

BEAUTY

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PUCKER UP


Like your eyes, hands and hairdo, your lips speak volumes before you even part them, make a pout or a smile, move them to speak or bite them to assuage your nerves. In fact, your lips may be the hardest working part of your face. They deserve to be kept soft, chap-free and adorned with colors most becoming to their personality. Read our lip guide on these pages, then give yourself some smooches! *by andrea dawn clark*



Our Lips Are Sealed

February may be a great month for ice-skating, snowboarding and skiing, but it's a tough one for your tender lips. The dry air and whipping winds have most of us reaching for lip balm, but the weather isn't the only culprit. "Our lips tend to get drier in the winter for four reasons," says dermatologist Dennis F. Gross M.D., the founder of the M.D. Skincare line and a researcher at New York University Medical Center. "First, our lips have fewer oil glands than the other parts of our body. That means less moisture. Second, the environment is generally drier in many parts of the country during winter. Third, we use more heat when it is cold outside, and that sucks moisture out of skin. Finally, when our lips get dry, we tend to lick them." A natural inclination, but it actually makes the problem worse. "Saliva isn't water. There are digestive enzymes in saliva that dry out your lips," explains Dr. Gross. So what's the best way to keep your lips soft and smooth? "Good old Vaseline is the best lip protector. It really traps the moisture in," says Victoria L. Holloway, M.D., MPH, director of the L'Oréal Institute for Ethnic Hair & Skin Research in Chicago. Petroleum-based lip balms work best, because they draw moisture away from the air and bring it to the skin. When you're shopping for a lip balm, look for one that's clear and thick, like Kiehl's Lip Balm #1 (\$5), Vaseline Lip Therapy Petroleum Jelly (\$2) and Neutrogena Lip Moisturizer (\$3). According to Dr. Gross, the clearer and thicker the product, the more petroleum it contains and the better it is for your lips. "Chap Stick is also great," says celebrity makeup artist Bryn Smoot. "Keep tubes everywhere—in your purse, your desk drawer—and you're set."

Slick alert: Once the weather gets warmer, you may be inclined to toss the lip balm in the back of your drawer. Bad move. Chances are you'll be outdoors more when the weather gets warmer, exposing your skin to damaging rays. Instead of nixing the lip balm, upgrade to one that contains sunscreen, such as **Joey New York Delipicious SPF 15 lip balm** (\$12).



Smooth Operator

No matter how hard we try, dry, cracked lips are a part of life. Slack off on the lip balm or your water intake for a few days, and there they are. Luckily, there is a simple trick to get them smooth again. "If a client of mine has really chapped lips," says Sonia Kashuk, creator of Sonia Kashuk Cosmetics, "I apply a little lip balm, then I use a toothbrush to remove the dead skin." This treatment even gets the doctor's approval. "When patients have dry lips, I tell them to exfoliate their lips gently with a toothbrush right after they brush their teeth," says Dr. Holloway. "The key word here is gently. Try to do it while the lips are still moist. Follow that with some lip balm."

A Touchy Subject

Choosing the right lipstick isn't just about shade. You've also got to think in terms of texture. You can glisten up with a gloss, make a subtle statement with a stain or sheer, get high-wattage shimmer with frost, or pure pout with a matte lipstick. **glow with gloss:** "I think gloss, alone, generally looks very pouty and sexy," says Cynde Watson, Bobbi Brown Cosmetics Global Makeup Artist Director. "But if you have full lips and you don't want to accentuate them, stay away from lip gloss. It'll just make them look fuller." Be forewarned, though: "There's not much wear time with a gloss," says Kashuk. After a few sips of wine, you'll need to reapply, so keep a tube handy. If you're the slightest bit color-shy, gloss is the best way to go, says Kat James, a makeup artist and founder of informed-beauty.com. "Gloss can make stronger colors more user-friendly, because the color is transparent and lightly suspended in the shine instead of opaquely covering your lips." **simply sheer:** Lipsheers, a gloss-lipstick hybrid, impart more color than a gloss, but are more diaphanous in texture than regular lipstick. Try Calvin Klein Lip Color Wash in "Cognac" (\$15). **shimmer moves:** Before you're enticed by the extra sheen from frosted colors in pots or tubes, consider if it's

right for your skin tone. "Lighter and even medium frosted lipsticks, like a pale frosted pink, don't always work well on darker skin tones, because the contrast can be too harsh," warns James. "The shimmer effect becomes the focus instead of the color." A better bet: frosted shades of deep bronze and burgundy. **matte moves:** When the occasion calls for glamour, a classic matte or creamy lipstick, such as Diorific Long-Wearing True Color Lipstick in Jazzy Brown (\$22), comes across with confidence and sophistication. But user beware: "If an opaque color isn't applied perfectly, the effect can be gaudy," says James. "This type of color calls for an exact match in lip liner to make a clean border." When wearing matte or creamy lipsticks, it's also important to balance eye makeup. Adds James, "An overdone eye with this type of lipstick can clutter your face." **sensuous stains:** Perhaps the flirtiest finish of all is the one achieved with the new lip stains. "They make your lips look like you've been kissing all night," says Watson. Adds James, "The intrigue of a stain is that it gives an uneven, 'from within' effect that's very sensual." Unless, of course, you have cracked lips. Nothing magnifies cracks more than lip stains, according to Smoot. His way to play the stain game: Apply Chap Stick first, outline your lips with a creamy lip liner, then apply the stain.



The Balancing Act

If you've noticed that your upper and lower lips are not the same color, there's no need to stress over it or make an appointment with the dermatologist. "Varied pigmentation is not at all unusual for ethnic skin," says Dr. Holloway. "If someone's lips are different in color, I think they should embrace that trait. Kashuk agrees. "If a client's top lip isn't the same color as her bottom lip, I like to use a flesh-toned brown pencil to shade in the lighter lip before I apply the lipstick or gloss," she says. "But sometimes, I just leave it alone, because that difference can create a really interesting look."

Which Red is Right For You?

When Valentine's Day rolls around, most of us develop an urge to reach for red-hot lipstick. But choose the wrong shade and you'll stop traffic, all right—for the wrong reason. For black women, zeroing in on the perfect red isn't as hard as you might think. Consider these celebrity color cues. According to Watson, if your skin tone is golden, like Vanessa Williams', you need a red that has a bronze or yellow cast, such as Bobbi Brown's Creamy Lip Gloss in "Maple" (\$18) or Fresh Lipstick in "Cranberry Lemonade" (\$21). A sister with a toasted-almond, Halle Berry-type complexion should go for a classic blue-based red (think "American flag" red). "This shade looks incredible on that skin tone, because it's the perfect contrast," says Watson, who recommends Bobbi Brown Lip Color in "Red #10" (\$18); or try Vincent Longo Satin Matte Formula Lipstick in "True Red" (\$18). Women with orange-brown complexions, like Angela Bassett, "look great in brick reds," says Watson. Our brick picks: Iman Lipstick in "Shade 2" (\$16) and Deluxe Beauty Lipstick in "Nigel" (\$18). And sisters with deep ebony skin tones, like African model Alek Wek, "want a red that's got a little plum in it, to work with their almost eggplant coloring. A rich, burgundy red would be gorgeous," says Watson. Our faves: Sonia Kashuk Luxury Lip Color in "Beat" (\$7) and Calvin Klein "Merlot" (\$16).