

I'm not a bot



Download Article Download Article If you have never used a tanning bed before, the process can seem a bit intimidating. You may be worried about how to properly hydrate your skin, or how to position your body to avoid getting awkward tan lines. So before heading to your local tanning salon to book an appointment, take this time to become knowledgeable about the tanning process, and what you can do to ensure you receive a flawless tan. 1 Go to a local tanning salon and ask about the tanning options they offer. Most tanning salons have a variety of bed styles available, and each use a different method to tan your skin. Speak with a representative at the salon, and have them pick the tanning bed that will work best for your skin. If there are multiple tanning salons in your area, shop around, compare salons, and choose the one you like most.[1] Tanning salons will also offer discounted tans if you purchase a monthly membership. If this is your first time using a tanning bed, only schedule an appointment for a single use. This way, if you do not like the results or if you decide tanning beds are not right for you, you are not committed to paying for a membership. 2 Use a low or medium pressure tanning bed to receive a natural-looking tan. Low and medium pressure tanning beds emit UVB rays in a spectrum that is similar to natural sunlight. The main difference is that medium pressure tanning operates at a higher wattage, and will tan your skin faster. While low pressure tanning is considered the traditional method of tanning because of its low reflector intensity, either of these will give you a natural-looking tan.[2] Since the lamps in low and medium pressure tanning slowly emit the UVB rays, there is a risk of getting a sunburn. If you burn easily, consider using an alternative method. Advertisement 3 Lay in a high pressure tanning bed to get a long-lasting tan. High pressure tanning beds emit a higher proportion of UVA rays over UVB rays. The UVA rays will give you a deeper, longer-lasting tan that will build quickly without burning your skin. While this method is gentler on your skin, it also is usually the most expensive. If this is your first time tanning, refrain from using the high pressure tanning bed until you have become more experienced with the process. High pressure tanning builds a tan quickly, and if you are not readily familiar with the process you can easily wind up with tan lines. 4 Stand in a vertical tanning booth to get a quick and even tan. Since your skin is not pressing against any surfaces, you will get a more even tan and won't have to worry about spots on your skin being missed. A vertical tanning booth is good for people who have never tanned before, or for people who are claustrophobic. 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Don't forget to moisturize your lips as well. Your lips can easily dry out and burn while tanning, so make sure to apply a thick coat of your favorite SPF lip balm before laying in the tanning bed. 3 Refrain from wearing fragrant beauty or skin products to avoid skin irritation. When heated, certain fragrances and chemicals can cause irritation to your skin, or prevent your skin from tanning properly. Before going to your tanning appointment, skip using any beauty products like deodorant, perfume, or makeup. After receiving your tan, wait at least 24 hours to resume your normal beauty and skin care routine. Makeup and fragrant lotions can still cause irritation to your skin while the tan is setting. 4 Apply an indoor tanning lotion about an hour before your appointment. Using a tanning lotion will increase the effects of the tanning bed. You do not have to use a tanning lotion before your appointment, but doing so might reduce the number of tanning sessions you have to have in order to achieve your desired tan.[8] Do not use any outdoor tanning lotions or oils. Not only will these outdoor products not be effective, but the compounds might actually damage the tanning equipment. 5 Wear a bathing suit to protect sensitive skin areas. Areas like your buttocks, breasts, and genitals are not used to being directly exposed to sunlight. To avoid skin irritation wear a bathing suit when you go tanning. If you opt for tanning nude, make sure to apply ample amounts of moisturizer to any areas that you believe will become irritated from the UV rays. Use a washcloth, hand towel, or tanning stickers provided by the salon to cover your nipples and genitals for most of your tanning session. Once you have experienced multiple tanning sessions, covering yourself will become less necessary.[9] Some tanning salons do not permit nude tanning, so find out what the policies are before you strip down.[10] 6 Cover recently dyed hair and tattoos to prevent them from fading. Steady exposure to UV rays can fade dyed hair and tattoo ink. Ask a staff member for a cap to cover your dyed hair, and find out what sunscreens are safe to use inside of the tanning bed so you can coat your tattoo. The UV rays will also yellow acrylic nails, so ask a staff member if they have coverings you can use to protect them. 7 Wear goggles to protect your eyes while tanning. These will be given to you at the salon, or you can bring your own. Even with your eyes closed, the intensity of the UV rays emitted in the tanning bed can irritate or even damage your eyes. Overtime, excess exposure to UV rays without proper protection can lead to color blindness, loss of night vision, developing cataracts, and blindness.[11] You can avoid getting pale circles, or "raccoon eyes," from the goggles by sliding the goggles periodically throughout your tan. Just do not remove or lift the goggles completely. Never wear contact lenses while tanning as they can dry out or damage your eyes. Advertisement 1 Ask a staff member to go over the tanning process with you. This is especially important if this is your first time tanning, or if you are using a type of bed you are unfamiliar with. Some tanning beds will have buttons for you to personally control the fans that circulate the air, or some will have separate light bulbs you can turn on and off to tan your face. Depending on the salon, you may also have to close the lid to the tanning bed and turn the machine on when you are ready to start. 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Stretch out your body when you first lay down to ensure all parts of your skin get exposure.[13] If you want to particularly tan the skin underneath your arms, lift your arms over your head for a few minutes to tan. 4 Bend your knees to avoid getting tan lines on the back of your upper thighs. When you lay your legs flat, your buttocks pushes against the back of your thighs. Tanning like this will result in embarrassing tan lines. To avoid this, bend your knees so your legs are slightly elevated. Make sure that your inner thighs don't press together when you do this, otherwise, you will get an uneven tan there. If there is not enough room inside the tanning bed for you to bend both of your knees at the same time, bend one knee for a few minutes and then switch to the other. 5 Flip onto your stomach halfway through your tanning session. In order to tan your backside, adjust your positioning so you are laying on your stomach. Place your arms at your sides with your palms down. 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Your tan will continue to darken over the next 24 to 72 hours. If after that time you are not happy with the results, make another appointment. Some people take 2 or 3 sessions before they achieve their desired golden glow. You can also use tanning extender products to make your tan last longer between visits. Safely expose your skin to the sunlight to keep the bronze pigment in your tan. If you constantly conceal your skin after receiving your tan, it will quickly fade. Advertisement Add New Question Question Can I go to a tanning salon if I have skin cancer? No. Tanning while having skin cancer is detrimental to your skin, as tanning is a major cause for skin cancer. It's a lot like smoking while you have lung cancer. Since you clearly have skin that is prone to skin cancer, you really should avoid using tanning beds for the rest of your life. Question Should I take off my make up before going on a tanning bed? Yes. 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Twin Cities Dermatology Center is a comprehensive dermatology clinic treating patients of all ages through clinical dermatology, cosmetic dermatology, and telemedicine. Equation Skin Care was created to provide the best in evidence-based, natural skin care products. Dr. Pierre-Louis earned a BS in Biology and an MBA from Duke University, an MD from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, completed a residency in dermatology at the University of Minnesota, and completed a dermatopathology fellowship at Washington University in St. Louis. Dr. Pierre-Louis is board certified in dermatology, cutaneous surgery, and dermatopathology by the American Boards of Dermatology and Pathology. This article has been viewed 1,950,016 times. Co-authors: 67 Updated: April 21, 2025 Views: 1,950,016 Categories: Featured Articles | Fake Tans Print Send fan mail to authors Thanks to all authors for creating a page that has been read 1,950,016 times. 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It may take some time, but it is safer and looks more natural. See more answers Ask a Question Advertisement Thanks Advertisement Co-authored by: Margareth Pierre-Louis, MD Board Certified Dermatologist This article was co-authored by Margareth Pierre-Louis, MD. Dr. Margareth Pierre-Louis is a board certified Dermatologist and Dermatopathologist, Physician Entrepreneur, and the Founder of Twin Cities Dermatology Center and Equation Skin Care in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Twin Cities Dermatology Center is a comprehensive dermatology clinic treating patients of all ages through clinical dermatology, cosmetic dermatology, and telemedicine. Equation Skin Care was created to provide the best in evidence-based, natural skin care products. Dr. Pierre-Louis earned a BS in Biology and an MBA from Duke University, an MD from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, completed a residency in dermatology at the University of Minnesota, and completed a dermatopathology fellowship at Washington University in St. Louis. Dr. Pierre-Louis is board certified in dermatology, cutaneous surgery, and dermatopathology by the American Boards of Dermatology and Pathology. This article has been viewed 1,950,016 times. Co-authors: 67 Updated: April 21, 2025 Views: 1,950,016 Categories: Featured Articles | Fake Tans Print Send fan mail to authors Thanks to all authors for creating a page that has been read 1,950,016 times. "Very efficient article with some humor thrown in that covers all the important points of indoor tanning. Good for newbies or those who've not tanned in years..." more Share your story Can I Use Cocoa Butter Under Tingle Lotions... 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