

General tips on makeup application

A collaboration between Sandra Glynn and Guide Dogs NSW/ACT

Supporting a boundless world through inclusive beauty.



These makeup application tips offer a comprehensive guide for individuals with low vision or blindness, to enhance their beauty routine. By implementing techniques, such as familiarising yourself with your tools, maintaining a consistent application process and organising products effectively, you can have an easier makeup experience.

General tips.

Your current makeup products:

- Natural colours blend easier.
- Consider your skin type and discuss with a staff member at a makeup store, whether a matte or shiny finish and cool or warm tones, would suit you best.
- Some products have different shapes, so consider buying a variety of shapes and designs to distinguish between products.
- Some brands offer distinct packaging to help differentiate products, like textured mascara tubes or scented lipsticks.

Accessories and Assistive Technology:

- Consider using magnifying mirrors or electronic magnification devices to enhance visibility.
- Brushes with shorter handles can provide better control, especially when using magnifying mirrors.
- Consider wearing a headband to keep your hair out of the way when applying makeup.

Choose makeup products with attached lids, like compacts for blush, eyeshadow, or powder. This reduces the risk of spills and makes them easier to manage.

- Avoid loose setting powders. If you do use them, always tap off the excess from your brush before applying it to your face to help control fallout.
- Try two-in-one products, like cream-based lip and cheek tints. These simplify your routine by having one product serve multiple purposes.
- After completing your makeup, ask a trusted person for feedback or use apps like “Be My Eyes” or “AIRA” for assistance.

Organisation:

- Keep a small bowl or container nearby. Place applicators, caps and lids of products into the container to prevent losing them.
- Keep your everyday products together for convenience and ease.
For extensive makeup collections, you may wish to organise your makeup according to “everyday makeup” and “formal or night makeup”, or “summer makeup” and “winter makeup” (particularly foundation and concealer shades). An organised system further simplifies routines and makes identifying products easier.
- Try makeup organisers. You can distinguish your products based on feel or where you have stored or positioned them. If you don’t have a lot of makeup, you can put it all in one small makeup bag.
- If all your products feel the same, you could try audio labels with “Pen Friend”, Braille labels, rubber bands, or adhesive velcro to distinguish and identify products.
- You could also use apps on your phone like “Seeing AI”, “Be My Eyes”, or “Be My AI” to identify the label and details.
- Try labelling your drawers and familiarising yourself with the layout of your products. Maintaining the same routine and staying organised will help.

Hygiene tips:

- Use makeup wipes, soap, or a face cloth to keep your hands clean. Regularly clean your brushes and equipment with soapy water or a specialised brush cleaner.
- Close all product caps tightly to minimise contamination, and store products at room temperature to avoid bacteria growth.
- Always clean and dry your skin before applying makeup for better results and for hygiene purposes.
- For makeup removal, reusable remover puffs are gentle on the skin and easy to use with warm water and your cleanser. They're especially effective around the eye area for removing mascara and eyeliner.

General techniques for application:

- Use the same brushes for each task to establish consistency. Count the brush strokes and apply gentle pressure to build your familiarity with the tools.
- Use your fingers to explore the makeup's texture, such as eyeshadow or lipstick, to better understand the amount and feel of the product.
- Follow a routine to avoid missing steps. A solid makeup routine usually follows these steps: cleanse and moisturise, apply foundation, powder, blush, eye makeup, and finish with lips.
- Use your fingers to feel how much product you have dispensed and want to use. With a clean finger, identify where you want to place the product first and then place the product with another finger in the same spot.
- Rest your elbows on a solid surface to enhance control during application.

Skin and foundation.

- Cleanse and moisturise daily. A consistent routine helps your makeup sit better on your skin.
- Choose pump or flip-top packaging for skincare (Cetaphil or Avène) to make dispensing easier and mess-free.
- Tinted SPF (Tower 28 or Naked Sundays) is a great everyday alternative to foundation. These products offer sun protection and natural-looking coverage in one step.

Primer:

- Primer smooths the skin and helps foundation last longer. Some formulas also help minimise redness, pores, or fine lines.
- Since there are many types of primer, it's worth discussing your skin goals with a makeup artist who can guide you toward the right choice.

Foundation tips:

- Decide what kind of coverage you want: light coverage for a natural look, medium coverage for a more even skin tone, or full coverage for events or specific skin concerns. For beginners, it's recommended to start with a light coverage foundation or skin tint to practice.
- Ask to be colour-matched to both your face and chest (décolletage) to make sure everything blends well and looks natural. This may vary by a shade or two between seasons, dependent on your skin type.
- Choose your finish based on your skin type:
 - Dewy: feels more hydrating, great for dry or mature skin.
 - Matte: less shine, but can highlight dryness or texture like fine lines or pores.

Eye makeup tips.

Eyebrows:

- Consider professional eyebrow shaping or tinting to minimise the need to use an eyebrow pencil. If using an eyebrow pencil, trace the shape of your eyebrows and blend with a brush for a softer look.
- Use eyebrow stencils to achieve your desired shape and definition.

Eyeliner:

- Hold the eyeliner horizontally against your lash line for better control, ensuring it stays close to your lashes.
- Use tape as a guide to create a winged eyeliner look, positioning the tape diagonally from the outer eye to the brow for symmetry.
- Consider using eyeliner stamps or guides for easier application of winged eyeliner.

Mascara:

- Consider lash lifts, tints or extensions to reduce the need for mascara.
- Use your finger as a guide when applying mascara to stabilise the wand and avoid smudging.
- Scrape the wand against the tube to remove excess mascara before applying. Bat your lashes against the wand to coat them evenly.
- Use cotton pads under the eyes when applying mascara to prevent smudging on the skin.

Eyeshadow:

- Consider using cream or liquid eyeshadows, as they are easier to blend with fingers and create less fallout. They have a thicker texture and stay where you place them.
- If using a powder eyeshadow, count brush strokes and tap the excess powder from the brush before application.
- Apply eyeshadow starting from the middle of the eyelid, sweeping left to right along the lash line and into the crease for even coverage.
- Label individual eyeshadow colours or purchase graded palettes for easier identification.
- Consider using shadow shields (small adhesive pads placed under the eyes) to catch any excess eyeshadow or mascara smudging.
- For eyeliner, consider starting with brown instead of black. It's softer and more forgiving.

Lip makeup tips.

General lip product application and tips:

- Begin with shades close to your natural lip colour, or nude for easier application.
- Trace the shape of your lips to increase awareness of their contours.
- Apply more pressure in the centre of the lips and less at the edges.
- Use a cotton bud to clean the edges of your lips, particularly the cupid's bow and corners.
- Keep your lips hydrated with balm or moisturiser to prevent dryness.
- Lip tints are a great option for long-lasting, low-maintenance colour and also work well under gloss or lipstick for added dimension.

Lipstick application:

- Experiment with different techniques to apply lipstick, whether its from the centre outwards, or the edge to the centre. Consistent technique will help improve muscle memory.
- Rest your elbow on a table for better control when applying lipstick.
- Place the lipstick lid in a secure, easy-to-find spot.

Lip liner and gloss:

- When applying lip liner, fill in your lips completely, not just the outer line. This creates a longer-lasting base and avoids the look of a leftover outline if your gloss or lipstick fades.
- Use lip liner to define your lips and prevent your lipstick from bleeding. Hold the pencil lower for better control.
- Use a lip brush to blend lip liner with lipstick for a smooth finish.
- Add gloss for shine, or as a standalone product to enhance the look.