

BEAUTY THE NATURAL WAY: FRENCH WOMEN'S SECRETS

Being positive = being beautiful

The attitude and the energy that you exude are much more effective than even the most expensive beauty products. Self-confidence is the best form of beauty: if you feel beautiful and in shape, ready to take on the world, if you believe that you can do anything and that everything is possible – then others will see it, too, and you will be radiant, in their eyes and your own.

Becoming a positive person:

- Stop trying to look like the latest 18-year-old top model. Cultivate your individuality!
- So what if you never have been, and never will be, a size six? Most men prefer curvy women – outright large woman – even if they don't say so openly. But let's forget about men for a minute, since this is about you and no one else: you can't fight yourself your whole life. You are how you are, and that's all there is to it, so show off your behind, your breasts, and your other assets (like your smile, your hair...). Love yourself, and enjoy your days. Life is too short and precious to turn it into just some thing you have to do, or worse, make into a hellish exercise.
- Try to treat yourself a little better than before: eat a little more healthily, take a little walk; care for yourself in small ways. If you've been fighting with your parents or your children, take some time to reflect on the reasons, or show them a bit more affection. Apply yourself more at work, or be friendlier to the people you meet. The same with your partner, your friends, and especially yourself. You'll notice the benefits right away, and in all aspects of your life.
- Stop focusing on being pretty: prefer to look extraordinary. Beautiful faces are a dime a dozen, but you can look long and hard for unique, funny, smiling, energetic, and sympathetic women! Decide, right now, to be one of those women.
- Don't forget that your look is all in the details – it's all the small things combined that add the final sheen to your allure. Details make you feel more elegant, more beautiful, and more confident. You can't go out with a great new handbag and a creased old skirt, or in crusty ten-year-old shoes and a dazzling evening gown.
- Stop being negative and living in the "maybe," right now. Stop using sentences starting with "if": "If I ate less," "If I went out more," "If I exercised," "If I had a hobby..." Implement these changes in your life this very minute.
- Are you the type to stare blankly at your closet every morning, not knowing what to wear? Give all the clothes that don't fit anymore or don't suit you to the Salvation Army. You'll be doing a good thing and, who needs all those old things anyway? Best of all,, your clothing choices will be all the better for it.

Your face and skin

As we've all heard, the first impression is the most important one. Although many people want the perfect body, in reality, most of the time the first thing people notice about you

is your face. Your mouth and eyes dominate your face, of course, but there's nothing like healthy, fresh, glowing skin to help you highlight it. Let's take control of your skin, starting today.

Dry skin:

How to recognize it:

Dry skin requires moisturizing morning, noon, and night. A good way to tell if you have dry skin is that, in summer, it hurts, and in winter, it blotches. In short, dry skin is often red, discolored, and is always thirsty.

What to do:

- Moisturize your skin in the morning and at night. Don't forget your neck and chest, which can develop premature wrinkles over time.
- Apply a moisturizing mask at least three to four times a month.
- Protect your skin from the sun with an appropriate sunscreen lotion, even if you're not going to be out in the sun.
- Treat your blotchiness: don't hesitate to cover it with make-up if you don't find it attractive (which is often the case).

What not to do:

- Dry skin reacts badly to over-exfoliation, which is too aggressive for this skin type.
- Don't buy skin creams that are too greasy, even if you think they'll do you some good: contrary to what you might think, they can do more damage than good.

What you should know:

Dry skin is often genetic, but not always: it can also result from harsh climate conditions or a specific skin treatment, like anti-acne treatment. Other factors – such as pregnancy and menopause – can radically change your skin type. If these changes are worrying you, or are problematic on a day-to-day basis, you should consult your doctor or your dermatologist.

Top tip:

Vitamin E is great for dry or older skins. Take a capsule of vitamin E, cut off the top of the capsule, and empty the contents on your face, preferably at night. You can even mix it in with your usual night cream.

Grandma's secret recipe:

Make your own dry skin mask! Mix three teaspoons of Nivea cream (the real stuff that comes in round, blue, metal pots) with the contents of one vitamin A and one vitamin E capsule. Apply generously to the face and neck. Leave on for 15 minutes.

Oily skin:

How to recognize it:

Oily skin is problem skin, suffering from a hyper-secretion of sebum, and generally accompanied by unsightly blemishes such as pimples and blackheads, as well as scars and spots. It can also be associated with excessive hairiness on some parts of the face (upper lip, chin).

What to do:

- Clean your face with gentle make-up remover or cleaner, followed by a non-alcoholic toner. Don't use anything aggressive, because you should always remember that oily skin is also extremely sensitive.
- Declare your love of exfoliants by using them twice a week! From time to time, alternate the exfoliating with a home peeling.

Caution:

If you have pimples, don't do home exfoliations, peelings, or microdermabrasions, as they can aggravate acne problems.

Regular skin problems can be bad for your morale, and can lead to less self-confidence at work, in your personal and emotional life... So, if you do have pimples, consult your dermatologist — the sooner the better!

What not to do:

- Never "pop" your pimples yourself. You might not empty them properly, and you can cause scarring as well as infection. Trust your skincare professional – they're the only ones who can pierce microcysts.
- Avoid creams that are too rich or too moisturizing: they can be comedogenic to your skin type.
- In the same vein, throw out all creams that are too harsh or powerful, as they could stimulate your sebaceous glands even further.

Tip:

Even if it might seem strange, oily skin might also be dehydrated – and in fact, that's often the case. You should hydrate the skin, but use an emulsion rather than a cream.

Grandma's secret recipe:

Once or twice a month, make your own oily skin mask: buy a packet of powdered green clay, mix it with cider vinegar until you get a paste that is neither too liquid nor too thick (don't be surprised if there's a slight foam when you first mix the two elements).

Once the paste has the right consistency, apply it to your cleansed face. For the first twenty seconds or so, you might feel a slight tingling sensations: if it continues, or if you don't like it, remove the mask – this moment should be enjoyable and relaxing.

Let the mask sit for ten minutes. Your skin might appear red at first, but that should quickly fade. You should also notice a healthier looking skin and tightened pores straight away.

Another tip:

Peel a tomato and stick it in the blender. Apply the mix to the face for ten minutes. This mask will absorb the excess sebum on your face, and leave your skin clean and radiant.

Note:

If you have excessive hair growth, which is often the case of people with oily skin, don't hesitate to consult your endocrinologist to check your hormone levels.

Combination skin:**How to recognize it:**

This is one of the most common skin types, so there's a large chance that you belong in this group. Combination skin is oily along the face's median line – that is, the nose, chin, and forehead – and dry on the cheeks and around the eyes.

What to do:

- When cleaning your skin, use a gentle product on your cheeks and cheekbones, and a more absorbent product on your nose, chin, and forehead.
- Same thing when you're exfoliating: exfoliate the median line of your face more than your cheeks.
- When applying a mask, use purifying products for the chin, nose, and forehead, and use moisturizing products for the cheeks. It might seem complicated and make your bathroom or make-up table look cluttered, but those products are there to help... Soon, you'll be so used to your daily ritual that you won't even think about it anymore.
- If you would prefer to use a single product for everyday moisturizing, use a day cream or emulsion for normal skin, but apply it more generously on your cheeks and less so along the median line.

What not to do:

- All together now: never use the same treatment for your whole face.
- Don't wipe your face over and over again: you might think you're removing excess sebum, but you're actually stimulating your sebaceous glands.

Normal skin:**How to recognize normal skin?**

Normal skin is a skin that never has any problems: no blotchiness, no excess sebum, no acne, no dryness.

If that describes your skin, you're very lucky! So enjoy yourself, because normal skin is so rare that even dermatologists have expressed doubt as to its existence. Now that's saying something...

What to do:

- Keep doing whatever it is that's working for you.
- Don't forget to use make-up remover every night, even if you don't wear make-up, because impurities and pollution quickly clog up skin.

What not to do:

- Don't fall into the trap of exfoliating too often, using too many masks or rich skin creams. More generally, avoid too much change or new products that might make your skin type change – which would only lead to more problems (for instance, oily, dry, or combination skin).

Basic hints for all skin types:

A must-do for all women:

Make-up or not, use make-up remover every night, no matter what. Don't make the excuse that you got home late, or that you're more tired than usual, because your skin is like you – it needs to breathe! It's collected a lot of impurities over the course of the day, so use your usual make-up remover, and don't forget to finish up with obligatory toner, applied with a cotton pad to remove the last traces of dirt. Now you're ready for your moisturizer – or for a good night's sleep.

Note:

- Generally speaking, use cold water on your face rather than hot.
- Don't forget to apply hydrating cream to your neck and chest every night as well – they might turn against you with age. If you have a treatment cream for your face (for oily or problem skin, for example), use it only on your face, and buy some moisturizer for your neck and chest.

Caution:

Whatever your skin type, avoid using toners with alcohol. They are far too aggressive and harsh for facial skin.

Grandma's secret recipe for dull skin:

Mix an egg yolk with a tablespoon of olive oil. Apply the mask, and leave on for 20 minutes. A guaranteed result of a healthy appearance!

Problem skin:

Acne:

Acne is particularly attracted to oily skin. It can be the product of genes, but might also appear following a hormonal change – puberty, pregnancy, or menopause. Some adults develop acne at the age of 30. Don't worry if you think you're a "special" case, because there are lots and lots of them.

Technically speaking, what's happening on the skin's surface?

The sebaceous glands are too active, and produce too much sebum, which obstructs the skin's pores and gives rise to comedos, blackheads, and – more annoying still – pimples. I know you know what I mean: those whitehead pimples that you so long to "pop" (don't do it!) and that ruin your life.

Helpful hint:

Don't wait too long to see a specialist because acne is a real skin infection, and can not only flare up, but also leave permanent scars. And let's not even talk about the effect regularly occurring pimples can have on your morale and your self-confidence. Whether you're a teenager or an adult, your physical appearance is very important – both to yourself and in how you relate to others. Effective covering make-up exists, as do more or less efficient correctors, but there's nothing like healthy skin to be attractive to others, and yourself.

How to treat acne?

At the risk of seeming repetitive when it comes to acne (I suffered from it a lot, at different times of my life), go and see a dermatologist or an endocrinologist as soon as possible – someone trustworthy, a doctor you've heard or read a lot about, for example, and who will give you professional, personalized advice.

There are some great products currently on the market to treat mild acne, and you might want to try a couple of them. But if there's no sign of improvement, or if the case gets worse, then get to the phone! Don't tell yourself it'll pass in a month or two – it rarely does. Consultation with a doctor, and a panel of blood work, can help you find out where the acne is coming from, and with the right treatment, those nasty pimples will be a thing of the past!

What to do:

- For your daily face washing, use soapless gels or gentle cleaners for acne-prone skin.
- Wash your pillowslips and towels often.
- Always have clean hair, especially if you have a haircut where your hair falls in your eyes (it's best to keep your face clear).
- Don't use too many hair products – wax, oil, rich conditioner.
- If you're an avid phone user, avoid contact between your face and the handset, and clean the latter regularly with a disinfectant wipe.
- Absolutely obligatory: at least once a month, get a facial cleansing with a dermatologist or a dermatological assistant. Because if excavating your own pimples is the worst thing you could do to yourself, and can lead to scars, blemishes, and badly emptied pimples, having enflamed and pussy pimples for too long a time isn't all that great either.

What not to do:

- Avoid overuse of masks or exfoliants that might extend the acne-prone zone and spread bacteria.
- Don't touch your hair or face too often, which spreads impurities.
- Don't use too many treatment products at the same time, or products that are overly abrasive, as they can irritate the skin even more. Don't forget that a skin with acne is a sensitized skin, and often inflamed.
- Forbidden forevermore: scratching and popping your pimples.
- Forget about lazing in the sun all day: it's not your thing. You might feel healthy and sun-kissed at the time, but watch out for the yoyo effect: your acne will come back with a vengeance, and could bring with it its friends – blemishes and scars.

- Don't take any medication that wasn't prescribed for you. Even if your girlfriend's acne looks just like yours, it almost certainly doesn't have the same origins.
- Stop feeling like your acne is your fault. It isn't. Thinking about it all day and spending hours in front of the mirror cursing the whole world won't change a thing. So, while you don't have to forget about it entirely, at least try to think about things more constructively. With patience and the right treatment, you'll get to the bottom of the problem.
- Quit eating simple sugars like candy, cookies, pastries, and chocolate. Even if they weren't directly responsible for your acne, they aren't good for you, your excess weight, or your skin.
- Throw out all thick make-up, as it tends to obstruct the pores and stimulate the sebaceous glands.

Caution:

Some anti-acne treatments can be powerful: don't hesitate to contact your doctor if you think the one you're taking is not right for you. In addition, if you're pregnant or trying to become so, the absorption of some elements is inadvisable, either externally or internally, so get all the information you can before making any decisions.

Tried and true recipes:

To get rid of a pimple in short time, here are some quick tricks. Up to you to decide which one works best for you!

- To quickly and effectively dry out a pimple, soak a cotton ball in very hot mineral water mixed with a lot of salt. Apply to the pimple for several minutes. Spectacular results guaranteed!
- Honey is also known for its astringent and anti-bacterial effects. Apply it directly to the pimple for 15 minutes.

Top tip:

Make a small amount of paste by mixing bicarbonate of soda with mineral water: apply directly to the pimple and cover with a self-adhesive bandage such as a Band Aid®. Keep on overnight.

Another tip:

Dab some tea tree oil on the pimple. Repeat two or three times over the course of the day.

Wrinkles

When can you expect your first wrinkles?

There are no set rules. As an adult, wrinkles can appear at any age, but clearly, the more dry and dehydrated your skin, the earlier they can become your daily enemy. The more hydrated and elastic your skin, the longer it will stay youthful.

What to do:

- Moisturize every day, especially if your skin is dry and dehydrated, and moisturize in every sense of the term: externally, through the use of products such

as creams (if your skin is dry) or emulsions (if you have combination or oily skin) as well as internally, because you might be in a state of slight dehydration, so don't forget to drink those two liters of water every day. It's great for you, and your skin.

- Are you getting up there in years? Feel free to use and abuse anti-wrinkle creams and switch brands often. Research and progress into anti-aging of the skin advance every day, and one cream might have a better result for you than another.
- Don't fixate on your wrinkles – there's nothing worse than stress and anxiety to dig nasty expression lines on your face: happiness and joy are the key for both you and your skin. So smile and don't dwell too long on the years passing by. There's some good in all phases of your life, and you can't beat maturity, wisdom, and experience – remember how uncomfortable you were in your own skin when you were 17 years old?

What not to do?

- Just say no to intensive tanning sessions that dehydrate and dry out your skin, and are especially deadly to the skin around your eyes and mouth. If you do expose yourself to the sun, use sunscreen with a very high SPF, especially when at the beach or in the mountains.
- Don't use too much vivid lipstick: when the make-up runs, those colors emphasize wrinkles.
- Avoid frequent frowning or squinting at the sun: that type of expression line is quite unflattering. Get used to wearing sunglasses when you're on vacation or if you live somewhere sunny. Plus, it's better for your eyes.

What you should know:

- If your wrinkles have you on the brink of a nervous breakdown, make an appointment with your dermatologist for a peeling that will leave your skin totally renewed.
- There are many new filling products on the market, as well as products that temporarily paralyze the muscles that cause some wrinkles. New lasers have also come to the light of the day. All these new technologies are used every day, the world over, and for the most part are not permanent; they are not, however, to be taken lightly, because some are not without their risks.
- Your last resort: lifting. A lot of changes occur with this technique as well.
- Nevertheless, the most renowned or the most expensive surgeon won't always be the best one for you. Don't hesitate to check his or her diplomas, his or her years of experience, and to consult two or three specialists to get different opinions. And word of mouth is still a great search engine.

Eyes

Dark rings under the eyes

Dark rings under the eyes are not to be confused with bags under the eyes. To fully disappear, the latter generally require the intervention of a cosmetic surgeon, while rings

are often the result of tiredness or a change in color, and can therefore be remedied by yourself.

What to do:

- Sleep, sleep, and sleep some more.
- Get some air – there's nothing like a good walk.
- Moisturize your skin and don't forget to drink your two liters of water a day.
- Just for the aesthetics of it, choose a concealer that isn't too fluid or too thick, one shade lighter than that of your skin.
- Remember to remove make-up from your whole face, including the contours of your eyes, every night.

What not to do:

- Don't stay inside all day.
- Get rid of that cigarette!

Grandma's secret recipes:

- For puffy eyes, you can't beat a teabag. Immerse your bag for a few minutes for it to absorb the water. Even better – kill two birds with one stone and squeeze out the teabag you used for your cup of tea. Apply the wrung out teabag to each eye for a couple of minutes (it can be cold or warm, but make sure it's not too hot).
- Another solution: cucumber slices, placed over both eyes for a few minutes, like compresses. Lie down while you're doing it, it's easier, and more relaxing!

Cheap solutions:

Put a few ice cubes in a towel or a face cloth, and apply to your eyes for a short amount of time. It's great for dark rings under the eye and puffy eyes!

Star power:

Quick, easy, and efficient. Mix one teaspoon of honey with half a glass of warm water. Soak two cotton balls in the mix, squeeze them out, and apply them directly to closed eyes for five minutes. You've never seen such toned skin!

What you should know:

Apply only a very small amount of product around the eye because the very fine skin there can't absorb much. Too much product might even make your eyes seem puffy when you wake up. To apply, gently tap the product on, moving from the inside towards the outside.

The mouth:

The mouth and lips are great elements of seduction. You only have to check out the effect that Angelina Jolie has on most of our male counterparts...

Pretty lips might be all very well and sexy, but badly hydrated, they can be the first sign of age. So I don't need to tell you how important it is to take care of them.

What to do:

- If you wear make-up, use moisturizing lipstick or lip gloss.
- If you have dead skin, take advantage of being in the bath to gently exfoliate your mouth and get rid of all the unflattering flakes of skin.
- Just as you use face cream every day, moisturize your lips on a daily basis – they need it too. Choose a lip balm with enough of a moisturizing effect, if possible with a built-in SPF filter, and make sure you use it as often as you need to during the day. It will make your lips softer and more beautiful. Say goodbye to dead skin!

What not to do:

- So-called long-lasting lipsticks are often quite dehydrating, so be careful when choosing them.
- Stop using your tweezers to pull dead skin off your lips. It's unhygienic, and you run the risk of sloughing off too much skin at one time.

Quick tip:

If you don't have any exfoliant, you can use your wash cloth or a soft toothbrush, but make sure you rub gently – you don't want to rip all the skin off your lips.

Grandma's secret recipe:

Make your own lip balm. Mix a tablespoon of honey with a teaspoon of rose water. Put the salve thus obtained in a little container to carry around with you. Use without moderation!

Breath:

Watch out: while your mouth and a nice smile with white teeth can be great assets, bad breath is most definitely not so.

Hints:

- Have impeccable teeth. Brush them – and your gums – properly at least twice a day. Don't skip the oh so tiresome nighttime session before you go to bed (and don't come up with excuses like, "I'm too tired," or "I forgot"). It would be a shame to spend the night with food caught between your teeth and get cavities.
- Get your teeth scaled at the dentist's at least once a year. You have to see him or her that often anyway, to make sure everything's okay, so you might as well kill two birds with one stone.
- When you brush your teeth, remember to brush your tongue too. Bacteria can develop there, and cause bad breath.

Grandma's secret recipe:

To freshen your breath, add a few drops of lemon juice to your water.

Hair:

Fine hair:

How to recognize it:

Fine hair is easy to recognize because it's a pain in the neck to deal with every day. This type of hair is nearly always limp, without volume or style. Fine hair looks best the day it's washed, but it quickly loses its body.

What to do:

- Switch shampoos regularly, it makes your hair happy. Keep two or three of your favorite shampoos at the ready in your bathroom. For instance, you might choose one shampoo for normal hair (for frequent usage) and two fine hair shampoos that work well on your hair. If possible, make sure the fine hair shampoos have different compositions. Alternate continuously.
- There's only one real solution for this hair type: cheating! Make an appointment with your hairdresser and ask for a haircut that adds volume to your hair – a layered, semi-long bob, for instance, if it suits your face. Get a few highlights one tone lighter than your natural hair color, and ask your colorist to dye the tips of your hair even lighter. Volumizing effect guaranteed!
- Use styling mousse: it does amazing things with fine hair.

Try this:

Don't be scared to try new hairstyling techniques if you have the time: blow-dryer, curling iron, normal or heated hair rollers, gel...If something doesn't work the first time you try it, don't give up: you'll be surprised at your own dexterity and your new hairdo in a few weeks' time.

What not to do:

- Forever prohibit perms and hair straightening – they'd be awful to your fine hair. Instead, make use of the abovementioned hair techniques.

What you should know:

Don't overuse conditioner or hair styling products: they can make your hair heavy.

Tip:

To strengthen your hair, add an egg to your shampoo routine. Leave in for one to two minutes before rinsing.

Grandma's secret recipe:

To add texture to fine hair, place a few drops of beer (yes, you read that right!) on your roots. Massage the hair very gently, without rubbing, to spread the product over the scalp. Guaranteed volume and easy upkeep. But be careful not to overdose on the beer: you don't want to smell like a brewery.

Dry hair:**How to recognize it:**

Dry hair is always dehydrated, especially at the ends. It breaks easily, and doesn't require daily cleaning. Dry hair is nearly always associated with dry skin.

What do to:

- After washing, you can use a moisturizing conditioner on the ends of your hair, but make sure it's not too rich, because overloading your hair with product is never a good thing. Even better than a conditioner, use a highly nourishing hair mask two to three times a month, which you should let set for at least ten minutes.
- Don't wash your hair too often: wait until it's dirty and choose gentle, non-aggressive shampoo, as your scalp might be very sensitive.

What not to do:

- Watch out for the sun: it dries out your hair even more. Use SPF oils, sprays, and protective creams. Reapply frequently, especially if you swim a lot.
- Avoid using hair elastics that will damage your hair, as well as buns that are too tight.
- When blow-drying your hair, always use products that protect your hair from the heat of your blow-dryer.

What you should know:

Pools are often loaded with chlorine or other products that don't necessarily bond well with your hair. So, just like you would at the beach or out in the sun, before you go swimming, protect your hair with the appropriate capillary oil. Wearing a swimming cap to protect your hair might not be very sexy, but it works.

Top tip:

Crush an avocado to get the consistency of guacamole. Mix it with two tablespoons of olive oil and a whole egg. Apply the mixture to your hair, cover with a shower cap or a sheet of aluminum foil for at least ten minutes. For even better results, let it sit for an hour, if you can. Rinse and wash. Results: the ends of your hair are nourished and hydrated, and your hair is shiny and full of life – vibrantly beautiful!

Oily hair:

How to recognize it:

You often feel like they're never really clean. The roots are oily, and the oiliness rapidly spreads over the rest of the hair. You only comfortable if you wash your hair every day. Oily hair can be synonymous with limp, dandruffy hair, and is generally associated with oily skin.

What to do:

- It's imperative that you get a blood work-up with your endocrinologist because oily hair, just like oily skin, is often the result of a hormonal imbalance (elevated male hormone levels, etc.) or a birth control pill that doesn't quite suit your body.

- When it comes to shampoo, choose gentle, natural formulae for normal hair or frequent usage, since overly aggressive products can stimulate the sebaceous glands even more.
- If you're going swimming over the holidays or throughout the year, go for the sea rather than the pool. Salt water does great things for your scalp – but don't forget to protect the length and ends of your hair.
- Try not to fiddle with your hair: love it, and treat it with care. It might seem difficult right now, but with a lot of patience, you'll be overjoyed with the results you've achieved. In any case, don't over do it: stress is bad for your hair.

What not to do:

- Above all, don't listen to anyone who tells you that washing your hair every day is bad. In many cases it's true, but most certainly not in yours. There's nothing worse than suffocating your hair follicles with an overload of sebum. It could make your hair's growth pattern change – and even cause you to shed.
- You might think you're being thorough by rubbing crazily at your scalp when washing your hair, but you couldn't be more wrong! Massage your scalp very gently and softly for a few seconds instead, to remove dirt and oxygenate the skin without harming it.
- Don't use overly hot water to wash your hair.
- Stop yourself from brushing your hair throughout the day: it only spreads oil from the roots over the length.

Note:

- Use your blow-dryer with moderation. The heat that it gives off isn't good for your hair, especially since you're probably washing it every day as well. Instead, towel dry your hair, or use paper towels. And once again, don't be too vigorous.

Grandma's secret recipe:

Mix a teaspoon of bicarbonate soda into your shampoo: it will non-aggressively remove all residue and greasiness, and leave you with really clean hair.

Normal hair:

How to recognize it:

Normal hair is nearly as rare as normal skin. It's hair that's neither too fine nor too thick, that never gives you any cause for grief. It's easy to brush, easy to untangle, not too dry at the ends, nor too oily at the root. In short, normal hair is dream hair!

What to do:

- Nothing special – washing it twice a week should be enough.
- Brush once in the morning and once at night to gently move air through it.

- Select products for normal hair, and make sure they're not too moisturizing as that might weigh your hair down unnecessarily. Be especially careful not to choose products that are overly harsh on your scalp.

What not to do:

- Too many treatments, masks, and conditioners can change the nature of your hair. Which would be a real shame – you're luckier than you know to have normal hair!

Combination hair:

How to recognize it:

Combination hair is very common. It has dry ends, with oil-prone roots. It often has split ends, is dehydrated, and collects dirt easily.

What do to:

- Wash your hair every two to three days. Alternate shampoos: for example, one time use a shampoo for normal hair, the next a shampoo for combination hair.
- If you use conditioners or masks, apply them only on the ends of your hair.
- If you don't have much time, apply a small layer of strengthening and moisturizing cream that doesn't require rinsing to the ends of your hair.

What not to do:

- Stop washing your hair with overly hot water. Use warm water instead, and finish the treatment by rinsing with cold water. It's great for microcirculation, and doesn't stimulate the sebaceous glands.
- If you apply conditioner or a mask on the ends of your hair, don't extend the sitting time. Those products tend to weigh down your hair type, which is often limp and hard to manage.

Note:

Combination hair can have a tendency towards dullness, so avoid overuse of hair styling products, as it dulls it even more.

Tip:

If you want to apply a hair mask to your hair, but avoid weighing down the roots, make a ponytail and spread the cream only on the hair you've tied up. Make sure you grabbed a soft elastic band, and don't make it too tight: there's no point in damaging your hair or giving yourself a headache when you're trying to relax!

Basic tips for all hair types:

Hint:

Heat facilitates the penetration of active ingredients, so let your hair mask sit while you're in the bath. If you can't take a bath, cover your scalp with aluminum foil, which is just as effective. Either way, keep the mask on for at least ten minutes, and rinse thoroughly.

Grandma's secret recipe:

When you've washed your hair, add a few drops of white vinegar or lemon juice to the last rinse: shine guaranteed!

Tips:

- For the well-being of both your hair and your scalp, avoid tying your hair back too tightly.
- If you think tap water isn't good for your hair – which might be the case, since more and more, water is loaded with all sorts of products – use a bottle of mineral water for your last rinse.

Static electricity:

In cities like New York, winter can infuse your hair with static electricity. To stop the phenomenon short, dampen your hands with a few drops of water (two or three are fine – just enough to get them moist) and run your fingers through your hair. You can do that with your brush as well. Watch out – not too much water or you'll have to style your hair again!

Accessories:

Buy extremely high quality brushes and combs. Don't shirk at the price: you'll keep them for years.

Make sure you wash your accessories on a regular basis. They collect dirt easily too, and could spread impurities and bacteria to your scalp.

Hair problems:**Dandruff:**

For a long time, it was believed the dandruff was exclusive to oily hair and caused by an excess of sebum. This is often the case, but dandruff also occurs in dry hair. Some theories indicate that it might be linked to stress. People with dandruff tend to make us think that they're unhygienic, even though that's rarely true. It also creates the additional challenge of a more sensitive scalp, and itchiness.

Solutions:

Very effective anti-dandruff shampoos do exist, and it's up to you to decide your "hair budget," but frankly, you don't have to choose the more expensive products. You can find your wonder shampoo for cheap anywhere, even at a supermarket. But there are no miracles: if you stop treatment, it's almost guaranteed that those little white particles will crop up again, sullying your tops in no time at all.

Grandma's secret recipe:

To fight dandruff, massage your scalp with sea salt. Then wash hair with your regular shampoo.

Tip:

If you don't have any anti-dandruff shampoo, mix a few drops of tea tree oil in with your frequent usage shampoo. Don't do this more than once or twice a week.

Hair loss:

What a pain. With the increasing emphasis placed on physical appearance, there's no need to explain how nerve-racking it can be to see one's hair on the pillow or fall out in the shower every day, unable to do anything about it. But stay positive: you might have lost the battle, but the war is still being fought.

More information on hair:

Most people have 100,000 to 150,000 hairs growing on their head at a rate of about one centimeter a year.

The life cycle of a hair has three phases: the **anagen** phase, where the hair is active and grows for about three years. The **catagen** phase marks the end of the hair's growth. The last phase, called the **rest** phase, consists of the dead hair being replaced by a new one. The same hair follicle goes through about 25 cycles, so hair loss is a perfectly natural process. Nevertheless, if you notice that you're losing more than usual, and you estimate the loss at more than 100 individual strands a day, then it's time to start worrying.

Why hair falls out:

There many reasons for hair loss, and they can range from hormonal changes due to pregnancy or menopause to a birth control pill change, but shock, stress, fatigue, illness, and some medical treatments can cause hair loss. This phenomenon can be temporary, chronic, or hereditary.

Note:

Iron deficiency is a frequent cause of hair loss in women, and is usually brought about by an insufficient diet and by menstruation.

What to do:

- If you want to be thorough, go to a dermatologist or an endocrinologist, because a blood work-up is essential. That way, if the hair loss is due to a hormonal imbalance or something that's easily treatable, things can quickly get put right with the appropriate treatment.
- Even if the cause of the hair loss is hormonal, fatigue and overwork certainly don't help. Make sure you get enough sleep and try to lead a healthy lifestyle: eat regular, varied meals that are good for you. Drink a lot, and take the time to relax.
- While some vitamin complexes, local treatments and ampoules might not totally fix a hair loss problem, they can diminish its effects, and stimulate microcirculation of the scalp. Again, get advice from your doctor.

What not to do:

- Smoke.
- Avoid self-medication, even for localized treatments, as they might not target your type of hair loss at all.

- Don't drive yourself crazy about your hair loss by thinking about it twenty four hours a day: you'll just get more stressed, and it could exacerbate the problem. It's worse for your hair, but also for your morale, not to mention the rest of your body!
- For good hair and scalp health, avoid tight or binding hairstyles.

A word of advice:

Your hair loss might be temporary, especially if it coincides with seasonal or temperature changes. If it gets worse, or is continuous, don't wait to seek professional advice or help. The loss could be a symptom of many other health-related factors, so it's important to know why it's happening. Also, the longer you wait, the more hair you could lose, and it takes a long time to restore your head to its original luster. That's tough on your morale, so don't delay!

Hair color :

Whether permanent, semi-permanent, or just highlights, hair coloring has been all the rage for many years. Thankfully, the products that are used have evolved a lot, and are far less aggressive on your hair than they were ten years ago. Still, don't abuse them, or you might find yourself with fragile or damaged hair.

It's up to you whether you dye your hair at home or at the hairdresser. Today, professional and consumer products are pretty much the same, but it's hard to match the skills of a good professional colorist (even if some very bad ones – and they do exist – have you leaving the salon feeling uglier than when you walked in).

As a general rule, if you're used to dyeing your roots or gray hair yourself, and are happy with the result, the old adage, "don't fix it if it's not broke" applies. But if it's not a case of a quick cover-up, a professional is probably the wiser solution.

What to do:

- Although practical kits are available, a professional colorist is your best bet if you want a full head of highlights, or want to radically change your existing hair color (for example, from brown to platinum blond). If you don't have a professional colorist, ask a girlfriend whose hair color you've always admired. If you don't have one of *those*, don't hesitate to casually approach someone who's sporting the highlights or color of your dreams, to get the name and address of her colorist. Usually, women will know where you're coming from – and it's always nice to get a compliment.
- In the days immediately following a color or highlight treatment, use a couple of moisturizing and strengthening hair masks. If your hair was stripped or colored in the past, apply the mask more generously on the ends (which will be more fragile because of the past treatments) and along the length of your hair. Let the mask sit for ten minutes and then rinse thoroughly, taking care not to put too much product on your roots as it weighs down your hair.

What not to do:

- Never apply color on clean hair; wait at least two or three days after washing. The dye will adhere better, and, more importantly, will be less aggressive on your scalp.

Note:

A very dark hair color can make you look hard and brittle.

Make-up:

For some of you — the rare ones — make-up is innate: you're great with your hands, have a good sense of the shape of your face, and you quickly ascertain the tones and textures that bring out your beauty. For others it's not quite that simple. Every morning you curse your mascara while in front of your mirror — and let's not even talk about the eyeliner the saleswoman said would be perfect for that big night out that you now want to throw out the window! So, just for you, we're going to go over the basic rules of make-up, one by one, with a few extra little secrets and very simple tricks thrown in. You'll see — it's really a lot easier than it seems.

I-SKIN TONE:

Skin tone is the basis of your make-up scheme, so don't mess it up. It's achieved in four simple steps: preparing your skin, correcting its imperfections, applying foundation, and finishing with powder.

Caution:

When putting on make-up, be very careful about what kind of light you have in your bathroom, because colors can look different under different types of lights. Washrooms in restaurants and offices are often disastrous. So if you don't want to look like a clown, check your make-up as soon as you're outside.

1-Preparing the skin:

What to do:

- There's nothing like clean skin to help make-up adhere properly. Cleanse your skin in the morning and at night, making sure to finish with a toner to remove residual make-up and other impurities.
- Before putting on any make-up, apply an emulsion or day cream appropriate to your skin type.
- Once your skin has been hydrated, wait a couple of minutes before applying any other products.

Note:

The best way to achieve good skin tone and even make-up coverage is still a good night's rest, so relax and get some sleep!

2-Correcting imperfections:

Before you apply your foundation, remember to start by concealing any imperfections: cover the dark circles under your eyes, wrinkles and lines with the help of a concealer. This should be in the same tonal range as your foundation, but one shade lighter.

Application:

- 1- Concealers can come in stick, cream or pencil form. For the first two, work with a fine brush; the pencil can be applied directly.
- 2- Use concealer to soften blemishes, dark rings under the eyes, and also the sides of the nose that are often red or dulled.
- 3- Without smoothing the concealer, gently tap it onto your face to make it adhere.

Note:

- If you have dry skin, choose a moisturizing or liquid concealer; opt for a thicker one if your blemishes are more noticeable.
- You can also cover the whole underside of your eye rather than just the dark rings, because the outside corner of the eye is often red.

Star power:

If you only have one blemish, and it's in a prominent place, take a dark brown eyeliner pencil – make sure it's sharp ! – and color your blemish with it. Powder lightly. Voilà: Cindy Crawford, eat your heart out!

3-Foundation:

Foundation is an asset because it evens out your skin tone. You especially don't want to pass it up if you have slight blemishes or your skin seems dull. All brands offer a variety of textures and dozens of different colors, but foundations that suit you perfectly are few and far between. So persevere and make the right decision, because it's important that your foundation be just right for you. After all, you're going to be wearing it every day!

What to do:

- To avoid the clown effect, when applying your foundation don't forget your neck, the area around your mouth, and your ears (especially if you wear your hair up).
- Select a foundation that is either the same color as your complexion or one shade lighter.
- When choosing your foundation, remember that the oilier your skin, the more you will want your make-up to be matte and its texture light and oil-free. For dry skin, you'll want to find a richer liquid foundation, or a cream. If you have a lot of blemishes, go for a texture that offers a little more coverage.

What not to do:

- Never choose a foundation that's too dark for your complexion. You might think it gives you a healthy glow, but it actually makes you look older. Plus, the disparity between the darkness of your face and the paleness of your chest and hands can be really unflattering. Blush is your best bet if you want to give yourself that healthy glow.

- When putting on your make-up, and particularly when applying foundation, don't always look straight at the mirror – don't forget the side views!

Tip:

When you're buying your foundation and aren't sure of the color, apply it directly to your cheek rather than to your hand, because the tonal differences between the two can be quite striking.

Note:

Foundation tends to go off after about a year. Throw it out if you notice that the color, texture, or smell has changed.

Application:

Compact foundation:

Super practical and easy to use wherever you are. Applied with a sponge.

- 1- Dab a bit of powder onto your sponge and brush it over the back of your hand to remove excess product.
- 2- Apply first to your nose, then your chin and the middle of your forehead before spreading it over the sides of your face.
- 3- Finally, press a tissue to your face (watch out, don't rub your face with it, just let it sit there) to remove any excess product.

Liquid foundation:

- 1- Shake the bottle well before application.
- 2- Take a small amount of product into the palm of your hand and heat it up with your fingers. You don't need more than a few drops.
- 3- Apply foundation gently and slowly with your fingers, first along the median zone described above then over the rest of your face. Don't rub.
- 4- Finally, press a paper towel to your face to remove excess product.

Accessory:

Opt for latex sponges.

Professional hint:

The more translucent your skin tone, the more emphasis will be placed on your eyes and mouth, making you exude youth and energy. For that reason, try to avoid piling on make-up, or choosing a foundation that is too dark.

4- Powder:

How to choose it:

You have the choice between loose powder or a compact. Compacts are easier to carry around with you, and more practical for touch-ups at work or in the evening. Know, however, that professional make-up artists swear by loose powder, because it ensures a more natural, subtle finish. So the choice is yours – and there's no reason you shouldn't choose both: loose powder for home, and a compact for your handbag.

With regards to color, professionals tend to go for neutral and translucent powders, but you might want to take a look at some of the lightly colored products. You could go with a pink shade for tired, dull skin tone, and sun-toned powder for the beginning or end of summer to highlight your healthy glow. Use with moderation!

Application:

- 1- Gather up some powder with a brush or a powder puff.
- 2- Gently tap it over the back of your hand to get rid of excess product.
- 3- If you're using a brush, apply it over your whole face; for a powder puff, press it lightly. In either case, don't forget to go over the contours of your face (they tend to get passed over) but also your lips and eyelids. That also helps your eye shadow and lipstick adhere properly.

5- Blush

Blush – that magic powder, to be worn every day even if you don't use foundation. It makes you look healthy on even the most miserable days, and can also change the shape of your face. Pink-toned blushes are easy to use, and suit pretty much everyone, although some very lovely orange- and brown-toned colors are available.

Blushes can come in cream, mousse, and powder form – so have fun with them, and pick the one that suits you best.

Note:

Professional make-up artists use dark brown blush to make a round face appear slimmer, but be warned – wearing that color in natural daylight can quickly make you look older.

Application:

Powder blush:

- 1- Apply sparingly with a high quality cheekbone brush.
- 2- Once the brush has been dipped in the powder, shake it once before applying to remove any excess product – it'll help you avoid a make-up overload.
- 3- Apply the blush, moving the application brush gently from your cheeks to your temples.

Caution:

Put powder blush on after your loose or compact powder, or the make-up will be too subtle.

Cream or mousse blush:

This type of blush generally provides a more natural look, but it needs to be of good quality for it to go on smoothly, and not in patches.

- 1- Place a small amount of cream or mousse on your index finger. Better too little than too much, even if you have to repeat the process a few times. This method will make sure you don't leave any nasty make-up lines.
- 2- Apply the blush with light, circular movements of your fingers, moving upwards from the cheekbones to the temples.

Caution:

Cream or mousse blushes are to be put on before your powder, as this helps them to last longer on the skin.

Hints:

If you want to redraw the shape of your face with blush, here are some simple tricks:

- For **round faces**, apply blush by moving from the bottom of the cheekbones up to the temples, which you should make darker than the rest. It will give more depth to your face, and make it appear slimmer.
- For **square faces**, apply the blush horizontally on your cheeks, and select a darker blush for your bottom jaw. Start from the middle of the jaw, and move up, ending just below your ears. This softens the square lines of your jawbone.

Learning the ABC's of blush:

Blush makes you look good, but make sure you dab some on your chin and the upper corners of your forehead as well as your cheekbones. Healthy glow guaranteed. But careful: don't get carried away or you'll end up looking like a shiny Christmas tree decoration.

Professional hint:

For the healthiest face possible, adopt a pink-toned blush focal point. To find out where your focal point is, stand in front of the mirror and smile. There it is, at the top of your cheekbone.

II- EYES:

Your eyes are a real weapon in the game of seduction. So while you don't have to get made up like a movie star every day, you do have to put forward a minimal effort. Especially since you can have tons of fun with all the colors and products on the market. Let's proceed in order of application, starting with eye shadow, then moving on to eye pencil, or eyeliner, and finishing with mascara.

1- Eye shadow:

Eye shadow comes in powder, cream, or soft pencil form. It's up to you to find your perfect match, keeping in mind that powdered eye shadow is probably your best bet for ease of application and its stability on the eyelid.

Application:

- 1- Dip a good quality eye shadow brush into your make-up.
- 2- Shake the brush firmly to remove excess powder.
- 3- Apply the lighter colored eye shadow over the whole eyelid.
- 4- Use the darker eye shadow to emphasize the upper side of your eyelashes, as well as the exterior half of your eyelid and the very corner of your eye by moving gently with an upward motion. This will blend the colors progressively, and is a particularly ideal technique if you have small or droopy eyes.

Addendum: If you're only using the one color, apply it to your eyelid, emphasizing the outside of the eye.

Note:

- If you decided on cream eye shadow, take the techniques described above and replace the eye shadow brush with the tip of your finger. Above all though, remember to dab some powder on your eyelid once you're done to make sure the make-up adheres.
- If you opted for the soft pencil eye shadow, apply it directly to your eyelid and smooth with your finger; don't forget to help the eye shadow stay on longer with some neutral toned powder.

Avoid mistakes:

If you want to mix colors, use the back of your hand as a palette to find the exact color you want before brushing it onto your eyelid.

Tip:

Are you a bit heavy-handed with the eye shadow? If so, apply a good layer of translucent powder over your eyelid to tone it down. Don't use too much of *it*, too, though!

Caution:

Make-up brands come up with prettier eye shadow colors year after year, but make sure you choose tones that blend well with the color of your eyes and hair, as well as your complexion. You want to avoid unpleasant combinations, and daytime use of too much sparkly or iridescent eye shadow.

What not to do:

- Don't use pure white eye shadow. Instead, go for off-white or eggshell tones.

For protruding eyes:

- 1- Stock up on dark eye shadow, to be applied all around the eye – both on the upper eyelid and in a fine line under the eyelashes of the lower eyelid.
- 2- Use a dark eye pencil (the same color as the eye shadow if possible) directly on the inside of the lower eyelid, and this along its whole length. Take it easy – no one wants a pencil in their eye.
- 3- Use mascara to thicken your eyelashes as much as possible.

2- Eyeliners and eye pencils:

How to choose them

- Eye pencils:

Never choose eye pencils that are too oily as they tend to flow too quickly. The pencils come in all the colors of the rainbow, but for daytime use, stick to neutral and natural tones close to the color of your mascara.

Application:

Eye pencil is applied at the base of the eyelashes. For a lighter effect, gently smudge the make-up with a very fine brush or a q-tip.

Professional tip:

If your pencil is too dry and difficult to use, heat it up on the back of your hand.

- Eyeliner

Eyeliner gives you an instantly more intense look and the Hollywood starlet gaze of the 1950s. Pick a color – black, brown or taupe – if possible in the same shade as your mascara. If your hands tremble or you aren't all that dexterous, practice practice practice in front of the mirror. If you're still hesitant after all that, go for the eye pencil instead, because in all honesty, drawing two nice, similar lines is a pain in the neck.

Application:

At the base of the eyelashes of your upper eyelid, draw a fine, even line.

Start at the inner corner of your eyelid or in the middle of it, depending on the shape of your eye (you'll have to try both techniques out to see which one fits best), and continue to the outer corner of the eye.

To get that retro look, when you get to the outer corner of the eye, draw the line a little longer, stretching it upward like Marilyn Monroe and Brigitte Bardot.

What you should know:

Painting on the eyeliner too thick makes the eyes appear smaller. So, unless you have protruding eyes, make the line as fine as possible. If, despite this, you still feel like your eyes look too small, choose a lighter colored eyeliner, like taupe.

Professional hint:

If you don't have eyeliner on you, substitute it with a very fine brush that you've moistened and dipped in a dark eye shadow. Don't put too much powder on the brush so that you don't make a mistake. The mix has to remain moist.

3- Mascara:

Mascara is one of make-up's "numero uno's" – it's magic. It sculpts, curves, lengthens, thickens, draws, but most importantly, it radically changes the intensity of your eyes.

Many women who wear little or no make-up will tell you that they never go out without putting on their mascara. And they're right – it changes everything... So it's up to you to find the one that's right.

How to choose it?

- Pick brown or black mascara for everyday use.
You might also want to choose a tinted black – one with blue tints or purple highlights – but brightly colored mascara (such as electric blue) are a thing of the past.
- When it comes to texture, it can't be too liquid or too dry. Aside from that, make your selection based on your needs: thickening if you have fine eyelashes, curl-enhancing if you have straight eyelashes...

- The holidays are coming up and you love going swimming. No problem, you can just buy a waterproof mascara to fit your needs. The only thing is that you'll also have to buy eye make-up remover for waterproof make-up, or you'll have a tough time taking the mascara off.

Application:

- 1- Face the mirror, head tilted slightly back: apply the mascara from the base to the tips of your eyelashes (without touching the eyelid).
- 2- Be careful to separate the eyelashes so that they don't stick to each other. Do this by making small movements from left to right with the applicator. If you make a mess, remove the excess mascara with an eyelash brush.
- 3- Don't forget the eyelashes at the outside corners of the eyes; that will give you an even more intense look.

Quick tip:

To achieve even thicker eyelashes, wait a few seconds for the first layer of mascara to dry and apply a second one.

Hint:

Don't use the edge of the tube to wipe off the excess mascara on the brush. It'll dry out, and not only will it get everything dirty, but it will also get stuck on your brush the next time you use it, leaving you with a lot of mascara globs.

Other tools:

Two other ways to a doe-eyed look:

- The eyelash curler. Squeeze it firmly, once before you put on your mascara and once more when the mascara is on but not yet dry.
- False eyelashes. Place them at the base of the eyelashes of the upper eyelid and press down for a few seconds to make the glue stick. Practice in front of the mirror, because it's no easy feat!

1- Eyebrow pencils and powders

Eyebrows, though often forgotten, are a large part of the weapon of seduction that is your eyes. Unfortunately, they're usually uneven or tweezed into oblivion. Following are a few tips to help you draw and unify your eyebrows for a flawless look.

Pencils or powders? How to choose?

- Powder is definitely the more natural-looking solution, but it requires a brush.
- The pencil offers more coverage, and is best suited to very sparse eyebrows.
- In either case, pick dry, matte powders and pencils.
- The natural color of your eyebrows should approximately match that of the pencil or powder. If your eyebrows are light, or bleached by the sun, go for a tone that resembles that of your hair.

Application:

- 1- Smooth out your eyebrows with an eyebrow brush, moving in the direction of their natural line. This will facilitate make-up application.
- 2- Take your pencil, or dab some powder on your eyebrow brush (shake it firmly to remove any excess product) and draw your eyebrow, starting with the inside and moving to the outside. The line you draw should be thicker on the inside, and get progressively finer until the end.
- 3- Go over the eyebrows one last time with an eyebrow brush to unify and harmonize them.

Quick tip:

If you've put on too much make-up, remove the excess with your eyebrow brush and apply a layer of translucent powder to soften the line. Not too much powder – you don't want Santa Claus eyebrows.

Another tip:

To shape your eyebrows and make them slightly more intense when you're out and about and don't have much make-up on you, use your mascara – but go sparingly.

Models Inc.:

Did you forget your eyebrow brush at home? A toothbrush will do the job just fine.

Hint:

Do you recognize yourself in one of these statements: you don't like your eyebrows, you think they're too bushy, or you just want to change their shape? Be careful – it's not an easy task, and it can drastically change your eyes and your look. Before going ahead, ask advice from a professional.

If you're really set on redesigning your eyebrows yourself, take your (preferably disinfected) tweezers and remove the hairs. Do this in a few sessions to curb your enthusiasm and make sure you don't end up with overly thin – or non-existent! – eyebrows.

What you should know:

We all follow a lot of different trends, especially when we're young and really want that "what's hot" look. Know though that when eyebrows are tweezed for a long time, some hairs might never grow back. You could end up with an eyebrow line that's too thin for your face, or with basically non-existent eyebrows. And the only solution to that problem is permanent make-up: not fun.

III- THE LIPS:

Most people believe that lips are the ultimate in sensuality. Unfortunately, a lot of you don't like their mouth, which is a shame because it's often unjustified: your mouth might have others raving, and still be unattractive to you. In any case, don't neglect it, because that's all people see when you talk.

1- The basics:

Lips must be clean and hydrated for make-up to adhere properly to them.

Hint:

Never emphasize your eyes and lips with the same intensity. You'll lose a lot in impact. Choose one or the other – preferably your best asset.

2- Lip liner:

You can do without this, especially if you have full lips or only wear transparent glosses. On the plus side: lip liner stops lipstick from running, and can even out the shape of the mouth, as many women have lips that are either asymmetrical or too thin for their liking.

How to choose it?

- Color selection: dusky rose looks good on a lot of women. In general terms, choose a natural color that is close to the tone of your lips. That whole dark brown line around the lips so popular in the 1980s is well and truly a thing of the past.
- The lip liner pencil should be neither too runny nor too dry.

Application:

- 1- Sharpen your pencil.
- 2- Always start with the middle of your upper lip and continue outward. Do the side you're more comfortable with first, and then try to replicate what you did on the other half of the upper lip.
- 3- Same process for the bottom lip.
- 4- Don't smudge the color, and don't try to spread it out with your fingers. The line should be fine, even, and subtle.
- 5- Carefully place a tissue on your lips to remove any excess liner.
- 6- Cover the line with translucent powder to make it last longer.

Go that extra step:

To create a flawless mouth, once you've gone over the contours of your lips with the liner, use it to fill in the whole mouth. Your lipstick or gloss will also adhere better that way.

Corrections:**Your lips are too thin:**

- Make sure your lip liner is a neutral color.
- Use the same technique described above, but instead of drawing the line directly around the contours of your mouth, cheat a bit: draw it just above the natural lip line. You should be only just over the lips (too far above the outline of your mouth and you'll end up looking vulgar).
- You might want to make only one lip fuller if the other one looks fine .

What you should know:

Dark or matte colors visibly diminish the volume of your lips, so you should ban those if you have thin lips. If that's the case, go for a gloss or a light colored lipstick.

Professional hint:

To visibly enhance your mouth, apply a cream or eggshell eye shadow to the middle of your bottom lip once you've put your lipstick on. Gently tap the powder, and spread lightly with your finger.

Your mouth is asymmetrical:

A more complicated problem, and one that requires a lot of dexterity to correct. You'll have to very carefully reshape your mouth with your lip liner.

Apply the lip liner to the contour of whatever half of your lip seems fullest or more even. Duplicate the same line on the other side of the lip.

Ask your aesthetician, if you have one, to show you how to do it.

3- Lipstick:

How to choose it?

Lipstick comes in all colors and textures: matte, sparkly, iridescent, lacquered, glossy, offering more or less coverage, in tube, cream, or pencil form.

Try to choose a moisturizing lipstick if possible, because some can dry your lips out and highlight the little lines around your mouth.

Choose a soft color or a gloss for daytime use, especially if you're the classical or sporty type. If, however, you're more eccentric and are drawn to more flashy colors, why not?

But keep in mind that your lipstick has to blend with the color of your eyes, and even that of your top.

Caution:

Fuchsia tones are a no-no if you don't have really white teeth: they bring out the yellow tint of teeth.

Application:

- 1- Apply your lipstick directly or use a brush.
- 2- Always start with the middle of your mouth and move out towards the sides with clean-cut movements. Try not to go over the lines of your mouth, because some red tones can quickly dye the skin.
- 3- Press a tissue onto your lips, without rubbing, to remove excess product.
- 4- For a more long-term effect, apply a second layer of make-up and use the tissue press again.

If you want to achieve a really matte look, powder your mouth lightly after your lipstick is on.

Professional hint:

To make your lipstick stay on longer, dab on some powder before applying lipstick.

Star power:

To get a more sensuous, sexy-looking mouth, smooth a small amount of gloss or iridescent lipstick on the middle of your lower lip. Make sure you use a tone that is one shade lighter than the rest of your mouth.

Grandma's secret recipe:

This works every time to avoid getting lipstick on your teeth. Wrap a tissue around your index finger. Make a small "O" shape with your mouth. Push your finger in and out of your mouth once to remove excess lipstick.

Make-up accessories:

Your accessories are your everyday tools, and they're important, so although synthetic brushes might be economical, go for quality brushes made from badger, marten, or polecat hair.

Choosing a good brush is as easy as pressing firmly down on the hairs: if they spring back up immediately, you're good to go!

THE BODY

In the past few years, the body has been stripped progressively bare. The cult of the perfect body and its followers have created a veritable explosion in the realm of cosmetic surgery and diets of all sorts – unfortunately accompanied by lots of unnecessary, sometimes even harmful, excesses. Nevertheless, there are some advantages to this movement: many of us have taken up a sport, maintain healthy eating habits, and have a very natural desire to remain youthful and healthy for as long as possible. So, following are some simple and efficient tips to help keep your body in shape. On the agenda: legs, arms, hands, back, breasts... but also skin.

Breasts:

Breasts are one of a woman's most potent assets, so they're well worth some attention, even if you might tend to forget about them on an everyday basis. If they're too big, you curse them when you're exercising; if they're too small, you obsess about them and save up to get implants. In the meantime, you opt for a triple-padded bra, and you're fine with that as long as you're still dressed.

Whatever you feel about your breasts, know that small, everyday actions can make them look better, and help maintain a youthful firmness and shape.

What you should know:

Your breasts are made up mostly of glands. It is supported by a few muscles, but also by skin. To drastically alter your breasts, there's no secret recipe: the only solution is cosmetic surgery. The same for stretch marks: no miracles there, either – you'll need to consult a dermatologist. There are solutions available for them, but they'll be hard to get rid of them completely. In any case, be careful: the results aren't always what you expected, and are often irreversible.

What to do:

- Whatever else you do, stand up straight! First of all, it's more attractive. Second, it makes you look a few centimeters taller, which is great for women who feel they're too short. But mostly, it helps to support your breasts.
- Use a few well-placed sprays of cold water on your chest at the end of your shower. It might be hard at first, but you'll quickly get used to it. There are even

- bell-shaped devices that spray cold water directly on your breasts if you'd rather not use the shower. It really works to enhance skin firmness.
- If a cold water shower is out of the question, you can always pick up a refrigerating brassiere.
 - At least once a day, do a few minutes of exercises to target your breasts: smile wider than usual, using the muscles of your neck as much as possible.
 - One of the first steps to maintaining and hydrating the skin on your breasts and chest is using a very gentle face exfoliant three to four times a month. Exfoliate softly and then apply a hydrating mask for about ten minutes. Remember to avoid the areolae.

What not to do:

- Young or not, don't go running to the cosmetic surgeon at the first sign of a complex. Interventions on the chest of a very young woman are not always advisable, either physically or psychologically. Conversely, in an older woman, that type of operation is never routine.

Hint:

If you want an operation to dramatically alter your chest, you should be one hundred percent sure that you want it, that you're psychologically ready, that it's not a whim or stemming from a mild depression or a low point in your love life. A 36C isn't the magic answer to a long-lasting relationship.

By the same token, if you want to get a serious breast reduction done – and especially if you're very young – think long and hard before going through with it, because you might regret it in later years, and find your breasts much too small.

Be extremely careful when choosing your surgeon. He or she must have the requisite diplomas, a lot of experience, and should have good word of mouth advertising as well (if at all possible, you should have seen real-life “before and after” results, not just photos). S/he should take the time to really explain the procedure to you: the operation, the anesthetic, the post-op effects, the risks and potential disappointments. S/he should also try to ensure your psychological readiness. After all, you're talking about an important part of your body, and by extension yourself. Never forget that this type of decision is irreversible.

Go that extra step:

A lot of products targeting breast firmness are available in the form of ampoules or creams. If you use them regularly, in the long term you could get some good results. To optimize them, make sure your skin is clean and healthy: the active ingredients will be a lot more efficient. So exfoliate your chest and breasts once a week, very gently, to remove dead skin cells and impurities, avoiding the nipples.

Tip:

Before applying gels and creams for the chest, put them in the fridge. They'll be all the more efficient.

Star power:

If you're going out and are wearing a décolleté, powder the curve of your breasts with white eye shadow or a pearl colored powder. It will give you noticeably more volume.

Legs:

Heavy legs:

How to recognize them?

You have a hard time standing up or sitting down for long periods of time. The bottom of your legs always feel heavy, and long airplane trips make your ankles swell up to twice their usual size. No two ways about it, you have heavy legs with bad circulation. Not only is that not very good for you, but it also stops you from having the silhouette of your dreams. You should also be aware that bad circulation in the legs can worsen cellulite! Don't just ignore the problem: there are a lot of easy steps you can take to help you stay light on your toes.

What to do:

- Elevate the end of your bed with a bolster. If that's not technically possible, place a pillow or cushion under your feet.
- When you're reading or watching TV, make sure you always have your legs up. If you sit in an armchair, rest them on a table placed in front of you. If you're stretched out on the couch, use the arm rests for your legs.
- Do as much exercise and sports as you can: walking (always good), bicycling, swimming at least three times a week. Whatever you do, stay active and don't sit in front of TV all weekend.
- Drink at least two liters of water a day.
- If you wax, use cold or warm wax over hot wax – which is a definite no-no for you.
- Consult a phlebologist at the first sign of varicose veins.
- If your heavy legs are a problem on a day-to-day basis, ask your doctor to prescribe a good phlebotonic. For mild cases of heaviness, you might want to opt for a plant complex for heavy legs, made from red vine leaf, chestnut, and hamamelis.
- Spray your legs with ice cold water morning and night (go from the bottom of your legs to the top). It's a bit of a pain in winter, but there's nothing like the ensuing feeling of lightness and well-being. It's the simplest solution, but also one of the most efficient; it's also great for swollen legs, skin firmness, and cellulite.
- If you have a few minutes, treat yourself to cold gels for heavy legs, or toning oils. Accompany their application with a light massage, always moving from the bottom of your legs to the top.
- Wear control pantyhose: they're very effective, and a lot sexier than they used to be. A must-have for long trips.
- First and foremost, keep in shape. Excess weight can exacerbate problems related to heavy legs.

What not to do:

- Say no to baths that are too hot.

- Don't cross your legs – it cuts off circulation. Having good posture should be at the back of your mind whenever you're sitting or standing up.
- Give up on socks, knee-highs, and shoes that are too tight.
- Don't expose your legs to the sun. It makes them swell up even more and is counterproductive for your varicose veins. However, if you're lucky enough to be at the beach, take a walk on the shore every day. It's a real exercise in youthfulness!
- Don't wear clothes that are too tight or pants that are too revealing.

Traditional treatment:

Manual lymphatic drainage is age old, and has always worked effectively on heavy legs. It stimulates blood circulation, elimination of toxins, and lessens water retention. It's also a great choice if you tend to suffer from cellulite. The ideal treatment lasts about ten sessions – one a week – especially in summer. If you decide to pursue a maintenance program, with treatments once or twice a month, that's even better.

Water retention:

If you tend to retain water in general, or more specifically in your legs, watermelon will work wonders for you. It's well known for its diuretic properties, and it brings down bloating in no time at all. Don't be surprised if you can't seem to stop urinating in the hours following consumption – it's proof that it's working. For best results, eat the watermelon on an empty stomach or in between meals.

Most importantly, don't forget to drink at least two liters of water a day.

Cellulite:

Cellulite is the little black cloud of doom following nearly every woman. It starts plaguing us at puberty, and likes us so much it never goes away! And it just keeps finding reasons to up its ante: hormonal changes, stress, menopause, pregnancy... Following are a few hints for fighting it.

What to do:

- Drink at least two liters of water a day. Try to drink before meals rather than during or after.
- Exercise at least three times a week. Walking, swimming, and bicycling are all excellent activities.
- Give yourself massages whenever you can, with ascending movements. A good example is each time you apply your moisturizing lotion.
- Take showers rather than hot baths. Rub your legs with a massage glove, and end with a quick cold water rinse. Anything that gets your circulation going is great against cellulite.
- Eat balanced and varied meals, at set times. Avoid large portions.

What not to do:

- Say no to simple sugars (candy, biscuits, pastries of any kind), forever after.
- Alcohol and cigarettes are another no-no.

What you should know:

Tablets of red vine leaf, chestnut, and hamamelis have positive effects on circulation and on heavy legs. Taking them over the long term can also have a positive effect on your cellulite.

Treatment:

Endermology is an external treatment that offers excellent results if you stick to it and don't decide to eat larger meal portions to even things out. Endermology attacks your cellulite through a series of lifting and rolling motions. For optimal results, schedule at least ten sessions. Ideally, you should continue on a maintenance program once you've achieved the results you wanted. You'll also notice a real improvement in your skin's tonal qualities with this treatment.

Liposuction:

While the French are not, generally speaking, huge fans of cosmetic surgery, I can totally understand how, after years of struggling in vain with cellulite, one might want to move onto a more radical solution. Don't forget that cosmetic surgery can change your life for the better if you get good results, but it can also turn it into a living – and often irreversible – nightmare if something goes wrong.

Hint:

- Choose a surgeon who has the requisite experience and diplomas. Don't hesitate to see a few before making your choice.
- Word of mouth is still a great way to find a surgeon. It's best to have seen good "before and after" results on a few people (although that doesn't guarantee you the same results).
- The surgeon should explain the different techniques available and thoroughly discuss whichever one s/he deems best suited to your situation. S/he should listen to your, but also warn you of all possible risks.
- Most importantly, be one hundred percent sure that you want to go through with the procedure, that it's not a whim, and that your skin and body are ready for it. It would be a shame for your thighs to look wavy and dimpled after the surgery – which is still a frequent occurrence.

Basic hints for all legs:

Having beautiful legs requires a healthy lifestyle and a minimum amount of exercise to maintain muscle tone, but it's just as important to have good skin. So once or twice a week, do a gommage on your legs using a body exfoliant. The days you don't exfoliate, rub your legs with a massage glove (it's great for the circulation) – but don't scrub too hard. Your skin will be as soft as a baby's in no time!

What you should know:

Gommages and exfoliants are advised if you have ingrown hairs.

Grandma's secret recipe:

If the skin on your legs is scaly, mix two teaspoons of coarse sea salt with one teaspoon of white vinegar. Massage your legs for one to two minutes with your homemade gommage before stepping into the shower. Finish with the application of a moisturizing body lotion.

The back:

Your back is neglected all too often, but it's the building block for your clothes. Bare, it can cause a stir, especially when it's sporting a long dress that's so open it reveals your behind – à la Mireille Darc in the movie *Tall Blond Man with One Black Shoe*. So stand up straight, shoulders back, and don't forget to work the muscles of your back or eventually, you'll pay dearly for the neglect with pain.

What to do:

- Whether you want to show it off in a swimsuit to the world or keep it for your partner's eyes only, don't forget to exfoliate your back once or twice a week. Use a long-handled wooden brush to help you.
- Also remember to regularly moisturize the skin with a body lotion. It'll be easier if you have a willing partner, but, if you're on your own, a few twists and turns (that look more like contortions) should do the trick.
- Check your skin for blackheads. You might not be able to see them, but their unsightliness makes it look like you are neglecting yourself. If your back sports a great many comedos, make an appointment with your aesthetician or dermatologist for a skin detoxification treatment.

Basics hints for your body skin:

Generally thicker than that of your face, the rest of your body's skin requires your attention. It is often roughest on the knees and elbows, but with a few adapted treatments, your skin should be as soft as a baby's: a real lethal weapon of seduction.

Gommage:

Exfoliate your entire body at least once a week. Pay extra attention to the rougher skin, but be very gentle on the chest and breasts – make sure to avoid the nipples.

Grandma's secret recipe:

This recipe is cheap and effective: mix a few drops of baby oil with some coarse sea salt and use as an exfoliant. Say goodbye to dead skin and blemishes!

In the shower:

Take advantage of your shower to pick up your massage glove. On the agenda are arms, legs, buttocks and back (if you can!). Pay special attention to your elbows and knees, as well as those saddle bags: it helps to stimulate circulation, which fights cellulite.

In the bath:

A cheap and easy solution for more supple skin that doesn't feel tight after a bath is to add a few drops of oil to the bath water. Choose between almond, avocado or wheat germ oil.

Hands:

Hands are a “handy” tool for seduction. Some of us use them in conversation, either subtly or expressively. When they are clean and well maintained, they’re a great asset – but broken nails and badly taken care of hands can become an object of shame and make us want to hide them under the table.

Home manicure:

- 1- Fill a bowl or container with hot water; let some gentle soap dissolve in it for two or three minutes.
- 2- While you’re waiting, file your nails until they are all a comparable length and shape them to your liking, either square or round.
- 3- Apply a thick layer of an emollient on your nails.
- 4- Soak both hands in the hot water for two or three minutes.
- 5- Dry your hands and push your cuticles firmly down with a nail stick.
- 6- Apply a strengthening oil to the nails, and a moisturizing crème to the hands.
- 7- Remove any excess oil from the nails with a cotton ball soaked in a gentle solvent.
- 8- Apply the base coat. Then confidently apply two layers of nail polish, taking care to avoid the edges of the nail – a bold stroke is better than a timid one here. You’ll be a pro in no time!
- 9- And now for the finishing touch, a coat of varnish.

Caution:

Don’t cut your cuticles. Not only can you cut yourself, you also run the risk of infection.

What you should know:

- Over a long period of time, too much nail polish can make the nails less white – even yellow. Set aside some time for your nails to breathe.
- For maximum prettiness, avoid wearing beige-toned nail polish on yellowed nails.

Simple basics:

If you want beautiful hands and nails, never wash the dishes without wearing gloves, and use hand cream every day.

Grandma’s secret recipe:

Make your own hand and foot treatment. Add three teaspoons of honey to two teaspoons of olive oil. Mix in a few drops of wheat germ oil. For hands and feet that are soft as silk, let the solution sit for ten minutes.

A few more tricks:

- For pearly white nails, once you’ve removed your nail polish, plunge the tips of your fingers into a half lemon and move them around for a few seconds.

- For nicely moisturized nails, mix some olive oil with a few drops of lemon juice. Put the liquid in the microwave for several seconds to make it warm, and then soak your fingers in it for ten minutes. Do this once a week on non-polished nails.

Star hand power:

It's that special night, and you want to appear as perfect as possible, leaving nothing to chance. Apply a very thin layer of foundation on the backs of your hands, making sure that it's the same color as your complexion, and powder with translucent powder. Your hands will be smooth, even, and more beautiful than ever. For even more "star" power, substitute a shimmery powder for your neutral one – but be careful it's not too sparkly, that would make it seem like you're trying too hard.

Caution: Do this only on the backs of your hands; avoid the fingers – because leaving stains everywhere will definitely scream unglamorous.

Stop biting your nails:

Visually, it makes your nails seem shorter and your hands look unsightly and unfinished - not at all sexy. To put an end to it right now...

An infallible trick:

Add one or two drops of a hot sauce like Tabasco to your nail varnish. The taste will quickly rid you of any desire to bite your nails!

Feet:

It's essential to have clean, pretty feet to be able to enjoy summer and all its lovely, revealing shoes.

Home pedicure:

- 1- Prepare a batch of hot soapy water in a container large enough to fit both your feet.
- 2- While the soap is dissolving, file your nails until they're all the same length.
- 3- Generously lather your nails with an emollient.
- 4- Soak your feet in the water for several minutes. Take advantage of the time to relax the rest of you, too.
- 5- After a few minutes in the water, take a pumice stone and scrape off any calluses from your heels and the soles of your feet. Stick your feet back in the water to remove the pumice stone residue and dead skin.
- 6- Dry your feet and push the cuticles back with a nail stick.
- 7- Massage your feet with a moisturizing lotion for a little while.
- 8- Remove excess nail cream with a cotton soaked in nail polish remover.
- 9- Before applying a base coat, don't forget to put on your toe-spreader. It will make your work easier, and help you to not make any blunders, such as leaving streaks of polish on other toes. Next, apply two layers of polish, taking care not to touch the skin.
- 10- Apply a coat of varnish. And there you have it: you can now slip into your favorite sandals.

Go that extra step:

If you have the time during your home pedicure, take advantage of the fact that your feet are soaking in warm water to vigorously exfoliate them with a foot exfoliant (the grains are thicker). It removes dead skin, and you'll end up with softer skin, guaranteed.

Grandma's secret recipe:

If you've ever dreamed of having ultra soft feet and getting rid of the calluses on your heels, this recipe is for you. Regularly apply a good amount of moisturizing lotion to your entire foot and slip into cotton socks that don't cut off the circulation. Let the lotion sit for 30 minutes. If you want to keep it on all night, go ahead – but it's not very sexy!

Basic hint:

Whether your feet are happy and healthy or tend to smell and gather moisture, as a general rule, buy shoes made of leather or noble elements like wood. Avoid plastic and all synthetic material; not only will they make your feet hot, but they could be the root of a lot of other foot-related problems.

When your feet stink:

Nasty! Foot odor is a real mood killer, plaguing you and everyone around you. The first thing you should do is consult your dermatologist to make sure you don't have any yeast infections on your feet or under your nails. If you don't, and it's a simple case of excessive and/or odorous sweat, regularly bathe your feet with bicarbonate or baking soda. It's a great antiseptic, and you'll quickly get results. And, even better, it's relaxing!

Waxing:

Hair removal is a must, because hairy legs never made anyone's top ten fantasy list, least of all your own.

There are several options for legs that are as smooth as silk. Cold, warm, or hot wax, getting waxed at a salon or home waxing – all you have to do is decide which solution suits you best.

Say no to shaving: it might be quick and cheap, but every time you use it, it strengthens your hair, which becomes harder and darker. And let's not even mention the fact that you have to shave pretty much every day if you don't want to look like a hedgehog.

Salon waxing:

Ask for non-reusable wax, which is the much more hygienic choice, and is warm rather than hot. Hot wax can burn and irritate your skin. The usual procedure is that the aesthetician applies a thin layer of wax, and removes it with strips of paper or fabric.

The not-so-good:

- Waxing is slightly painful, but it's bearable, and you quickly get used to it

The good:

- You're free of hair for at least three weeks.
- Salon waxing is generally much better than trying to wax yourself, even if it is more expensive. Especially since there are places you just can't reach when you're in your bathroom by yourself – like the backs of your thighs – and your very sensitive bikini area.

Have fun:

- Take advantage of the fact that you're in the hands of a professional aesthetician to let your imagination run wild, and, just like at the hairdresser, ask for a new look for your bikini. There's plenty of options to choose from – classic, Brazilian, American, full bikini – or you can go for something more original, like the first initial of your sweetheart's name. (It might not be the height of class, but it can be fun – and the hair grows back fast enough!) There are tons of choices, and it will inject a bit of spice into your relationship.

Home waxing:

If you don't have the time or inclination to go to a salon, home waxing is still a much better choice than shaving: a bit difficult at first, but easy enough to get the hang of. The hardest parts to do will be the backs of the thighs and calves. If you want to wax your bikini area and/or underarms, don't rush in: you'll do much better if you've watched an aesthetician do it a few times beforehand so that you can duplicate her movements.

What to do:

- Choose suitable wax for each area (you won't necessarily use the same wax for your legs, your bikini, or your softer facial hair). Go for supple, elastic wax that doesn't break as soon as it starts losing heat: you need to be able to remove the wax in one clean go.
- Pick the easiest solution for you: you have the choice between wax that you remove with a strip of paper or fabric, and wax that you apply with a spatula or stick and that you remove with a quick hand tug. This latter solution is probably the easiest and more appropriate for the bikini area, the underarms, and facial hair. Wax that you remove with strips is great for your legs, and very hygienic. You can even buy ready-made wax strips (take them with you on trips!).
- For your legs: opt for warm or cold wax, especially if you have heavy legs. It's better for your circulation.
- For the bikini area: opt for a warm, or preferably hot, wax (not too hot, you don't want to burn yourself!), which is more manageable for this sensitive part of your body. If you're a novice at the waxing gig, keep your thong on and cover the edges with tissues to avoid stains. Keeping your underwear on will allow you to keep between the lines you've set yourself, and also achieve a more symmetrical result. Don't worry if your first few times are less than auspicious, and you end up with one side much less hairy than the other: just tell yourself that no one ever really died of shame, and hair always grows back too fast, anyway.

Caution:

Waxing presents one large inconvenience: when the hair grows back, some might remain under the skin, which is pretty unsightly and can sometimes turn into pimples, and, far less frequently, leave scars. To reduce the risks as much as possible, exfoliate your body at least once a week, paying particular attention to your calves. Use your massage glove, and moisturize your skin regularly.

What not to do:

- Don't use any lotion before waxing, because the wax won't stick to your skin.
- Under no circumstances should you use wax that is too hot on your body or face. Not only can it burn you, but you could also rip skin off when you remove the wax strip.
- Don't wax if you have a sunburn, irritated skin, cuts, or blemishes.
- Don't wax while you're menstruating, because your pain sensitivity skyrockets.

Quick tip about waxing and dating:

Avoid waxing just before that hot date with your new sweetheart, because in the hours following hair removal, little red blotches can appear. Also, hot wax has an anesthetizing effect on sensitive areas – what a waste that would be!

Tip:

If you're too hot, or feel damp and not quite clean, apply a thin layer of talcum powder before you wax. The wax will adhere better to your skin, and will more effectively remove hairs.

Oriental recipe:

We've all either heard of or met an oriental woman with gorgeous skin that seems as soft as silk, with nary a hair showing. Their secret? Sugar waxing, also called "oriental waxing."

Here's the recipe: over low heat, melt three handfuls of sugar cubes with a half glass of water in a small saucepan. When the mixture has turned into brown caramel, add a few drops of lemon juice and pour the substance into cold water for a few seconds (be careful not to burn yourself). Make a ball of the paste: you're ready to start your oriental waxing. Spread the ball out over the surface you want to wax, and firmly tug it off. Repeat as often as necessary to cover the whole area. Enjoy your satiny smooth skin.

Grandma's secret recipe:

If, after waxing, your skin is really irritated, apply a layer of plain yoghurt for 15 minutes.

Permanent hair removal: what method is right for you?

Basically, you have two choices when it comes to permanent hair removal: electric, and laser. Both techniques are generally practiced at a dermatologist's or a cosmetic doctor's office.

The procedures are fairly expensive, and you'll need a few sessions before achieving the final results. But you'll probably never regret permanently removing the hair from your calves or underarms. But keep in mind that everything changes, including your tastes: you might not find a bikini area that's very bare as attractive in your later years. So make sure you think it through before making a decision!

Electric hair removal:

The good:

- This technique suits hair of any color.
- Its effectiveness has been proven for more than 30 years.

The not-so-good:

- Electric hair removal is fairly painful, because it attacks the hairs one at a time by inserting a needle into the hair follicle and releasing an electric charge. Some dermatologists ask you to use an anesthetic cream a half an hour before your session, which strongly reduces the pain.
- Plan on three sessions for each hair before it's definitively "dead." Since you have to wait about six weeks between regrowths (the hair will be finer and lighter), count on a few months until you're totally hair-free. It's a long process. If you want to be clear and free for the summer, start your sessions in the beginning of autumn.

Laser hair removal:**The good:**

- This technique also works with ingrown hairs, because the laser's rays can penetrate skin.
- You'll need fewer sessions than if you were undergoing electric hair removal to definitively clear a given area.

The not-so-good:

- Laser hair removal works better on dark hair than on light hair. Technology being what it is though, newer lasers seem to get good results on light colored hair. To be continued...
- The procedure is quite painful, and the burning sensation can be significant. The session doesn't last long, however, and your dermatologist can offer you an anesthetic cream.
- Lasers and their applications are increasing in number every day, so be extremely careful when making your choice of practitioner, and make sure s/he knows how to handle the laser perfectly. Burns and scars aren't really what you're looking for.

Basic beauty tips:**OPTIMIZE YOUR POTENTIAL**

- Don't smoke: your skin, lungs, and whole body will thank you!
- Avoid alcohol.
- When it comes to your weight, try to stop the rollercoaster ups and downs. Not only does it destroy your morale, but you're also ruining your skin: stretch marks, loss of elasticity, cellulite...
- Being skinny at 18 is all well and good, but with a few additional years, your thin build will not only not be as sexy, but will make you look older, your face seem drawn, and your wrinkles more apparent.
- Jogging is great for your cardiovascular system, but if you do it regularly enough for enough years, your face might reap the less than the desirable results. When you jog, you lose fat in the face first, then in the chest, and only then in the buttocks and stomach. In addition, the repetitive impact from each step is bad for your knees and your facial skin tone. Power walking is a better option.

- Smile as often as possible. Contrary to some facial exercises that can deepen wrinkles, smiling is one of the best ways to tone your face. And it's so nice and sexy, too!
- As a general rule, avoid all simple sugars. The fleeting pleasure they bring you is nothing compared to the damage they do to your metabolism.
- Avoid exposure to the sun, especially for your face, which is your first tool for seduction. Do this not only because of the dangers of skin cancer, but also to avoid depigmentation, liver spots, as well as loss of skin elasticity and premature wrinkles.
- Many women from so-called "rich" countries favor their slimness over their health today (even though the two are not mutually exclusive). Between those who believe they're alive when they're as skinny as a 16-year-old model, bulimics playing the yo-yo game, and those who alternate between ridiculously rich meals and two-day soup or fruit fasts, the number of women who eat well are few and far between. This means eating balanced, diverse meals at regular intervals, in reasonable amounts, and sticking with those habits. Keep in mind that that remains the best way to move towards a healthy, young, and beautiful you.
- You should try to start your nutritional program, sports activities, and daily skin care treatments between the age of 25 and 30. The later you start, the harder it will be to stick to them and optimize your results.

Another key to well-being: relaxation

- Take the time every day to do something for you. Relax for five minutes, sprawl out in a bath, delight in your funnest photo album, read your favorite magazine, treat yourself to a movie.... You deserve every moment of happiness these activities can offer.
- The shower may well be quicker, more economic, and more invigorating than a bath. But in terms of relaxation, there's no comparison: a bath is the "be all, end all." It lowers stress, stimulates you, soothes aches and pains, and helps you to sleep. Add some soft music and a few candles, and you've got it made (careful – don't make the bath water too hot!).

Additional tip:

- Add a few drops of lavender oil to your bath water. Not only will your skin not feel tight when you're dry, but you'll also feel even more relaxed!
- Take advantage of your daily application of moisturizing lotion to give yourself a quick massage. The neck and shoulders are particularly good for relaxing, as are the feet and ankles. Rubbing your own back might be a bit tough, so if you have a willing partner, ask him to gently rub the back of your neck, your back, and buttocks. Relaxation guaranteed – and who knows what else might happen!
- If you can, treat yourself to two relaxing massages a month: choose between hot stones, Californian massage, reflexology... It's even said to be a preventative measure to keep you healthy, so it would be a shame to miss out! If money is a bit tight, pass up on a top or two, or a hair styling appointment so that you can treat yourself to a massage every now or then, because there's nothing like it to reduce tension!

- Make sure you attend at least one yoga class per week – these days, classes are a dime a dozen. There are a lot of different yoga styles, so don't go around thinking that every class will be boring and require you to hold a pose for 15 minutes at a time. There's nothing like yoga to help you unwind and keep your body in shape.

Eternally essential

Almond oil:

Almond oil is as old as time itself, and is a real staple in the beauty world. It has awesome moisturizing properties for dry skin and hair (it'll make it shine), it makes your cuticles soft and supple, and it's a perfect bath oil. You can even use it to remove eye make-up.

Bath salts:

Bath salts are great to relax muscles and release tension. If you can get your hands on some Dead Sea salt, that's even better. Throw a small handful into your bath water, and, if you want to get more exfoliating impact, add some of the salt to a face cloth and exfoliate your whole body before getting into the bath.

Baking soda :

Frequently seen as an "old lady's product," bicarbonate or baking soda has a lot of very positive attributes. You can use it to wash your teeth, but also as a paste to dry out a blemish (leave on overnight). It's also a highly effective face exfoliant, and it has antiseptic and deodorizing properties when used in a foot bath.

Crystal alum:

This crystalline stone is one hundred percent natural, and an excellent astringent. It's used by barbers to stem bleeding, and it's also a tremendously effective deodorant – it's practically inexhaustible and very economic. You can buy it in some pharmacies, health stores, or over the internet.

Avocado oil:

The moisturizing properties of avocado oil work wonders on dry or older skin, as well as on dry, weakened hair. You can also slather it on if you get sunburned.

Yoghurt:

You eat it for the calcium, but plain yoghurt is also an excellent source of treatment for your skin and scalp. Apply for ten minutes as a mask: it'll make dry skin soft and supple, and also remove excess sebum from oily skin. In addition, yoghurt provides relief to itchy scalps (massage your head with it and let sit for ten minutes).

Beauty on vacation:

Take advantage of the special time that is your vacation to take care of your body and soul. You don't have to run yourself ragged, but optimize all the positive energy surrounding you.

- While you're lying on your beach chair, take a few deep breaths. Breathe in and out through the nose, feeling the air enter and leave your stomach. It's a wonderful way to relax! Do this without moderation, at least twice or three times a day.
- Three or four times a week, take a 45-minute walk, if possible with your feet in the water. If you can, do it every day for additional benefits.
- When you're out in the sun, protect and moisturize your skin with a high SPF cream. Repeat the process every two hours at least, especially if you're in the water a lot. Don't forget the details: feet, hands, ears, neck, top of the shoulders, and the backs of the arms.
- Slather your body with ultra moisturizing or after-sun cream every night.
- Once or twice a week while you're in the shower, treat your hair to a hydrating and strengthening mask. Let sit for a minimum of 10 minutes. Use that time to scrub your body with a massage glove. Finish your session with a cold water shower for your whole body and hair.
- Blow-drying your hair all the time isn't really in its best interests, so let it air dry while you're on vacation. Your hair will love it!

Note:

- Don't go out in the sun between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. You'll gain years in terms of your skin's age and appearance. Twelve noon is especially deadly: just think of the depigmentation, liver spots, and skin cancer you're risking. Why take the chance?
- Don't re-use the sunscreen from last year, even if there's product left. It has more than likely expired or lost its effectiveness. Buy a new bottle.
- If your hair is colored or bleached, it's already fragile and damaged. Avoid staying out in the sun too long or your hair will get even more dehydrated, or – worse still – could even turn yellow or take on green highlights. Always have caps, hats, and protective oil and cream for your hair with a high SPF to counter the sun's effects (UV filters, targeted for beach or pool use).