

Putting your Best Face Forward

I just went through a drive-thru and came across what I call “the Mask”. The craziest part about this story is that it was not a little old lady with poor eye sight who sported this makeup no-no. It was a gorgeous teenage girl who had foundation and/or bronzer that was so orange and unblended that it looked like she was wearing a mask. It was startling and distracting all at once.

I often wonder why women (of all ages) struggle so much with finding a great foundation but it’s a common question that is asked of me. I do realize that it’s not the easiest thing to do either. With the fluorescent lighting and exceptionally tiny hand held mirrors at cosmetic counters or department stores, it’s not surprising that the colors tend to look a little “off” once on the skin. This doesn’t help anyone feel confident about leaving the store and using it on a day to day basis.

But if you knew what you were looking for and then how to apply your new purchase, I can only hope that you would be inspired to use it daily. I am sure that there are women who feel like foundation is heavy, excessive or over the top. But it doesn’t have to be and believe me it can do wonders to improve the overall look of the face while at the same time looking flawless and natural.

Many people comment on my skin and how smooth it looks so they’re slightly shocked when I inform them that they could name almost any type of product and I would most likely be wearing it on my face. My trick is a great brush, a light touch and the right type of foundation for my skin type to start with.

Traditionally, women apply foundation with their fingers or a sponge. To me, it’s a case of good, better, best. Fingers are good, sponges are better, but a foundation brush is best. Foundation brushes are typically made of synthetic or nylon hairs and are designed to be used with liquids or creams. Starting from the top of the face and working your way down, you can ‘paint’ the foundation on and create a smooth surface, blending out the edges so there is no visible line.

You don’t need to use large quantities of product or use heavy strokes, but if you feel like you need more coverage, you can reapply your foundation with the brush and still not get a thick, caked –on look. This is your best bet and while it may seem like an expensive purchase, when taken care of, your brush will last through many applications and years of use.

When it comes to purchasing a great foundation, you need to factor in the type of skin you have as well as the amount of coverage you want. It is not unlike finding a good moisturizer. If your skin is dry, you need to use a creamy, hydrating foundation that will provide it with moisture. If your skin is oily, you need a foundation that will reduce the oil production, thus lessening any shiny effect. A powder based product might be right for you. If your skin is ‘normal’ then you have more options and just need to consider the finished effect that you want.

With most foundations, there are options for how much coverage you get. A light coverage foundation or tinted moisturizer will even the skin tone out slightly but will allow freckles, beauty marks and blemishes to be visible. Medium coverage is most common and eliminates visible discoloration but does not appear heavy. It is a very natural finish.

Heavy coverage tends to look and feel heavy and will often have a very matte effect. It reduces redness and blemishes but needs to be blended, blended and blended. This type of foundation needs to match your skin type spot on.

Once you know the type of look you want and have determined your skin type and what it needs, you need to head to a store that allows you to sample the products and or return them should it not work for you. Don't be scared to ask questions and test the foundation. One of the best ways to test the foundation is take a q-tip and swipe 1 of 3 colors onto the jawline. The color that disappears into your skin is the one for you! Look at these swipes in natural light as well to ensure that you are picking the correct shade.

Now that you know how to test foundation, what to look for and how to apply it once you've found your color match, you are armed and equipped to have flawless looking skin! There are no more excuses for sporting a mask!