




# CATCH THAT SUMMER GLOW WITH SUNLESS TANNING

By: Karen Simpson



The loud “crack” of a baseball bat when it hits a ball, the smell of freshly cut grass, and the warm temperatures and bright sunny days—all signs that summer is here. This is the time that many people begin to work on that special summer glow—their tan. Conventional tanning—outdoor tanning or UV tanning booths—subjects you to the harmful effects of the sun and ultraviolet rays. But now you can achieve a great tan without damage to your skin. Spray tanning centers are offering a safe alternative. You can be bronzed in minutes with a spray tan! Spray tans and other sunless products create a tan by staining the skin. The process is safe, quick, easy and often looks as good (or better) than that hard-earned “natural tan.” More important, it provides that yearned-for tan without the harmful skin damage that the sun creates.

You may recall the episode of “Friends” that featured the spray tan. Ross felt he needed a great tan. With little time, he decided to check out a local spray tanning salon. New to this type of activity, Ross had a little problem figuring out the timing (for turning his body) with the automatic spray tanning machine. When he arrived home, the back half of his body was completely white and the front side a weird orange color. It was hysterical—but hardly an advertisement for those new spray tanning booths. Indeed, the early sunless tanning products often produced an unnatural-looking orange tone on the skin and were unappealing. Things have surely changed. Today’s sunless tanning solutions are able to produce a very natural-looking tan and can be applied as light or as dark as desired.

Sunless tanning is celebrity approved. Kudos to Jennifer Lopez for being one of the first to step up and admit that her flawless tan is always sprayed on. Jennifer Aniston and Christina Aguilera are two more of the growing number of celebrities championing the use of spray tans over “natural” sun tanning. Many celebrities on “Dancing With The Stars” reportedly use the spray tans as part of their make-up regimen. Fake tans, as they are referred to, are fast becoming the fashionable alternative to sunburns and sun tans. Achieve your summer glow in just minutes. There are several choices. Some tanning centers have a technician who airbrushes the tan; others have a machine that sprays the tan—similar to the one Ross tried to use. You can also purchase sunless tanning products to achieve a tan at home. Spray tans last an average of four to six days, and with continued application can become more color intense.

**TODAY'S SUNLESS TANNING SOLUTIONS ARE ABLE TO PRODUCE A VERY NATURAL-LOOKING TAN AND CAN BE APPLIED AS LIGHT OR AS DARK AS DESIRED.**


Just how safe is a sunless tan? Most sunless tanning products contain the active ingredient dihydroxyacetone (DHA). DHA is a colorless sugar that reacts with the top layer of dead cells and stains or colors them. As the dead cells wear away, the tan fades. Reapplication of the product renews the color and maintains the tan.

**TIPS THAT HELP ACHIEVE THAT EVEN, NATURAL-LOOKING TAN.**

- EXFOLIATE FIRST, TO REMOVE THE LOOSE, EXCESS DEAD SKIN CELLS. (WOMEN SHOULD ALSO SHAVE THEIR LEGS SO THAT THE APPLICATION GOES ON SMOOTH.)
- COVER DRYER AREAS (ANKLES, KNEES, ELBOWS) OF YOUR BODY WITH A LOTION SO THAT LESS PRODUCT WILL BE ABSORBED IN THESE AREAS.
- APPLY THE PRODUCT EVENLY.
- WASH YOUR HANDS IMMEDIATELY AFTER APPLYING THE PRODUCT.
- ALLOW YOUR BODY TO DRY COMPLETELY BEFORE DRESSING. THIS USUALLY TAKES ABOUT 15 TO 20 MINUTES.

An argument can be made in support of sunless tanning. Literally, you can save your skin. You also save valuable time. Think about the possibilities. Vacations become more about fun rather than “achieving the trophy tan.” Spend time on the beach enjoying the surf instead of cultivating the tan. The spray tan process averages about an hour—including the 20 minutes necessary to completely dry before getting dressed. Sunless tanning is generally considered a safe alternative to conventional (UV) tanning. The Food and Drug Administration has said that DHA is safe when applied to the skin, but it also cautions that it shouldn't be inhaled or ingested and that proper measures be taken to protect the eyes, nose, mouth and ears.

Sunless tanning is a safe alternative to the conventional tan. However, the products do not typically contain any sunscreen to protect your skin from the damaging rays of the sun. Contrary to popular belief, a tan (conventional UV or sunless) does not protect your skin from burning or sun damage. Sunscreen is still a must, especially if you are spending time outdoors. Remember to apply it liberally.

So get your glow on—create a great tan without damaging your skin. Summer will be here soon! 

*Karen Simpson is the owner/operator of Ageless Remedies Medical Skincare & Apothecary in Huntersville.*

