

How to Apply Sunscreen: The Devil is in the Detail

By [Darina](#) / July 9, 2020

Do you think you know how to apply sunscreen correctly? This is a tricky question considering that we ALL think we do. Trust me, I also thought I knew in the past.

Have you heard someone tell you “I got burned, even though I was wearing sunscreen”? or my all time favorite, “There was no sun and I still got burned”?

I hear them all the time and I decided to write this post and explain why you might feel that your sunscreen is not working; if you ever applied it in the first place 😊.

Side note: You might be using it the wrong way!

I have my own experience with not applying sunscreen and it was horrible. You see, I ended up with second degree burns on my back. I was only able to sleep on my belly for 2 weeks (not a position I like). The memories of my best friends back then – [Aloe Vera gel](#) and yogurt are still very vivid. Since then, I have learnt my lesson.

Pin this in your Health Board for later!

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Here are 8 questions to consider when it comes to sunscreen usage!

1. Do you apply sunscreen beforehand?

Most people apply [sunscreen](#) once they start sunbathing. This is a huge NO NO because the sunscreen needs to get absorbed by the skin. This is how the lotion you have applied creates a protective layer against the UV rays.

The FDA recommends sunscreen application 30 min before sun exposure. This way you get to be protected even in the car ride before sunbathing.

Remember that the UVA rays are the most dangerous ones and they can even penetrate windows, so if you have applied a Broad-spectrum sunscreen which protects from the UVB rays as well, then you are good to go.

If you have some questions about the different UV rays you can check a more detailed explanation [here](#).

2. Do you reapply in time?

The FDA recommends that [sunscreen](#) must be applied every 2-3 hours. This does not apply to me because of my sensitive skin, I start feeling my skin dehydrated and dry after the first hour of exposure. Thus, I have to apply way before the second hour to prevent any sunburn.

It is important to remember that you need to pay attention to the signs of your body, don't just assume that applying once will protect you for the whole day.

When we sweat or get in and out of the water the sunscreen we applied has rubbed off. Even if you see on the label “waterproof/water resistant” that doesn’t mean that one application will last for the whole day.

Beware that this kind of labeling can be misleading and there should be extra info regarding how long this sunscreen is waterproof for. For example, a description like *“waterproof for 40 min of swimming”* should be visible on the label.

If you have any questions about how to pick the best sunscreens, check out my post [here](#).

3. Did you choose the correct SPF index?

What I mean by this is that you need to consider your skin type, the season, and the place you are. If you are pale and tend to get red in no time, then it is highly recommended you apply sunscreen with a 50+ SPF index.

On the other hand, if you don't get burned easily that doesn't mean you don't need sunscreen, it just means that you don't have to apply such a high index. Up to 30+ is fine.

Think about the [UVA](#) rays that are present ALL year long! They penetrate the skin and do invisible damage now; but later on it might cause the skin to get saggy or worse case scenario skin condition issues.

Remember that the FDA recommends an SPF index of 15+ or higher.

I have written a more detailed post about it, called- [SPF index: Everything you need to know and why](#), check it out, you will find plenty of relative info!

4. Do you apply everywhere?

Many times people forget to apply [sunscreen](#) everywhere and end up not covering all body parts. Don't believe me? Look at what an expert has to say about the matter.

"I do a lot of skin cancer removals on the temples, upper cheeks, scalp, nose and

the ears. These areas usually get the most sun exposure.” – David Harvey, M.D

Please do your skin a favor and don't forget the :

- hands
- face (nose, cheeks, forehead, ears, and temples)
- feet (upper foot and toes)
- neck

Trust me, you will thank me later!

5. Do you apply enough sunscreen?

Dermatologists recommend that we must use about 1 ounce of sunscreen which can be as much as a shot glass. But again that varies from person to person depending on the ground you need to cover.

For example, I am size 16 and I like to cover everywhere thoroughly, so that shot is not enough for me. But guess what, my partner who is tiny but hairy, needs the same amount of sunscreen as me.

So, apply the right amount of [sunscreen](#) that covers your whole body to be on the safe side.

6. Do you rub it in well?

The sunscreen has to be applied thoroughly in order to get absorbed by the skin. This is when you get the promised protection on the label.

For that you need to massage it well and don't be in a hurry when you apply. Take your time, for the best results.

7. Do you apply daily?

You see, sunscreens work invisibly and it is not a one time miracle worker. If you want to be protected you need to apply daily no matter if it is sunny or not.

Many times I see people forgetting to use sunscreen because it is cloudy or rainy outside.

“Just because you can’t feel the sun beating down doesn’t mean you’re not at risk for UV exposure. UVA rays can penetrate through clouds, rain and fog, leaving you exposed”

skincancer.org

8. Do you apply when visiting a mountain top?

Many people assume that there are no UVR's in winter or on mountain tops. This simply is not true, in fact, the rays are much stronger there.

Did you know that ?

Snow Cover can increase UV levels by approximately 90% in fresh snow, and by approximately 50% for old snow.

bom.gov.au

How to apply sunscreen and have the best protection ever!

- 1. Apply 30 min at least before sun exposure!**
- 2. Apply as frequently as your skin needs or every 2-3 hours**
- 3. Use the correct SPF index for your skin type**
- 4. Apply EVERYWHERE**
- 5. Apply a good amount to cover well**
- 6. Rub the sunscreen well**
- 7. Apply daily**
- 8. Apply on high altitudes as well**

As the saying goes, 'The devil is in the detail'. When it comes to sunscreen and protection this is so true. The small details mentioned above will make a world of difference for your skin. Not only now but in the future as well.

This is because of the UVA rays which harm your hypodermis layer of the skin and can cause serious health issues later on in life.

Stay safe and Apply sunscreen!

Here are my favorite ones on the market!

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