

# LET'S FACE IT

## selecting the perfect foundation for ethnic skin!

by Krista Embry

Ethnic skin tones are sometimes confusing - so many shades of skin, yet limited foundation shades! How can a perfect match be achieved for every client? This is a question I have recently received, and I want to use this month's article to clarify the art of mastering skin tone.

So... who would be considered ethnic? The term, "*Women of Color*" can be a broad category. Let's take a look at this category and discuss how one can better accommodate a client.

First off, the term "*Women of Color*" includes African-American, Asian, Latino and American Indian, to name a few. All of these categories are Warm or Neutral based skin tones. Immediately, this eliminates Cool tone foundations. What if you have a client who has an Asian father (Warm skin tone) and

a Caucasian mother who has a Cool skin tone? A combination of skin tones can alter this basic rule. What would you do? Remember to always look at the forearm to determine skin tone: Cool, Warm or Neutral. By looking at the forearm for **Zone One** (Cool or Pink undertones) and **Zone Two** (Warm or Yellow undertones), you will be able to choose the correct skin tone for that client. This combination of parents would more than likely put the offspring into a Neutral skin tone. (Note: For a more detailed explanation of skin tones and identifying the zones of the forearm, refer to my article, "Mastering Your Skin Tone".)

The next step is to match the exact foundation to the jaw line. This could require a combination of two foundations. Remember, we are speaking about "*Women of Color*", so your two foundations may include a Warm and a Neutral. Be VERY hesitant to match a Cool base on ethnic skin. What typically happens is that after a couple of hours, oil from the skin will change the overall color of the foundation. The outcome is very unfavorable and will change the complexion to a grayish hue.



Now that we have targeted the skin tone we are addressing this month, let's talk about how to match extremely dark skin. First - if two shades of foundation won't deliver a perfect match, try mixing a dark tinted moisturizer with only one foundation. By adding just a couple of drops of a tinted moisturizer to a foundation, the result will be a lighter coverage to the skin. If you are addressing "blue black" Ethiopian skin tones, you need to step into a product line that carries "tinters". These products are pure in color, and are usually manufactured for cosmetologists; however, some over-the-counter cosmetic lines carry similar products. Mac Cosmetics carries a deep tone

foundation that is pure in pigment and Chanel carries a Matte Blanc which is pure white in pigment.

It is impossible for professional make-up artists to carry every shade of foundation, so we rely heavily on "tinters" to deliver the perfect match.

"Tinters" range in color from pure white to black. The opposite end of the spectrum can be attained if a complexion is so light that even an ivory foundation is too dark.

All you do is take your closest matched foundation to the skin, and adjust it accordingly using 2-5 drops of "tinter" until the desired shade is mixed. Remember

to always apply your foundation with a cosmetic wedge to get an overall flawless look. Continue your make-up routine as normal with concealer, loose powder etc.

How does this concept that "*Women of Color*" are always Warm to Neutral skin tones affect the rest of the make-up application? Well, skin tone is one issue that cannot be deviated from, while the issue of color is much broader. Just because an ethnic skin tone can only wear a Warm foundation does not mean she has to use warm shades of blush, shadows and lipsticks! Quite the contrary is true. To enhance a woman's complexion, try using cool tones of eye shadows and blushers to create a vibrant healthy glow. I cross all boundaries when it comes to color for shadows, blushers and lipsticks. By mixing and matching cool shades with warmer skin tones, opposite ends of the color spectrum are being blended. Just for kicks, apply a deep pink lipstick and overlay it with a gold or copper lip gloss. You will be amazed with the outcome! If a cool blush is too intense for your client, overlay the blush with a swipe of a bronzer. This will warm up any blush, yet still maintain the vibrant look desired.

Hopefully, this has given you a broader view of skin tones and exposed yet another avenue to assist you in...*Impacting Your Image!*

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