

YOU.

TEND TO YOURSELF, BODY AND SOUL

**GOOD HABITS CAN
KEEP YOU SAFELY
COVERED FROM HEAD TO
TOE (AND UNDER THOSE
SPAGHETTI STRAPS).**

☀️
There are now
sunscreen picks for
every skin tone,
type, and preference.

Make SPF Your Jam!

It happens all the time: You pack the bags, fill the sippy cups, smear the kids with sunscreen, and then think, “Meh. I’ll do myself later.” Let’s make this the year that finally changes. Start by finding your dream SPF, commit to some easy application and skin-check habits, then enjoy the sun safely—at long last.

by **GINA WAY**



STEP ONE

Put Your Sunscreen Routine on Automatic

Imagine there was a miracle product proven to prevent wrinkles, brown spots, and sagging over time. Surprise: There is. All you have to do is find a brand (or two) you like and use it on the daily.

● First, try a Tinder approach.

“You can’t swipe right on just any sunscreen,” says Mona Gohara, M.D., a dermatologist in Hamden, Connecticut. “Be realistic about what you’ll actually wear and what could be a long-lasting relationship.” To wit: If you traditionally hate blending on a mineral sunscreen, pick a chemical-based one instead.

(A) Elta MD Skincare UV Clear Broad-Spectrum SPF 46 (\$36; [dermstore.com](https://www.dermstore.com)) has a mix of chemical and physical ingredients and really does go on clear. If you wear makeup, consider a tinted

moisturizer with SPF, such as **(B) First Aid Beauty Ultra Repair Tinted Moisturizer SPF 30** (\$28; [sephora.com](https://www.sephora.com)). If you love a little face powder, think about a powder SPF. Find what works so you’ll stick with it.

● Keep it at the ready.

“I have sunscreen lotions and sticks in every bag, as well as in the bathroom, the kitchen, the backyard, and by the front and back doors,” says Rosemarie Ingleton, M.D., a dermatologist in New York City. “When SPF is right in front of me, I’m less likely to forget to put it on.” If it’s easiest to have one formula for the whole family, go for it. Try **(C) Aveeno Kids Continuous Protection Sunscreen Lotion With Broad Spectrum SPF 50** (\$13; [drugstores](https://www.drugstores.com)).

A



B



Tinted SPF
is an A.M. routine
in one step.

C



● Apply sunscreen naked.

On days that entail a hike, the pool, or other outdoor adventures, put your sunscreen on before getting dressed. Doing so guarantees you're covered before the morning rush. "Clothing and bathing suits tend to shift around, and you don't want to get burned on those unexpectedly uncovered areas," says Amy Wechsler, M.D., a dermatologist and psychiatrist in New York City. You can skip body lotion and instead try:

(D) Coppertone Glow Spray SPF 30 (\$9; drugstores), which contains a hint of shimmer, or quick-to-absorb **(E) La Roche-Posay Anthelios 30 Cooling Water-Lotion SPF 30** (\$36; drugstores). "Put it everywhere, including ears, feet, hairline, and the back of your neck," Dr. Wechsler says.

● Dress in sunblock.

Look for UV-protective clothing, swimsuits, and exercise gear with built-in UPF (ultraviolet protection factor) of 50+ because it blocks 98 percent of UVA and UVB rays. Check out **(F) Mott50 Coco Crew Neck Rash Guard** (\$68; mott50.com). "When I'm wearing a UPF cover-up or shirt, I don't need to wear sunscreen underneath it. How easy is that?" Dr. Wechsler says. The caveat: UPF usually lasts one summer because the UPF in the fibers wears off over time in the wash. You can add **Rit Sun Guard Laundry Aid UV Protectant** (\$4; store.sunguarduv.com, not shown) to a load of laundry to turn any clothing item into UPF 30.

● **Layer different formulas throughout the day.** "I never leave the house without sunscreen on, and that's not just about skin cancer; it's about keeping my skin looking youthful," says Dr. Gohara. She uses **(G) Melé Dew the Most Sheer Moisturizer SPF 30** (\$19; drugstores), which she says blends easily into her medium-brown skin. "I apply it to my face and neck in the morning, and then I touch up during the day with an SPF powder." We like the translucent **(H) Tarte Sea Set & Protect Mineral Sunscreen Powder Broad Spectrum SPF 30** (\$28; sephora.com). For full-on outdoor days, Dr. Gohara reapplies with an SPF stick and spray because they're thorough and so easy to use on the go.



UPF can be cool.



LOOK FOR THE ZINC

Zinc oxide has had a bad rep for resembling white paste on skin, but new formulas are easier to blend. Here, three reasons to use the mineral.



Zinc oxide-based and fragrance-free

1 IT'S GREAT FOR SENSITIVE SKIN Zinc oxide has skin-soothing properties and won't cause an allergic reaction. Because mineral formulas can feel thick, it may come as a surprise that zinc oxide won't cause breakouts. "In fact, zinc oxide-based sunscreen is what I recommend to my patients with acne," says Dr. Wechsler, who suggests checking the label for the percent of zinc oxide. "The higher the better, and the minimum is 10 percent," she says. Try **Olay Regenerist Hydrating Mineral Sunscreen Moisturizer SPF 30** (\$29; olay.com), which has 17.5 percent.

2 IT WORKS RIGHT AWAY Because zinc oxide is a mineral that sits on skin like armor to filter UV rays, it protects the second you put it on (chemical sunscreens need at least 20 minutes to absorb).



3 IT MIGHT BE SAFER FOR THE SEAS Some researchers believe that oxybenzone and octinoxate may damage coral reefs and marine life, and some places have banned the sale of sunscreens with those ingredients. Physical SPF's, like **Australian Gold Botanical Mineral Lotion SPF 30** (\$16; target.com), are "reef friendly."



This is Venus Williams's brand.

STEP TWO

Bust Your SPF Excuses

Adults may be even better than kids at coming up with reasons not to apply. We all know (and have probably used) greatest hits such as “It’s cloudy” or “I’m in the car.” Derms have heard them all, and they have comebacks for any justification you can dish out.

I WFH and am never outside...

“You don’t need to be on the beach to get sun exposure or sun damage,” says Ellen Marmur, M.D., a dermatologist in New York City and mom of four. “UVA rays come through windows, so you need to protect your skin while in a car, a plane, or a home office.” Supergoop! Daily Dose Vitamin C + SPF 40 Serum (\$46; supergoop.com) contains chemical sunscreen and an antioxidant to protect and brighten in one step. Blue light from digital devices could be problematic too (see “Remember Your Screen ‘Screen,” right).

I’m just running one errand...

“We all make these little deals with ourselves,” Dr. Wechsler says. “We associate applying sunscreen with being outside all day on vacation, but even five minutes of unprotected sun exposure is harmful.” And besides, quick errands can turn into long ones. A sunscreen that doesn’t feel thick or greasy, like Banana Boat Light as Air Sunscreen Lotion SPF 50+ (\$8; drugstores), is hassle-free.

Sunscreen absorbs into the bloodstream...

“Mineral sunscreens do not absorb into the skin, which is why I love them,”

Dr. Wechsler says. Some chemical sunscreen ingredients do, but scientists haven’t found evidence that they’re harmful. Bottom line: If you’re worried, wear UPF clothing and mineral sunscreen.

But I need vitamin D...

“It’s true that making vitamin D is one of the skin’s big jobs, and the vitamin is important for the immune system and the absorption of calcium,” Dr. Marmur says. “But just five to 15 minutes of incidental light is enough to get your body to synthesize vitamin D through the skin. Realistically, unless you slather on SPF like cake frosting from your scalp to your fingertips, you’ll probably still make enough. You can also get it from fortified food and supplements.”

My dark skin protects me...

“People of color have a built-in SPF of about 13.4 compared with fair skin’s 3.4,” Dr. Gohara says. “But all skin tones can get skin cancer, and those with more melanin can be more prone to hyperpigmentation. Sunscreen is the best way to prevent both. A recent study showed that BIPOC women who wore sunscreen every day had improved skin texture and tone.” Adds Dr. Ingleton, who has dark skin herself, “My patients with darker complexions ask how mine looks so youthful. I tell them that I’ve been wearing sunscreen daily for the past 30 years.” We like EleVen by Venus Unrivaled Sun Serum SPF 35 (\$50; credobeautey.com), which blends into all skin tones.

STEP THREE

Remember Your Screen ‘Screen

Just when you think you’ve got this UV thing figured out, here comes another wavelength to protect against. High-energy visible (HEV) light, aka blue light, is a short-wavelength light emitted by the sun, lightbulbs, and digital devices like (gulp) our laptops and phones. Blue light has been shown to contribute to skin issues like hyperpigmentation and wrinkles, but unlike UVA/UVB light, it is not associated with skin cancers. FYI, not all sunscreens are blue-light-protective, Dr. Gohara says. “Chemical ones absorb UVA and UVB but not HEV rays. Mineral sunscreens, however, do have the ability to protect from all wavelengths of light. And research is showing that the ingredient iron oxide boosts their effectiveness.” Dr. Loretta Urban Antioxidant Sunscreen SPF 40 (\$50; drloretta.com) and Colorescience Face Shield Glow SPF 50 (\$39; colorscience.com) check all the boxes.





Love the
sun safely.

STEP FOUR

Get Serious About Skin Checks

"I believe you should live your life and not be afraid of the sun," says Dr. Marmur, a skin-cancer survivor. "I've had multiple surgeries for basal cell carcinoma, but I still run on the beach, climb mountains, and go outside with my family every chance I get—I just take a few seconds to put sunscreen on first."

Melanoma is the most common cancer in people between the ages of 25 and 29 and also the most serious. But here's the good news: According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, daily use of sunscreen with an SPF 15 or higher reduces the risk of developing melanoma by 50 percent. While a yearly exam from your dermatologist is highly recommended, giving your

own bod a regular once-over could be even more important. "Most skin cancers are found by the patient, and about half of melanomas are self-detected," Dr. Marmur says. "Skin cancers that are caught early are 92 to 100 percent curable, so time is of the essence." Don't think of a self-exam as a big thing. "It's really about getting to know the landscape and texture of your skin and noticing if there's a change," Dr. Gohara says. "When taking a shower or putting on lotion, be aware of anything that wasn't there before or feels different." This includes a spot or sore that won't heal or a mole that's changed color, size, or shape.

LISTEN TO A FELLOW MOM

Take in lessons one woman learned through her own experience with skin cancer.

Heather Snyder, 42, is the mother of two teenagers, a marathon runner, and a sun-protection fanatic because she was diagnosed with Stage 4 melanoma when she was 30.

"I'd never been to a dermatologist before I was diagnosed with skin cancer when my youngest was 6 months old. I'd had a weird purplish spot on the back of my calf while I was pregnant, and I hadn't thought much about it. It had been there for a while and was the size of a pencil eraser when my husband noticed it. It wasn't until a few months later, when my mom urged me to get the spot checked, that I made an appointment. The dermatologist took one look at it and said, 'That's melanoma.' By that time, it had spread to my lymph nodes, and I was scheduled for surgery

followed by months of chemotherapy. I don't have fair skin, and I tan easily. I understand now that a tan is a form of skin damage, but in high school I loved having a tan. I never applied sunscreen because I didn't burn, and I used tanning beds to get ready for events like the prom. Skin cancer wasn't talked about back then, and even when the dermatologist told me that I had melanoma, it didn't sink in that I had cancer. I got through it, and now the nonnegotiable rule for myself and my family is: If you go outside, you must put on sun protection. I have a UPF tent that I sit under for the kids' softball games, and when I go running, I wear a hat and a UPF top and tights. Plus, I have a sunscreen stick and SPF lip balm with me. Always."

(A) Athleta Salutation Slash Pocket Tight UPF 50+ (\$98; athleta.com)

(B) Neutrogena Sheer Zinc Kids Mineral Sunscreen Stick SPF 50+ (\$13; drugstores)

(C) eos The Guardian 100% Natural Sunscreen Lip Balm SPF 30 (\$3; drugstores)



These are
the balm.