

The Naked Face

There may be horrified women out there as this article is being read. The thought of a naked face is foreign and unheard of to some. Just imagining the need to rush out of the house in the middle of the night without an ounce of makeup leaves a few people in a cold sweat. I'm sure we all know someone like this – the one who never leaves the house without lipstick in hand, a mascara tube tucked into her purse or a blush compact in her back pocket. These women are always prepared and are determined to be seen as the perpetually put-together woman. I respect these women, although I am not one of them.

I cherish the days where I can go out and about without a stitch of makeup, when I can rub my eyes without fear of smudging mascara, when I can kiss my boyfriend without having him make a face and then rub off the gloss I left behind. This also means that at the end of the day, I don't have to spend an extra five minutes washing it off. Pure bliss in my books!! But admittedly, I don't always feel as put together without my 'face' on. People ask if I'm tired or sick because they see the dark circles under my eyes and I sometimes take a second look at the uneven skin tone that stares back at me from lighting that's not as warm as the light in my bathroom at home. Generally, I feel comfortable without any makeup, but I definitely see (and proclaim) its benefits too.

So here's the happy medium – we'll call it the Naked Face or the No Makeup Makeup Look. You may have heard of it before or seen it without even knowing it. It's a polished face that doesn't scream layers of makeup, color or enhancement. It's fresh, simple and pretty and can often be seen in skin care ads in magazines or tv where you're meant to believe that the woman just woke up and looked that way naturally. It is soft and subtle and flatters all.

So how do you get it? How do you take your makeup from over the top to barely there without sacrificing what you may feel is needed before you are ready to face the world?

The first step is skipping the heavy foundation. Using a tinted moisturizer is a lighter, softer alternative that still provides a bit of coverage without looking like you've applied a layer of product on your face. Tinted moisturizers can be found in varieties that suit your skin type, in a range of colors to match. They are, essentially, a foundation that has been diluted by moisturizer. So you are getting the hydration you need with an even complexion along with it. Unlike traditional foundations, tinted moisturizers are best applied with your fingers, massaging and blending it onto the skin until there are no visible start or stop lines.

The next step in creating your fresh look is injecting some color back into the cheeks. You want to look naturally flushed, as if you just came in from a brisk walk outside. This flush usually occurs on the "apples" or fullest part of the cheeks. Powder blush is more commonly used for day to day makeup wear, but for this type of effortless look, I'd recommend using a cream blush in a semi-bright color. This should also be applied with the fingertips to get a blended effect. Dot the cream blush on the apples of the cheeks and along the cheekbones and gently blend until no dots are left and all you see is a fresh glow.

Once you've finished with the skin and cheeks, move up to the eyes, where you only need to use the squeeze of an eyelash curler to give them an open and bright appearance. Be careful not to pinch your eyelids and be sure to use this tool prior to applying any mascara. Mascara for this look is definitely optional. The key is keeping it simple and fresh!

There is no nicer way to finish the Naked Face than with delightfully smooth and hydrated lips. After you brush your teeth, gently rub the toothbrush over the lips to exfoliate any dead skin off and to stimulate circulation. Follow up with a dab of lip balm. When you are ready to walk out the door, swipe a thin layer of gloss for highlight and shine and feel good about looking so fresh, yet so "naked".