

COVERING ALL THE BASES

Perfect makeup begins with foundation,
concealer, and powder

Text by Dorothy Mandrakos

All things of enduring beauty begin with a strong foundation. This is especially true when it comes to makeup.

Although color cosmetics—lipstick, eye shadow, mascara, and blush—get most of the credit for beauty enhancement, these products are merely the icing on the cake. Foundation, concealer, and powder are the true ingredients that help to minimize your imperfections and maximize your best features.

"The biggest mistake many women make, especially when they're in a hurry, is putting on just lipstick and eye makeup," says New York

City makeup artist Alison Raffaele. "When you don't have much time to apply makeup, it's better to improve the appearance of your skin, which is the first thing people notice."

But many women shy away from these basics because they feel they create a look that is too "made up" or unnatural. Thanks to technological advances, however, today's makeup formulas are dramatically different from those your grandmother—or even your mother—used. On the following pages, a crash course in choosing and using foundation, concealer, and powder—the basic components of your makeup regimen.



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basebasics

Available in many forms and finishes, foundation is designed to even out the texture of your skin and create a smoother surface for the application of color cosmetics. It also serves as a protective barrier, shielding skin from damaging environmental elements. But as you grow older, you'll find that there are other reasons why foundation should become one of your beauty essentials. Karyn Grossman, M.D., a New York City dermatologist, explains, "Foundation helps camouflage the effects of age and the environment on your skin. For instance, cumulative sun damage can result in broken blood vessels and brown spots, which foundation can easily cover. Skin also becomes drier with age, and many foundations contain oils that help hold moisture on the skin."

Experts agree that selecting the correct shade is the single most important factor in purchasing a foundation. "The most common mistake women make is choosing one that's too light or dark," Raffaele says. "Many women also make the mistake of trying to match the color to their neck, which is the lightest part of the body." To ensure that you get it right, test the product on a clean, makeup-free area of your face—a stripe test above the jawline usually works best. Blend it in thoroughly to let it interact with the chemistry of your skin. "If it disappears, then you know you have a good match," says Michael Maron, a Hollywood makeup artist and cosmetic consultant to the American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons.

If you have broken capillaries on your cheeks or around your nose, Honolulu skin-care specialist Connie Gayle recommends that you also test the foundation on a vein on the underside of your wrist to see how well it will cover trouble spots. "It should help conceal the vein but also let your natural skin color shine through," she advises.

The formula you choose should depend upon your skin's condition, since a range of coverage is available in both oil and oil-free foundations. "People who break out or get clogged pores may prefer an oil-free foundation," says Maron. But the

environment can also affect your choice. "As the climate changes, so does your skin. Generally, in colder weather, skin is drier due to low moisture in the air and indoor heat," Dr. Grossman says. "Wearing an oil-based cream foundation, which moisturizes and provides a matte finish, is a good idea in the winter. During the summer, sebum [oil] production in the glands increases, so an oil-free formula makes sense for women whose skin may need it at that time," she says. "In addition, many women choose to wear products that contain sunscreens, because of the added protection they provide."

Wait at least 30 seconds after putting on moisturizer or sunscreen (to allow it to penetrate your skin) before applying your base. And while it may be quicker and easier to use your fingers, the pros insist that a sponge offers the best application results. Houston makeup artist Heidi Schulze recommends removing foundation from its container with a cotton swab, then dotting it on your forehead, cheeks, nose, and chin. Use a clean, damp foam sponge to apply it. "Your fingers just create more oil. Using a sponge allows it to adhere better to your skin," Schulze explains. Blend the foundation gently into your skin using downward strokes, working your way out toward the hairline, ears, and jaw. If you've applied too much, simply blot it off with a tissue.

coveringup

While foundations address small problems in large areas, concealer is designed to combat large problems in small areas, such as blemishes or dark circles under the eyes. "Skin around the eyes is thinner, making it more susceptible to environmental assault," Dr. Grossman points out. "It's not uncommon to see discoloration and fine lines here before you notice other signs of facial aging."

New York City-based makeup artist Mark Hayles says, "I like to use concealer for the under-eye area that's a shade lighter than the foundation because this helps create skin-tone depth and avoids a masklike appearance." Hayles says you should avoid anything, however, with a pink tone because,



Once you learn how to choose and apply the correct shades and formulas of concealer, foundation, and powder, the color of the other makeup you apply on your face will only look better. All makeup by Mary Kay. Opposite page: Fawn Beige Day Radiance Liquid Foundation. This page: Clockwise from top left, Walnut Bronze Day Radiance Liquid Foundation; Lavender Neutralizing Full Coverage Concealer; Blush Ivory Day Radiance Cream Foundation; and Beige Powder Perfect Loose Powder. Next page (Box): Mint Neutralizing Full Coverage Concealer.

“when you put pink over the blue tones of under-eye circles, you end up with an ashy gray.” As for mixing brands, Hayles presumes that “a company’s concealer is created to work in conjunction with its foundation—so you may get better results if you choose a concealer from the same line.”

But picking the right concealer is only the first part of covering up. A good application is as important as the right product. “I like to apply concealer after foundation,” Hayles notes; “otherwise the foundation may disturb the concealer’s corrective work.” Rex, author of *Forever Beautiful with Rex* (Clarkson Potter), points out that “many women apply too much concealer, and apply it in all the wrong places.” He says that too much concealer becomes “cakey and gives the skin a dry and hard-looking appearance.”

To apply concealer on under-eye circles, place a small amount on a cotton swab and dot it on. Then use a slightly damp sponge to blend it in. To cover blemishes or broken capillaries, Raffaele suggests using a fine brush. If you apply too much, just blot it off with your sponge or tissue and begin again. If you have a stubborn blemish or pimple that is difficult to cover up, Hayles suggests placing a small amount of concealer on the back of your hand, and then tapping it to dry it out before applying it to the affected area. This technique concentrates the pigment, and will allow for heavier coverage of stubborn blemishes.

finishing touches

Powder is the final step in giving the face a flawless finish. Used in conjunction with foundation and concealer, it serves several purposes. “Powder acts as a veil and a primer; it will set the oils and water in other cosmetics so that they stay in place,” says Diana Bihova, M.D., author of *Beauty from the Inside Out* (Rawson). It also gives your makeup more staying power. Today’s powder formulas impart a sheerer, more natural finish because they contain micronized pigments that can spread out more evenly on the skin and thus provide more even coverage. Many products also contain light-reflecting ingredients, which help give mature skin a more youthful radiance.

When shopping for a powder, look for one that is silky and fine-textured. For extra oil control, sheer coverage, or light-reflecting benefits, opt for a translucent powder rather than an opaque one. As with concealer and base, you need to select a shade that blends well with your skin tone. Be sure to test a few colors over your foundation and concealer before you purchase a powder.

While you may choose to use only one formula of foundation or concealer, you should have two forms of powder—loose and pressed. Loose powder is the one to use when you are putting on your makeup in the morning or redoing it in the evening for a night out. It provides the lightest, most natural-looking finish. Pressed powder, packaged in a purse-sized compact, is perfect for touch-ups throughout the day (or night).

Because pressed powder also has a heavier consistency, it is often the better choice for eliminating shine.

“Powder is an important step many women skip, because they don’t know how to apply it correctly,” says Rex. Here’s how he recommends you do it: Using a sponge, press powder firmly on top of your foundation. Apply it to your forehead, cheeks, nose, and chin. If you apply too much, use a big round brush to dust off the excess.

When used correctly and in the right combination, foundation, concealer, and powder really pay off in the end. By highlighting your assets and downplaying your flaws, these three items do more than cover and protect—they let your natural beauty shine through. ■

SPECIAL FX

Even armed with the perfect foundation, concealer, and powder, you still might face some beauty problems that demand extra help. That’s when you should apply color-neutralizing concealers, designed for use under foundation. Consult the chart below to determine which concealer offers the best solution.

Problem	Color Neutralizer
dark circles	yellow or a skin-tone shade
ruddy skin, broken capillaries, blemishes, scars, birthmarks	mint or yellow
sallowness	lavender
extremely pale skin	lavender

Color neutralizers should be applied using your finger or a damp sponge. The trick is to blend it well; otherwise you risk having the color beneath come through. Whichever neutralizer you choose, be sure to have a beauty professional show you how to use it properly.