

MASTERING your skin tone

by Krista Embry

“You have so much yellow in your skin, you should only wear earth tones!” “Oh, you are definitely a cool because you have blonde hair and blue eyes!” “I’m a ‘Winter/Spring/Summer/Fall’ so I can only wear...” “I have brown hair and brown eyes, I must be a warm...” The scenarios go on and on... Is there truth to these scripts? Sometimes; however, as with all rules, there are exceptions. I feature 13 models on my DVD, *Impact Your Image*, which represent the majority of skin tones. The hair and eye color help in identifying the model that most represents you, but it truly is the skin tone that is critical. When it comes to a foundation, choosing the correct skin tone is crucial. What I call “second skin” make-up will either give you a look that will receive compliments, or a look that can cause others to look at you in a side glance leaving you wondering “Do I have something in between my teeth?” This is because your face will either be ghostly white or orangish-yellow if you are in the wrong color family. We have all seen women walking around with an orange face and an extremely white neck and body. There is usually a line around the jaw called a line of demarcation where the foundation stops, and the real skin tone begins. Remember, the point of foundation, whether it is a liquid or a mineral, is to look like “second skin”. Can you leave your home wearing just your foundation and feel comfortable? If you said, “No, I need color in my face first!” then I can almost guarantee you are in the wrong color family. I’m not condoning that you only need foundation to get a beautiful finished “look,” but I believe you should be able to leave your home wearing only foundation



and concealer, and feel “flawless.” Another indication you are in the wrong color family is if your foundation changes colors throughout the day. If you are using a **Warm** foundation, and you are a **Cool** skin tone, your foundation will turn orange after a few hours. If you are a **Warm** wearing a **Cool** foundation, after a few hours your complexion will have a grayish hue.

The special effects that I teach in my DVD, *Impact Your Image*, will continue to complete your canvas; however, I am not the type of make-up artist that stays with **Warm**, **Cool**, or **Neutral** tones when applying color on the face. In other words, I am a **Warm** skin tone, but I love wearing pink lipsticks and purple eye shadows! Allow me to break you out of the mindset of “I can’t wear that eye shadow, it’s not in my color family.” There are tricks in the application process that will allow you to cross over into other color families regarding shadows and lipsticks, but a **Warm** skin tone can never cross over to a **Cool** foundation or vice versa. (I am NOT speaking about your wardrobe! This article is only regarding make-up.)

Let’s break this down to simple terms. A yellow base would be a **Warm** skin tone, a rosy base (usually Ivory or Alabaster skin) would be a **Cool** skin tone, and a combination of the two skin tones would be a **Neutral** skin tone. I already know what you are thinking... “How can I tell?” Once you train your eye to see the different zones in the skin, it’s a piece of cake! First, let me say that 80% of the population has either **Neutral** or **Warm** skin tones.



Our skin is what identifies our coloring. When identifying skin tone, look at the wrist and forearm. Be sure to have excellent lighting when making a decision. Look for “zones” in your skin. When you examine your forearm, turn your wrists up and extend them out in front of your body. The inner most part of the forearm, which will be next to your waist if you have your arms extended, will show a zone (Zone 1), while the outer part of the forearm, if you follow your thumb down to your elbow, will be another zone (Zone 2). Here is what you are looking for:

Do you have a rosy/pink hue to Zone 1, and...
Do you have a golden/yellow hue to Zone 2?

If you said yes, then you have a **Neutral** or combination skin tone. This should be easily identified, so don’t stare at your skin until you think you see a rosy tone as it will just be a figment of your imagination! However, if you see two zones, this is what **Neutral** means, so consider yourself blessed as you can wear colors (especially pinks and corals) easily without using tricks to make them work! Also, your foundation will be in the **Neutral** family. Now, let me make this a little more thorough for you. Sometimes a **Neutral** will lean more toward the **Cool** foundations in the winter months, and sometimes a **Neutral** will tan easily in the summer and lean more toward the **Warm** foundations in the summer months. Don’t let this confuse you, as that’s exactly what a **Neutral** skin tone should do; however, some **Neutrals** will stay in their same color family all year with no shading issues.

If you said “No, I don’t see two colors/zones on my forearm,” then let’s identify a **Warm** skin tone.

Do you see a golden/yellow hue that covers both Zone 1 and Zone 2?
Does your skin look thicker? In other words, does your skin hide veins easily?



Do your veins around your wrist have a greenish tint? (The best way to see “green” veins is to lay your forearm on a blue piece of fabric. This will highlight the color of your veins. **Neutral** skin tones can have green or blue veins.)

If you said yes, you have a **Warm** or yellow skin tone. **Warm** skin tones are the most common, and are typically the easiest to identify. A **Warm** skin tone can cross over to a **Neutral** foundation, but never cross over to a **Cool** foundation.

Now that we have identified **Neutral** and **Warm** skin tones, what about the 20 percent of the population that falls in the **Cool** skin tone? A true **Cool** is very easy to detect.

Do you see rose/pink undertones in your forearm (Zones 1 and 2)

Are your veins easily seen?

Do your veins around the wrist have a blue tint? (The best way to see “blue” veins is to lay your forearm on a blue piece of fabric. This will highlight the color of your veins.)

Do you burn easily with sun exposure?
Is your skin Ivory or Alabaster?

All of the above are indications that you have a **Cool** or blue-based skin tone. Very seldom does a **Cool** skin tone cross over into a **Neutral** foundation; however, in some cases, the summer months may dictate that a **Neutral** base is more appropriate.

Always test your foundation on your jaw line by making a vertical line with the foundation you are trying. This will allow you to see the foundation on the “least sun damaged” part of your face, and see if the foundation matches against your neck. Unless you compare two different shades of foundation, it is difficult to spot an exact match.