

MAINTAN



Achieving a balance between a healthy, natural tan and ompa-loompa orange - while staying SPF aware - treads a very fine line. Avoid the DayGlo look with iQ's guide to self-tanning

With all the information at our fingertips about how bad exposure to the sun is, it seems a little perverse to compliment someone on the colour of their skin following a few weeks of frying on a beach. In fact, the number of men affected by skin cancer has quadrupled since 1975 and a recent survey discovered that one in six men never use sunscreen, the results of which - premature ageing, skin damage and possible skin cancers - are supposedly widely known.

If you want some colour without the risk of cancer, the most obvious compromise is to fake it. Bought in a bottle, sprayed or applied at a local grooming emporium, fake tan is becoming as popular with men as it is with women. Sadly, achieving that flawless "just back from two weeks in the Caribbean" fake tan isn't as simple as it seems.

Firstly, there's the array of choice now on the market - tans in tubes, tans in sprays, men-specific tans, unisex tans, tans that

need only an hour to develop, tans that develop over four hours - the choice is endless. Secondly, the preparation involved with the majority of self-tan applications (if you want to remain streak-free) can be off-putting for low maintenance guys. As a basic rule of thumb, before tanning, you'll need to thoroughly exfoliate to remove dead skin and moisturise tough skin on the knees and elbows, for example.

Finally, ensuring an even, all-over tan - in the shade you want - takes some practice. It's best to opt for a self-tan with the same guide colour (St Tropez is ideal) thus allowing you to see exactly where you're tanning. It's also a good idea to start with one layer and then build it up gradually to avoid said ompa-loompa orange.

Fake or real, the mahogany tan is definitely to be avoided. After all, do you really want to look like a pre-pubescent footballer, an ageing member of a boyband or, worse still, a waxed leather sofa?

THREE OF THE BEST SELF-TANNING PRODUCTS

Guerlain Terracotta Sunless Smoothing Self-Tanning Cream

A glossy lotion in a stylish gold canister, this is easily absorbed and doesn't bear the trademark whiff of self-tan. Turns skin a golden caramel hue overnight.

Dior Homme Dermo System Healthy Look Moisturising Emulsion

That the packaging of this pump-action face moisturiser come self-tanner conceals the product's true purpose is an

advantage for the cosmetic-shy male. It also provides a natural shade of brown in a matter of minutes, making it our outright favourite.

St Tropez

The King of self-tans, St Tropez has been the premiere self-tan brand for years, and it's no wonder why. The tans are oil free, easy-to-use and (handily for men) most of their self-tans also tan through body hair. The resulting colour is deep and very natural.

THE SPRAY TAN

While first-timers might think that a self-tanning application is easy, it's probably still best to leave it to the professionals

For those of you not familiar, the professional spray tan involves standing in a telephone box-like booth, wearing a pair of paper pants while a stranger aims a small hose at you firing liquid tan. As startling as this may sound, especially to those new to the delights of spray tanning, it is a fast, easy and effective solution to achieving that year-round glow without putting your skin at risk. After being ushered into a booth and asked to strip down to your paper pants (provided), the spray tan commences. It's not unlike a car being painted in a production line, with the tanning therapist evenly spraying your various body parts.

WHEN TANS GO BAD...

Valentino

If you're Italian and a fashion designer, a neon tan is a prerequisite (just ask Donatella). However, Valentino is definitely the leader of the orange Italian fashion mafia.



Roberto Cavalli

iQ had an up close and personal encounter with Cavalli at his recent club opening and we're giving him an orange factor of at least 9/10.



George Hamilton

All those years spent lazing around on a yacht in St Tropez or similar have left George with a visage resembling aged leather.

