

THE BEAUTY DESK

How to master the no makeup makeup look

JULY 30, 2016 ~ SMITA DESOUZA

The no makeup makeup look or nude makeup look has been around for ages and there's a joke among beauty industry insiders about how it takes a whole lot of nothing to achieve this look. The epitome of this look is to appear as natural as possible while wearing all that makeup. And the key to getting it right is not only picking the right products but also keeping the following pointers in mind.

Prep, prep, prep

The first step to getting this look right is making sure your skin is well moisturised and absolutely hydrated. I'm talking plump, glistening skin here – the kind that's been drenched in moisture. Hydrating your skin is an essential step because the better your skin looks, the less makeup you require. Also, you don't want the little makeup that you're using to cling to any dry patches, emphasising flakiness.

Try the Kiehl's Ultra Facial Cream or Bioderma Hydrabio Crème if you have dry skin. If your skin is feeling dryer than usual, consider throwing on a facemask as well. I like the Kracie Hadabisei Moisturising Facial Mask (Extra Rich), SK-II Facial Treatment Masks and Lululun High Moisture (the blue packs) masks. Those with oily or combination skin types can get away with using a lighter moisturiser but need to ensure there's no flakiness.

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I used this kind of makeup as the inspiration. Image: Makeup by Ariel

Prime

Next, smooth on a tiny bit of primer on the areas you need it most. Pick a pore minimising primer like the Benefit Porefessional Primer or the Make Up For Ever Step 1 Skin Equalizer Mattifying Primer if you have oily skin, and something with a bit of radiance like the Laura Mercier Radiance Foundation Primer or the Illamasqua Hydra Veil if your skin is dry like mine. Your primer should help blur imperfections creating that perfect canvas, which will allow for less makeup, while keeping it place.

Pick the right foundation

Because you want to look like you're wearing almost nothing, it's best to go with a

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BB Cream or a liquid foundation. Some really good options are the Laneige BB cushions (if they have one in your skin tone), the Urban Decay Naked Skin One and Done Hybrid Complexion Perfector, MAC Face and Body foundation, or even the Bobbi Brown Skin Foundation Cushion Compact SPF 50 PA+++. I might even use the Make Up For Ever Ultra HD Foundation if I'm planning to do this look for a night out.

If you have one of those stick foundations or anything that is full coverage apply a teeny bit of it all over your face, mist it with the MAC Prep and Prime Fix+ and buff it into the skin. This will help sheer it out.

Spot conceal

Once you've applied your foundation, look out for any visible spots and spot correct them with concealer. Spot correcting ensures you use less concealer and don't look "made up" while still looking like you've got flawless *skin*. Similarly apply concealer only where you need it under your eyes. Most people tend to need to conceal closer to the inner one-third of the eyes. Couple of the concealers I'm using at the moment are the MAC Pro Longwear and the Maybelline Instant Age Rewind. No spots or dark circles? Lucky you! Go on to the next step.

Enhance your features

By now your face will start to look quite flat with its natural planes, angles and shadows concealed under foundation. Some makeup artists and beauty insiders may debate this step, arguing there is no place for contouring in a no makeup makeup look. I think it's essential but it needs to be very, very subtle. Think of enhancing features, not sculpting a pair of cheekbones or slimming your nose within an inch of its life. I like to use a dull taupe shade to lightly contour my eyes to give them a bit of definition or an eye shadow like the Moonshot Manhandeling which is just slightly deeper than my skin tone, and use a matte tan blush (Lo Fi from the Urban Decay Gwen Stefani blush palette) along my cheekbones – but nothing too drastic.

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Do I look like I'm wearing makeup?

Add that glow

To me natural skin is all about having that healthy glow. Like you've finished your outdoor yoga class and then got a facial and have also been green juicing for a week healthy. That's why the first prep step is so important. And I like to emphasise that glow with highlighter. I like to do this with the Hourglass Ambient Powder in Incandescent Light from my Ambient Lighting Palette or my Tom Ford Skin Illuminating Powder Duo in Moodlight. You could also get the look with the Becca

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Shimmering Skin Perfector Pressed in Opal or the Illamasqua Gleam in Aurora. Some times. I will swirl in a bit of bronzer as well – on the high points of my face where the sun would normally hit – to create that sun kissed healthy girl glow.

If you prefer to use a blush instead, make sure you pick a colour that comes as close as possible to the colour of your natural flush.

Anchor your look

Doing your eyebrows is always a good idea and more so in this case. Without a bold lip or a smoky eye to draw attention to, your eyebrows become the focal point of attention – after they notice gorgeous skin that is. To keep them looking natural just like the rest of your look, brush your brows upward and outward and fill in any bare posts. Make sure however that they don't look too stark or have that defined line underscoring them. On rotation on my vanity are the Benefit Goof Proof pencil, CLIO Kill Brow Tattoo Lasting Gel Pencil and the Shu Uemura Brow Sword.

Keep your eyes subtle

Precise, winged eyeliner or any eyeliner for that matter is not natural and will make you look like you're wearing makeup. If you need to emphasise your eyes, you need to tightline them. Preferably with a pencil that matches the colour of your eyelashes. Because I have naturally dark hair, I like to use the **Nudestix** Magnetic Eye Color in Night. The thick tip makes it a bit difficult, but I know the colour doesn't budge so it's worth the extra few seconds to apply it right.

To tightline, gently lift your upper eyelid till you can see the waterline and gently line it with the pencil. This will give the illusion of thicker brows while adding definition to your eyes.



Go Big on Lashes

Here's where you can cheat and go all out with your lashes. These mascara tips will ensure you have long luscious lashes, but you can still go ahead and add a few individual lashes to give it that oomph. As look as they don't have any embellishments and can pass off seeming natural, you're in the clear.

And lips neutral

Finally, finish your look with a lipstick or lip balm in a colour similar to the colour of

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your lips. You're looking for a my lips but better colour, so use your natural lip colour as a guide. Sometimes I just use clear lip balm.

You will notice I haven't made a mention of powdering – I don't recommend it for this look because you want your makeup to look like skin. But if you absolutely have to, take a small fluffy brush that you may use to powder under the eye and lightly powder under the eyes and along the sides of the nose. I am currently very impressed with the Laura Mercier Translucent Loose Setting Powder because it doesn't look cakey or settle into fine lines.

Congratulations if you've made it to the end. I hadn't realised how many steps actually want into this look till I sat down to write it. Doing this makeup takes me about 15 minutes – writing it has taken me three days. Exactly what I said in the beginning – a whole lot of nothing!

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