



Camouflage Makeup for Party-Perfect Skin

by Jill Glaser

Clinical, or camouflage makeup, is defined as makeup specifically formulated to provide effective coverage for those with serious skin discolorations. The term "clinical" is used because plastic surgeons, as early as World War II, helped formulate products for fighter pilots who suffered severe burns from their injuries.

Today, the art and science of camouflage makeup is becoming increasingly popular among consumers who are not severely disfigured, but are otherwise dissatisfied with their appearance. With the correct products and tools – along with some basic knowledge of application techniques – individuals seeking the illusion of flawless skin can easily apply camouflage makeup.

Clinical makeup can temporarily “erase” scars and uneven pigmentation resulting from acne and bruises, spider veins, tattoos and severe scarring. It follows then, that this kind of makeup can allow women to wear – with confidence – lower necklines, shorter than usual hemlines, and strappy shoes. The desire for flawless skin, especially during the holiday season, prompts those to look to camouflage, as well as classic beauty makeup, to enhance their appearance and even out uneven skin tone.

The Difference Between Commercial Concealers And Professional Camouflage Makeup

Camouflage makeup products are highly pigmented, opaque and formulated in a way that allow adhesion to all types and textures of porous, as well as nonporous skin. In other words, the products can diminish or conceal skin discolorations regardless of whether the skin is merely discolored due to common acne, hyperpigmentation, vitiligo or bruising – or whether the cellular surface of the skin has actually changed due to scarring.

Camouflage foundations are water-resistant, particularly when thoroughly set with camouflage powder; they may even become waterproof if also sprayed with an alcohol-based setting spray. Due to the vast variety of skin tones, the best clinical product lines offer many different shades in order to effectively camouflage the discoloration and match the surrounding skin.

What To look For In A Clinical Makeup Line

Camouflage makeup varies in color selection, covering ability and cost. The products may be cream, oil-in-water or silicone-based. The makeup is available in the form of opaque liquids, creams or powders. For maximum coverage, more than one skin tone color is usually required to effectively conceal the uneven coloration and then match the surrounding skin. Since it is not cream or oil based, it is ideal for all skin types and will not cause break-outs. Products that contain kaolin, magnesium carbonate or talc absorb oil on the skin’s surface. Titanium dioxide, mixed with iron oxides, provides color.

The Best Camouflage Makeup Is:

1. **Water Resistant:** Camouflage makeup must be wash-off resistant, or even waterproof, for wear-ability throughout the entire day; the product must stay in place until it is time to wash it off with cleanser.
2. **Highly Adhesive:** The makeup must be able to adhere to nonporous tissue scars, such as keloids, laser-resurfaced, chemical-peeled or dermabraided skin.
3. **Easy To Apply:** Camouflage products should not be difficult to apply. Complicated application will discourage their use.
4. **Opaque:** Camouflage makeup must have no transparency whatsoever in order to effectively mask uneven skin tones.

Application Tips

As with any makeup application, lighting is very important. An evenly balanced light is helpful in determining the foundation colors to choose. If there is no bright light available, apply the makeup while sitting in front of a window. The natural light, even on a cloudy day, helps to provide accuracy in reading skin color.

It is especially important with clinical makeup to use sanitary and hygienic practices. Start with a clean skin surface by washing and then applying alcohol to the skin. After the alcohol has dried, liberally “prime” the skin with either a moisturizer or a silicone primer. In either case, be careful to avoid the use of excessive moisturizer, as this will create too much “slip” for the coverage to stay in place.

Once applied, it is important to allow the primer, particularly if it is silicone-based, to sit on the skin’s surface for at least two minutes before applying the foundation. While the primer warms to the skin, the excess will dissipate and the remaining product will act to “fill any cracks,” thereby creating a smoother surface for the foundation application.





It is extremely important to then choose a foundation camouflage product that closely matches the skin color surrounding the discoloration. If the discoloration is covered, but the coverage does not match the surrounding skin tone, the discoloration will still be readily apparent. Thus, while one or more colors may be needed to cover the scar, a totally different foundation color is usually needed in order to correctly match the surrounding skin.

Regardless of the product line selected, the makeup is most effectively applied with either a clean, synthetic brush, or a clean and damp, latex-free sponge. To avoid cross contamination, fingers should not be used in a clinical application. With the brush or damp sponge, use a dabbing, or patting motion. Make sure the entire discolored or raised surface is covered.

The bulk of the foundation must be applied directly toward the middle of the discoloration; the foundation's edges are then thinned, or blurred out, to blend into the surrounding skin. The camouflage foundation must then be set in place with an ample amount of camouflage setting powder. It is especially effective to use a fully-loaded powder puff, in a rolling action, across the entire area for the powder application.

If, after setting the area with powder, the client finds that the area is not totally covered, an additional layer of the correct foundation colors should be reapplied and set once again with the camouflage setting powder.

If the foundation colors selected to conceal the discoloration do not quite match the surrounding skin area, the foundation that actually does match the unaffected skin needs to be reapplied. Apply it (the surrounding skin tone foundation) directly over the middle of the discoloration or scar. Then spread it out to the edges in order to match the surrounding pigment. Apply another layer of powder. Keep in mind that the more you layer the product, the less powder you add to the layers – otherwise it becomes too thick.

Finally, if the area needs to be waterproof, an alcohol-based spray may be used over the entire surface. However, alcohol is very drying to the skin, and may not be suitable for everyone, particularly those with dry and/or sensitive skin.

For removal, it is best to use a gentle cleanser, followed by a toner to ensure that the skin is totally cleansed.

The World at Your Fingertips

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black tank top, is smiling and holding a globe above her head with both hands. The globe is composed of a grid of small, diverse photographs of people from various backgrounds. At the bottom of the image, there are five colorful icons representing different products: APN (green), SG (red), AP (blue), PG (blue), and a yellow icon with a green leaf. Below the icons, the text "Aesthetics Professional.com" is written in white on a dark background.

APN SG AP PG

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The Use Of Color Theory To Match Skin Tone

If you are unable to find the exact opaque foundation in the color you need, you may want to try using the principles of color theory to create a perfect skin tone match. This means you can tone down or neutralize a color by covering it with another color that is opposite to it on the pigmented color wheel.

For example, on the color wheel, green is opposite to red. So, if you have a scar with a reddish hue, try to first blot it with a small amount of green primer or camouflage foundation. Similarly, since purple is across from yellow, and blue is across from orange on the color wheel – for blue or purple discolorations such as bruises – try blotting the discolored area first with a yellow or salmon/orange-based concealer.

Once you have neutralized the color, you can then find the foundation color that matches the surrounding skin and then cover the entire area (including the discolored area) again blurring the edges. Complete the application by setting with a “loaded” powder puff. Then brush the excess powder away.

Color Theory And Tattoo Coverage

With tattoos, color theory is quite effective. When covering a colorful tattoo, you may need to use at least three colors. One shade should be up to two shades lighter than your skin tone to neutralize the darkness of your work of art. The second color should match your skin tone. In addition, a third color (color theory) may be selected to blur the bright color(s) in the tattoo.

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As with all clinical applications, first clean and dry the tattooed skin, then apply the lightest color. Be sure that all of the ink has been covered with the product, but avoid the surrounding skin. Then, apply the opposite color of the color in the tattoo. Finally, apply the makeup that matches the skin surrounding the tattoo in the same manner, but extend that shade just over the outside edges of the tattoo and gently blur the edges of the product into your skin.

Camouflage Makeup Airbrushing

Airbrushing is a highly effective camouflage makeup technique. Typically a makeup artist will be required to apply the airbrush camouflage makeup. However, recently companies have introduced airbrush compressors intended for individual use.

The same basic coverage principles apply and foundation color considerations are the same; however, the product is sprayed evenly and quickly over the skin by use of a power source, compressor and an airbrush.

Airbrush makeup is available in water, silicone and alcohol-based products. For the best, most durable coverage, alcohol-based may be used. This kind of foundation will actually stain the skin and will last for several days, even after showering. However, the problem with the alcohol-based airbrush product is that it is very drying and harsh on skin.

The next-best product alternative for airbrush camouflage is silicone-based airbrush foundation. As with any other camouflage application, the skin is first cleaned, primed and then the foundation is set with camouflage powder.

Conclusion

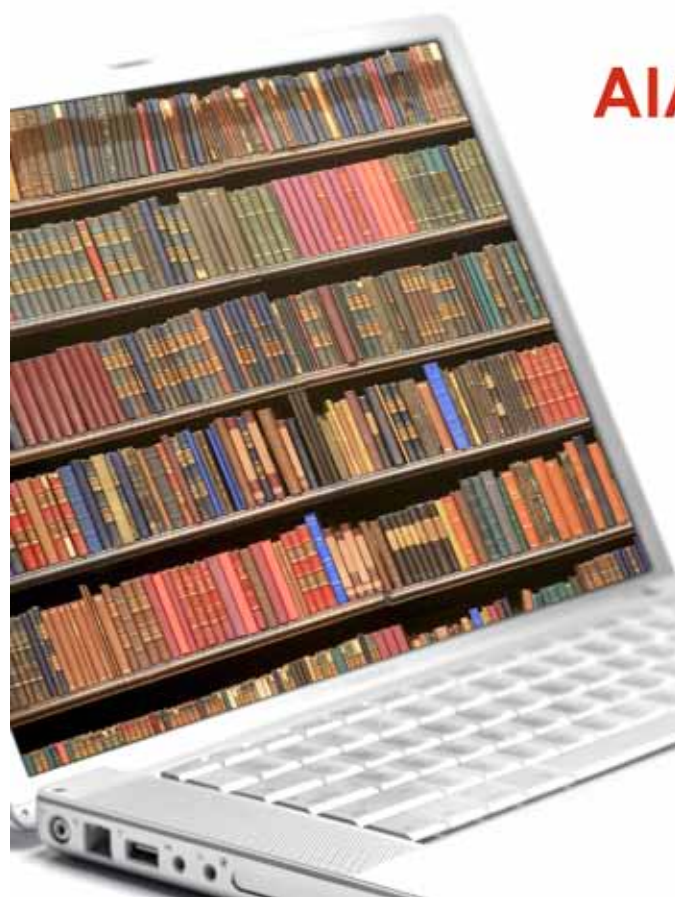
The basic principles of camouflage makeup application in this article will work for almost all skin discolorations, regardless of the severity of the skin condition, or the color or texture of the surface. If applied correctly, clinical makeup should be durable and stay on for a good eight to 10 hours until it is gently removed with cleanser. This makes it a perfect addition for holiday makeup application and "party-perfect" skin.

Resource:

"Clinical Cosmetology," Victoria Raynor (1993).



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