

# Beauty The way to body confidence, by Kate Shapland

Preparing the body to bare all may simply mean a self-tan top up for some people, but for others it involves far more consideration. Blemishes, excess hair and skin conditions cause anguish to even the most body-confident. Everything improves in the sun, but until then, pigment-rich cover creams, softening topicals and baths that diffuse puffiness are saviours.

**Covers** These concealers perform well to hide marks and even chronic skin conditions with a near-invisible layer. **Covermark Leg Magic** (£19.99, skinlight.co.uk) is the best body camouflage. A trace covers everything: scars, birthmarks, varicose veins, spider veins, moles and stretch marks. It is also water-, sweat- and smudge-proof. **MAC Studio Finish SPF35** (£10, maccosmetics.com) is highly concentrated and best for more 'cosmetic' marks such as dark circles and spots. **Veil Cover Cream** (£20.50, veilcover.com) is best for covering eczema, dermatitis and psoriasis without drying the patches.

**Puff relief** For those whose limbs puff up at the slightest rise in temperature, only fast-working treatments will do. These are worth finding space for in a holiday suitcase as they bring quick relief to heavy limbs. **Thalgo Thalassobath Marine Bath Crystals** (£25, beautique.com) are a more efficacious kind of Epsom salts (they have a wonderful ozonic scent). The crystals are rich in trace elements and brown algae, which work to ease fluid retention. **Thalgo Aromacéane Slender** (£32, feelunique.com) is full of essential oils such as juniper berry, cardamom and spearmint. This is best massaged into skin after a soak in the crystals. **My tip** before applying the oil, spray puffy areas (usually feet and ankles) with blasts of warm and cold water from the showerhead. After massaging the oil in, lie on your back with your feet against the wall to encourage fluids to travel back up your legs.

**Skin toner** Exfoliation makes a big difference to skin because it does more than just buff off dead cells. It also encourages the microcirculation and lymph, bringing fresh blood to the surface, making it look pink and toned, and helps the system cleanse itself. **Bobbi Brown Buffing Grains** (£25, bobbibrown.co.uk) makes light work of dry-prone zones and revitalises the skin while cleansing it. **My tip** drink a tall glass of water after exfoliating to enhance the detox process.

**Thirst quenchers** There isn't much difference between 'aftersun' and regular body lotion except for the way they are marketed. So any topical that puts back what the sun takes out helps a needy body look better. Choose those that absorb quickly and leave skin soft, not tacky. Scent is key too – don't go for anything too strong to wear when it is hot. Try **Jo Wood Everyday Nourishing Body Cream** (£24, jowoodorganics.com), a simple apricot and shea butter mix with rosehip oil that brings skin back to life. **Nars Monoi Body Glow II** (£43, narscosmetics.co.uk) makes skin gleam – it contains Tahitian gardenia, which infuses the oil with



nutrients. **My tip** apply moisturiser after buffing skin and pat it on to encourage absorption.

**Depilation soothers** While depilatories are much improved, they can still irritate – even the humble razor can cause a rash if you use it before going in the sun or using sunscreen. Antiseptic cream helps, but this treatment was developed specially to be used post-depilation: **Thalgo Biodepyl Concentrate** (£22, beautique.com), a mix of capislow and essential oils of lemon, lavandin, verbena and camomile. This is said to inhibit hair regrowth, but more importantly it soothes and instantly diffuses redness. **My tip** yogurt and honey are good natural rash and burn soothers. Mix a drop of honey with some yogurt and pat on to affected areas to take down irritation.

**Nail saver** Damaged nails are not exactly something to keep you off the beach, but the harm caused by sun and sea will make nails brittle for months after a holiday; to stop this happening rub strengthening emollient into nails daily. This is one of the best: **Bastien Reverence Unguent for Nail & Cuticles** (£8.50, bastiengonzalez.com). It contains St John's wort, burdock root, arnica, camomile and raspberry extract, and works miracles at restoring vitality and making nails super-strong. **My tip** nails need to breathe, so leave clear varnish at home and use a buffing paste and chamois to keep them shiny on holiday.