

weekend Living

COOL BEAUTY BEAT THE HEAT

The heat wave persists, but don't sweat it. We ask the experts how to look good despite soaring temperatures



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IT'S getting hotter.

The average temperature is creeping upwards and while that is a worrying environmental concern, a more immediate problem is how bad the weather is making us look. To put it mildly, it's seriously "unglam".

We are no strangers to having to look poised and professional in hot weather, yet the latest spell of unforgiving heat and stifling humidity is proving a real challenge to our tropical sensibilities.

After all, it's hard not to look flustered when, 5 minutes out the door, your skin is glistening with oil and perspiration, your make-up starts sliding off your face and your hair is wilting. And then there's the task of trying to remain smelling fresh all day long.

In temperate countries, it's normal during winter to switch to richer products to protect skin from the dry, cold air. In a similar vein, all it takes to get through this extreme weather is a few tweaks to our usual skincare and grooming routines.

It won't make the heat more bearable, but at least we can look better in it.



LIGHTEN UP ON THE SKINCARE

Unfortunately, oily skin is just the tip of the iceberg. When it's hot, sebaceous glands are more active. And, on top of looking like a shiny beacon, there are also problems such as clogged pores, acne outbreaks and blotchiness, said **Dr Wong Su-Ni, dermatologist at Dr SN Wong Skin, Hair, Nails & Laser Specialist Clinic**, which has been seeing more patients with heat-induced skin problems.

"Some have pre-existing skin problems that have been aggravated by the heat, while some are developing them for the first time," she said.

If your skin is more greasy than usual, Dr Wong suggests switching to oil-free face products or moisturisers and sunscreens with lighter textures.

"Choose fluids and gels rather than creams or lotions," she said.

La Roche-Posay Anthelios XL Very High Protection Spray SPF 50+ (\$58.90 from selected retailers and hospital pharmacies) has a fluid texture that spreads easily and is quickly absorbed by the skin. For a moisturiser that hydrates and mattifies, try Biotherm Aquasource Oil-Free Moisturizing Clarifying Gel (\$72 from Biotherm counters).

Some of us may be tempted to exfoliate more often but dermatologists tell us that it's not necessary, especially if the problem is just skin that's oilier than usual.

Said Dr Ang Por, Consultant Dermatologist at Dermatology Associates Skin and Laser Specialists: "If there are more comedones (blackheads or whiteheads), some exfoliation may be helpful, but not too much."

Go for gentle abrasives or products containing glycolic acids or salicylic acids such as Dr Brandt's Pores No More Vacuum Cleaner (\$80 from Sccube the Apothecary). The rinse-off mask promises to help loosen and dislodge blackheads as well as tighten pores with regular use.

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GO EASY ON YOUR MAKE-UP

When it comes to make-up, less is definitely more. Low Jyue Huey, make-up artist at The Make Up Room (6220 3437), advises keeping it to a minimum, and recommends sticking to just a tinted moisturiser and some loose powder over oily areas. "Your base colour should be as close to your natural skin colour as possible, so it won't be obvious even if it runs," she added.

If you absolutely need fuller coverage, pick lightweight formulas like Clinique's Superfit Makeup (left, \$50 from Clinique counters), an oil-free liquid foundation that's designed to stay put for up to eight hours, even through heavy perspiration.

Another item Jyue Huey advises using in moderation is any pore-minimising product with silicone. "They leave a thin film on the skin, making it hard for foundation to attach to it properly. When that happens, your base may streak as well," she explained.

For touch-ups, have a bottle of facial mist at hand. Said Jyue Huey: "The surface of skin tends to be very dry in this heat and make-up can't sit properly on it. Facial mists with hydrating properties and emollients keep it moisturised, so make-up adheres better and won't streak."

Spray it on as often as you like and let your face dry naturally.

THE SCALP IS A NO-GO ZONE

Hair forms a big part of first impressions and you wouldn't want to be labelled in a new acquaintance's mind as the one with the greasy hair.

Just like with problem skin, Dr Wong has also been seeing more patients with oily scalps. "Wash your hair daily. You'll be surprised how many people don't," she said. Frequent washing also helps prevent and control dandruff and itchiness, which are problems worsened by greasy scalps.

When using styling products, go for those with a matte finish, suggested Rita

Ho, hairstylist at Reds Takashimaya.

"For instance, choose clay instead of wax. Products with a shiny finish contain more oils in them and can make hair look dirty and limp by mid-day when the weather is hot," she explained.

If the problem is frizz from the humidity, she recommends a light leave-in treatment to smooth locks without weighing them down. Try Kérastase Chroma Riche Serum (right, \$50 from Kérastase Consultant Salons), which imparts a healthy, glossy sheen and also contains UV filters to protect coloured hair.

USE FRAGRANCE STRATEGICALLY

Summer fragrances such as Elizabeth Arden's Pretty Eau de Parfum (below, \$70 for 30ml from Elizabeth Arden counters) tend to be lighter as heavy, musky scents can be suffocating in hot weather. The down side is that they tend to fade more quickly.

To make them last longer, Angeline Lim-De Silva, regional training manager at Elizabeth Arden, suggested first applying a lotion of the scent before spritzing the fragrance over it.

"To make it smell fresh at the end of the day, apply a dab of parfum (rather than eau de toilette or eau de parfum) of the same scent over pulse points," she added.

But summer fragrances are typically sweeter with floral or fruity tones and they are not to everyone's taste. To keep wearing your favourite, more intense perfume, simply wear less of it.

"Instead of spraying directly onto skin, spray it into the air and walk through it. This ensures an even and light exposure to the scent," said Angeline.



BOTANICAL BEAUTY

JAPANESE skincare brand Fancl has quite the following among local beauty product fans. Now, they can also get acquainted with Fancl's American sibling, Boscia.

While both brands share the same preservative-free philosophy, Boscia — launched in 2002 in the United States — differs from its Japanese counterpart in several ways. Besides being botanical-based, Boscia products come in larger portions compared to Fancl's downright dainty servings.

The relatively petite product sizes are a must for both brands because of the absence of preservatives. But, as Boscia's general manager, Meri Baregamian — who was in town last month to introduce the brand to members of the press — explained with a laugh: "To American women, (the Fancl sizes) would be like those of samples."

It's no wonder American consumers

cannot get enough of the brand.

Recently, Boscia's Oil-Free Daily Hydration SPF 15 was named the top-selling oil-free moisturiser in Sephora stores across the US. Its scented blotters, particularly those infused with green tea, have also been a huge hit — although they will only be available in Singapore next month.

According to Meri, Boscia's gentle, preservative-free formulations make them a hit with consumers on the lookout for "healthier" beauty products, as well as those with skin conditions such as acne, rosacea and eczema.

She said: "We've got so many letters from customers saying, 'You've changed my life.' If I read some of them to you, you'd probably think that I'd written them myself!"

Boscia is available at Sephora (#B1-05/06/07, Takashimaya Shopping Centre).
LYNETTE KOH

TRIED AND TESTED: THE BEST OF BOSCIA

1) Clear Complexion Treatment with Botanical Blast, \$51
This zit-fighting gel, which contains natural extracts of licorice, rosemary leaf, and willow bark, helps to calm angry breakouts gradually and gently.

2) Enlivening Amino-AG Eye Treatment, \$56
Reduce fine lines, puffiness and eye circles with this eye cream, which contains ingredients such as jujube fruit and coix seed extract.

3) Makeup-Breakup Cool Cleansing Oil, \$32
One of Meri's personal favourites, this cleansing oil removes make-up gently and contains ingredients which supposedly protect skin from free radical damage.

4) Oil-Free Daily Hydration SPF 15, \$42
Recently named the bestselling oil-free moisturiser across Sephora stores in the US, this lightweight lotion contains silica powder and burdock root to reduce shine, and green tea and jojoba leaf to protect skin.

