun lotion won't clog pores or aggravate spots.



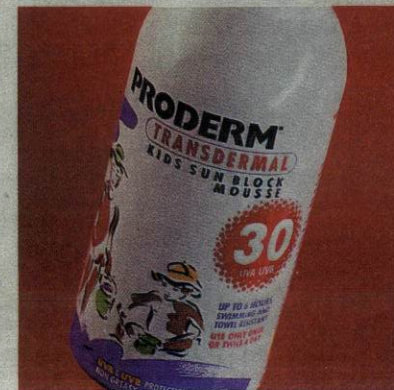
Sun Sense Daily Face, £8.95 for 75g. If your skin is prone to spots, you'll know that ordinary suntan lotions can cause an outbreak. This SPF 30 product is oil-free and can be worn alone or under make-up.



Lanc  me Aqua Protect Body and Hair Instant Sun Spritz, £16 for 50ml. Don't let the sun turn your hair to straw. This two-in-one product protects hair and skin from damaging rays.



Variosun Classic, £11.99 for 150ml. As your holiday progresses, you may want to alter your SPF. Simply twist the dial to select a factor between 2 and 30 and the bottle will dispense your chosen strength.



Proderm Transdermal Kids Sun Block Mousse, £12.99 for 150ml. Lasts for six hours and sinks in without a trace, so children – and adults – avoid being covered in a crusty coating of sand as they play on the beach.

YOUR TAN PLAN: WHAT FACTOR TO USE

NORTHERN EUROPE		
	First 3 days	4 days +
CHILDREN	25	25
VERY FAIR/FAIR	25	15
MEDIUM/OLIVE	15	15

SOUTHERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN			TROPICS/AFRICA/AUSTRALIA		
	First 3 days	4 days +		First 3 days	4 days +
CHILDREN	35	25	CHILDREN	35+	25
VERY FAIR/FAIR	25	15	VERY FAIR/FAIR	35	25
MEDIUM/OLIVE	15	15	MEDIUM/OLIVE	25	15