

Variables that Affect Sunless Tanning Results

There are many variables that affect the quality of a sunless tan. Two individuals can receive the exact same sunless treatment and experience very different results. Following are the eight key factors that affect sunless tanning.

- 1. Skin Type** – Sunless color reacts differently depending on skin type. What may appear as a deep, dark color on one person may look more golden on another person. The only way to know for sure how a sunless tan is going to look on your skin is to do a spot test prior to application.
- 2. Pre-Application Care** – It is recommended to exfoliate and carefully apply barrier cream to hands and feet before a sunless tanning treatment. If skin is not thoroughly exfoliated, your tan will fade faster and you may experience uneven results. If barrier cream is not properly applied, it can result in stained cuticles or unnatural-looking spots. It is also important to have clean skin free of oils and moisturizers that can be a barrier to the self tanner and interfere with its reaction.
- 3. Post-Application Care** – For the first six hours following sunless application, it is critical to avoid any activity that could interfere with the sunless reaction on your skin, including bathing, moisturizing, swimming, or other physical activity that could cause excessive perspiration. After the first day, it is recommended to moisturize daily to prolong sunless tanning results.
- 4. Spray Equipment Used** – If the tan was applied in an automatic spray unit, the results vary depending on spray level chosen. Also, different automated systems can deliver different results.
- 5. Maintenance of Spray Equipment** – The quality of a spray application, both from handheld spray equipment and automatic spray units, can be compromised if a regular equipment cleaning and maintenance regimen is not followed. Equipment that is not properly maintained could result in less solution transference, too much solution transference, or uneven application.
- 6. Skill Level of Person Applying Product** – The skill level of the person applying the sunless tanning solution or product affects the end results. Applying sunless products to the skin is an acquired skill and the more experience someone has, the more likely the results will be natural-looking.
- 7. Quality of the Sunless Spray Solution** – Sunless solutions vary from manufacturer to manufacturer regarding type of self tanning ingredients used, percentage level of self tanning ingredients, delivery system of active ingredients, and freshness of product. The differences in solutions can affect the immediate color on the skin, the color of the developing 'tan,' and how long the results last.
- 8. Sunless Product and Spray Solution Storage** – For best results, sunless products should be stored in a cool, dry place and protected from prolonged exposure to heat. In addition, sunless products should be tightly capped between uses to minimize exposure to oxygen. Sunless spray solutions should be used within 12 months from manufacturing and within 3 months of being opened. At home sunless solutions and sprays should be used within 12 months and tightly capped between uses. Sunless products that age beyond the recommended usage period, or are exposed to heat or air for prolonged periods, may decrease in effectiveness or change color or fragrance.