

# 1

## "I HAVE DARK CIRCLES UNDER MY EYES. WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO BANISH THE RACCOON LOOK?"

Those dark circles have a couple of *raison d'être*. First, they may be genetic. "Your lower eyelid skin may be thinner [than on most people], and you're seeing the blood circulation below the skin," says Dr. David E. Bank, director of the Center for Dermatology in Mount Kisco, New York. Another possibility is that it may be brown pigmentation under the eyes from sun damage. "Many people with dark cir-

cles may have a bit of both problems," Bank says. But there are things you can do to reduce your tired appearance.

Bank suggests starting with a bleaching or fading cream with hydroquinone from the drugstore; follow the directions on the label. If the area doesn't lighten up after two months, see your dermatologist for a prescription-strength fading cream.

If the problem is genetic, a fading cream won't help. Dr. Audrey Kunin, owner of *DermaDoctor.com* and founder of the *DermaDoctor* line of skin care products, recommends a yellow concealer to neutralize the blue, such as *DermaDoctor's Eye Spy*, a dark

circle concealer and treatment. Apply the concealer, then use your regular foundation and powder on top.

# 2

## "MY CUTICLES ARE DRY AND PAINFUL. ANY TIPS?"

Reduce excessive water exposure, which can cause drying. This means you should wear rubber gloves when doing the dishes – or even better, have someone else do the dishes for you! Several times per day, rub in a moisturizer such as *Eucerin* or *Moisturel*. Clip off any hangnails with nail scissors or a cuticle nipper so they don't tear even more. If you're concerned about infection, apply an antibiotic ointment to the cuticle after you've clipped them.

To heal ragged cuticles, you need to keep them moist. "If you don't soften the edges, they'll never heal together," says Kunin. *DermaDoctor* sells *Handy Mannum*, a medicated dry oil with cortisone that soothes and softens the offending bits.

# 3

## "HOW CAN I AVOID STREAKING WHEN I APPLY SELF-TANNER?"

First, congratulations on opting for self-tanner – as you probably know, old-school-style tanning can cause premature aging and skin cancer. But that's a small consolation when your self-tanning efforts cause you to look like a zebra.

The trick is to prep the skin to evenly absorb the self-tanner. This means exfoliating with a scrub or a loofah to prime the canvas and create a smooth base, says Kunin. You can also try a product like *Neutrogena's Pre-Sunless Scrub*, which contains both microbeads and beta hydroxy acid. Then, a tinted self-tanner will help you determine where you've already applied it so you don't miss any spots.

Areas with thicker skin, such as your elbows and knees, soak up more self-tanner and tend to get darker than the rest of the skin, so apply tanner to these areas sparingly.



## 4 "I GET FLYAWAY HAIR IN THE WINTER. HOW CAN I TAME IT?"

Believe it or not, your hair may be too clean. "You need to give the hair weight by making it a bit dirtier," says Yuki Sharoni, owner of Beauty and Lifestyle, a salon in Beverly Hills. "Take a molding mud or any cream with a bit of wax and go lightly over the top of your hair."

## 5 "HOW DO I GET RID OF A BIG ZIT?"

"It depends on how big it is and how fast you need to get rid of it," says Bank. "The gold standard is to go to a dermatologist for a cortisone injection, which will almost always shrink the pimple within 24 hours."

If it's not an emergency (like the day before your wedding), soak a washcloth in very warm water and hold it against the pimple for a couple of minutes several times a day. "This may cause it to come to a head and open or maybe even shrink down and go away," says Bank. Apply benzoyl peroxide – an excellent drying agent – according to the label's directions.

If the pimple has a white head, you can pop it – but not with your fingers. "Because of the angle at which you're pressing, there's a chance you can drive the pimple deeper into the skin, so you may get a deeper pimple, a cyst or even an infection," says Bank. Instead, use a comedone extractor (a.k.a. "pimple popper") from the drugstore; this instrument has a little cup with a hole in the bottom. Clean both your skin and the comedone extractor with rubbing alcohol, then place the instrument with the hole over the head of the pimple, and gently push the cup straight down. Voila! No more pimple.

To cover a pimple, use a green concealer to neutralize the redness, suggests Kunin. Apply the concealer to the pimple with a sponge triangle, then



finish with a layer of foundation and a light dusting of powder to keep makeup in its place.

## 6 "I LIKE TO SHAVE MY BIKINI LINE BECAUSE IT'S CHEAPER THAN WAXING OR LASER HAIR REMOVAL. HOW DO I AVOID RAZOR BURN AND INGROWN HAIRS?"

First, ditch the soap and rusty razor and use real shaving cream and a

sharp new blade. Then, shave in the direction of hair growth, which for most people is down. "If you go against the way the hair grows, you're cutting the

hair below the skin's surface, and if the hair doesn't grow out straight it can cause ingrowns," says Bank.

## 7 "I GET WINTER FLAKES IN MY HAIR, AND I'M NOT TALKING SNOW. HOW CAN I GET RID OF IT?"

Try this relaxing flake-busting method from Sharoni. Buy an organic olive oil or scalp massage oil from a beauty supply store. Apply it generously to the

scalp and hair, then use a plastic vent brush to massage the scalp for at least 30 minutes. Then wrap your head

with a bathing cap or plastic wrap and head to bed. In the morning, shampoo out the oil. Both stress and dandruff will be gone!

## COLORED CONCEALERS CAN HIDE FLAWS. YELLOW NEUTRALIZES UNDER-EYE BAGS AND GREEN CALMS REDNESS