The Look Book

Beat the BURN

Can you really love the sun and your skin? Absolutely, says Cosmo’s Beauty Editor, Kate Turner, who’s learnt the hard way.

Styling Shelly Vella
Photography Peter Pedonomou

Swimsuit, £75, Vitamin A at Saltresortwear.com.
Necklace, £135, Alex Monroe.
Brooche on upper arm, POA, Annina Vogel.
Other bangles, from £365, Dower & Hall.
I have a confession to make: I love the sun. Indeed, I used to be a real factor-6 and sunbed kinda girl. I once sunburnt my thighs so badly I couldn’t sit down for two days. I’m horrified to think I had such a reckless approach to my body, especially knowing what I now do about skincare. I still don’t believe you should sit in the shade all summer, but I’ve learnt some brilliant tips so you can be bronzed and safe. See you by the pool...

1 FAKE TAN CAN HELP STOP YOU BURNING
It’s a fact that having pasty British skin can drive many an otherwise sane woman to cook herself for eight hours straight on day one of her holiday. Taking time to fake-tan just before you jet off can ease that first-day panic. “This really is the key to swimwear survival,” agrees dermatologist Dr Sam Bunting. “Who wants to wait until the last day of their holiday to model their foxy white swimsuit? I like to splurge on a salon treatment just before I go away. It’s so satisfying to be able to wear white at the airport on the way out!”

2 TANNING BEDS DO NOT GIVE YOU ANY OF THE SUN’S HEALTH BENEFITS
A myth peddled by tanning salons is that you can get a helping of feel-good vitamin D with a ‘healthy’ tan. “This is BS!” says consultant dermatologist Dr Nick Lowe. “It’s the wrong UV – tanning beds pump out huge amounts of UVA and virtually no UVB (which stimulates vitamin D), and can increase your risk of skin cancer by 75%.” Scary stuff. Get your tan from a bottle or from gentle sun exposure, and your vitamin D from a supplement. “I recommend a daily vitamin D3 supplement all year round,” says Dr Lowe. Try Solgar Vitamin D3 1000 IU, £6.72.

3 YOUR SKIN REACHES A TANNING CUT-OFF POINT AFTER ABOUT TWO HOURS
You know that thing where you hit the lounger for a solid six hours’ tanning time? Um, pointless. Because in fact your skin will reach a point each day when it physically can’t produce any more melanin, the tanning pigment. “Everyone has their own melanin cut-off point, typically after two to three hours, or much less if you have fair skin,” says Dr Lowe. “Only one in 10 of our outer skin cells are melanocytes (melanin-producing cells), so it takes time for them to transfer melanin to other cells, giving a deep, even tan.”

4 IF YOU CARE ABOUT YOUR SKIN, SPF ISN’T ENOUGH
Even with ruthlessly applied sunscreen, some pesky UV light will get through. The solution? Add a secondary layer of protection in the form of daily antioxidants, which help neutralise nasty free radicals (the damaging molecules unleashed by sun overexposure). “Use a good-quality antioxidant facial serum,” says Dr Bunting. “Vitamins C and E make a great combination.” Try Medik8 CE-Thione Rechargeable Vitamin C Serum, £79, or Nourish Protect Replenishing Peptide Serum, £16.95. Then take a supplement for long-lasting protection from the inside – which can’t be washed off. “Ideally start taking them well before your holiday as it can take up to 12 weeks for the antioxidants to reach the skin’s surface,” says Boots suncare expert Clare O’Connor. We like The Organic Pharmacy Superantioxidant Capsules, £37.50.

*Cosmo loves Sienna X Touche de Soleil Spray Tan, £20.*


Bangles, as before
UVA PROTECTION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN UVB
The SPF rating of a product relates to its protection against UVB rays, which account for only about 10% of the UV radiation we receive. UVA rays make up the rest, and these can reach the deeper levels of the skin, causing long-term damage. For all-round protection you need a product of at least SPF15 with an added UVA protection rating; you’ll find this in a circular UVA symbol on the pack. We like Hawaiian Tropic Silk Hydration Protective Sun Lotion SPF30, £14.99, Soltan Protect & Tan Ultra-Light Texture Suncare Spray SPF15, £13.99, and Ultrasun SPF20 Glimmer Formula, £18. “For sensitive or fair skin, we recommend reinforced protection against long-wave UVA rays,” adds L’Oréal scientific director Dr Julie McManus. Try Ambre Solaire Sensitive Advanced Lotion SPF50, £19.29.

MOST OF US DON’T APPLY ENOUGH SUNSCREEN TO GET THE SPF ON THE BOTTLE
We’re all guilty of sometimes half-heartedly slapping on our suncream. But, warns Dr Lowe, “If you only apply half the recommended amount, you’ll end up with about two thirds of the advertised protection.” In fact, most of us apply only 25-50% of the correct amount. Aim for about a shot-glass full to cover your body and a 10p-sized blob for the face – it should feel like slightly more than your normal body lotion. Also, right-handed people tend to apply more to their left arm than to their right, and vice versa for left-handers. Don’t end up lopsided!
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Top, as before. Bikini (just seen), £26, Miss Selfridge. Necklace and bangle, both as before. Bracelet, £120, Alex Monroe

7 BB CREAMS CAN GIVE A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY
Much as we love our BBs, you can’t dab on a thin layer in the morning and expect to be protected from the sun all day. Most are SPF15, which is likely to wear off after a couple of hours. On holiday, use an SPF30 broad-spectrum (UVA and UVB) facial sun-protection product labelled non-comedogenic (non-skin-clogging). These won’t make you break out: Skinceuticals Mineral Radiance UV Defense SPF50 (which has a pretty, skin-flattering tint), £35. La Roche-Posay Anthelios XL Dry Touch Gel Cream SPF50, £16.50, and Clinique City Block Sheer SPF25, £16 ✔.

8 SAND, SUN AND SEA CAN CATCH YOU OUT
“A key time to burn is after you get out of the water,” says consultant dermatologist Dr Susan Mayou, “so it’s vital not to leave the skin unprotected while you wait to dry off.” Clever Piz Buin Wet Skin SPF15, £17.99, can be sprayed on wet skin for immediate protection. Sand particles are not only annoying, they also quickly rub off your protection. Don’t sit there and hope for the best – shower/swim, dry and reapply. Studies show that if we feel hot, we’re less likely to slather on a layer of cream. So reach for Nivea Sun Protect & Refresh Invisible Cooling Mist SPF30, £14.29, a gorgeous cooling spray with menthol to beat the heat.

9 LUNCH CAN DOUBLE YOUR SUN PROTECTION
Certain sun-friendly foods are known to increase lycopene, the skin’s own SPF. An antioxidant found in tomatoes, and other red and orange fruit and veg, it can boost your sun protection by a whopping 33%. One of the best sources is tomato paste, so tuck into Italian-style treats like tomato spaghetti or pizza (any excuse). “I’m a big fan of a group of antioxidants called polyphenols,” says Dr Bunting. “Green tea is a great example. Sip it after a sushi lunch.” (Fish, rich in omega-3, has anti-inflammatory powers too). Dark chocolate is packed with flavonoids that can help protect against sunburn, while caffeine is thought to help cut your skin-cancer risk. “It’s best taken in an espresso shot right before you hit the beach,” Dr Bunting suggests.

10 HAVING A LIE-IN IS GOOD FOR YOUR SKIN
The sun’s rays are most intense – and thus the risk of skin damage peaks – between around 11am and 3pm. So dodging these danger hours makes sense, especially if it fits with your party schedule. “Develop a ritual of late nights, lunch-for-breakfast and enjoying the beach from 3pm onwards,” says Dr Bunting. “Mykonos and Ibiza lend themselves very well to this routine, which minimises sun exposure at the peak hours without killing your buzz from the great weather.”

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Your beat-the-burn kit

Everything you need to stay safe in the sun and look hot

Medik8 CE-Thione Rechargeable Vitamin C Serum, £79
SkinCeuticals Mineral Radiance UV Defense SPF50, £35
Ambre Solaire Sensitive Advanced Lotion SPF30, £19.29

Top, £115, Felice Couture at Felice-art-couture.
Necklace, £35, Alex Monroe

Nivea Sun Protect & Refresh Invisible Cooling Mist SPF30, £14.29
UltraSun SPF20 Glimmer Formula, £18
Piz Buin Wet Skin SPF15, £17.99

Nourish Protect Replenishing Peptide Serum, £16.95
Solgar Vitamin D3 1000 IU, £6.72
La Roche-Posay Anthelios XL Dry Touch Gel Cream SPF50, £16.50
Hawaiian Tropic Silk Hydration Protective Sun Lotion SPF30, £14.99

Soltan Protect & Tan Ultra-Light Texture Suncare Spray SPF15, £13.99
The Organic Pharmacy Superantioxidant Capsules, £37.50

Discover our top 10 tips for prolonging your post-holiday glow at Cosmopolitan.co.uk/keepglowing

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