

SKIN FITNESS

Why beauty pros love serum foundation

They're the high-tech hybrid of make-up and skincare. Here's why the experts want you to embrace a base with benefits

We may be a nation of outdoorsy types, but Australia sure has a love affair with foundation. In fact, according to a 2023 study on make-up, we spend roughly \$2.5 billion on it each year.

But the irony is, while layering on base may have instant aesthetic benefits, it's typically been to the detriment of our skin – until now. And it's all thanks to one of the fastest-growing categories in the cosmetic realm: serum foundation.

To Michelle Sciara, a career beauty therapist and national education manager for InSkin Cosmetics, spending time and money on great skincare, then using an old-school base, is like going to the gym then picking up a Big Mac on the way home. "As therapists, we often see people's great skincare routine undone by make-up that clogs and aggravates the skin," she says. "Serum foundations, on the other hand, extend the benefits."

Serum foundations are full-coverage bases that contain little to no irritants, and are infused with hydrating and typically anti-ageing actives: think niacinamide, hyaluronic acid and peptides. "There should be no silicones, no fillers and definitely no talcs, which are in a lot of mineral make-ups now," notes Sciara.

Make-up artist and beauty pro, Nikkia Joy, who has almost a million followers on YouTube, has had a front seat to the rise of this wonder category. "Three or four years ago, serum foundations were unheard of. Now most of the major brands have a version."

According to Sianan Scrivner, another of Australia's most-followed beauty influencers whose content MO is radiant skin, one of the main misconceptions about serum foundations is they offer little coverage because they have a lighter, more fluid texture. "In reality, most are designed to be buildable, so you can layer them to get the coverage you need," she notes.

Sciara echoes the sentiment. "You apply it the same way as regular foundation. It's buildable the same way. The finish is the same. You're not sacrificing benefits, only gaining."

One caveat: "You still need to apply skincare underneath," says Joy. "The ingredients in the serum foundation are not at a high enough concentration to replace your usual products." Noted.

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