

Application form

Behind every great foundation is an even greater sponge

Sponges used to be considered the shellsuits of make-up applicators – old-fashioned, uncool and with questionable hygiene. But right now sponges (unlike shellsuits) are experiencing a renaissance. A new wave of elliptical, contour-hugging shapes has the sponge diffusing creamy foundations over the skin more smoothly than icing with a spatula. The creamier end of the foundation spectrum works best with sponges – anything too watery will only be absorbed by the fuzzy texture. Be vigilant about keeping your sponge clean. Every evening use a drop of cleanser or shampoo to clean it, then air dry. Throw away after three months. Here's our pick of the best:

RED CARPET, £16, BEAUTYBLENDER [1]

The honeycomb-like texture fills with water when wet, making the sponge so full that the foundation only sits on top rather than being absorbed. The benefit? You use less product.

DEFINER SPONGE SOFT, £9.99, BARELY [2]

Latex-free and hypo-allergenic, this is perfect for sensitive skin. The pointed end can be used to nudge foundation into hard-to-reach spots such as around the nose and under the eyes.

PRECISION MAKE UP BLENDER £6.90, KIKO [3]

With a pointed tip and chubby base, this sponge blender can reach all angles of the face. Plus the porous

texture absorbs just the right amount of product before releasing it in an even sweep.

MIRACLE COMPLEXION SPONGE, £5.99, REAL TECHNIQUES [4]

The Rubik's Cube of foundation sponges. Twist to the round side for a full face of coverage then to the flat edge to sculpt cheekbones using a darker shade of foundation.

PRO BLEND DAB HAND APPLICATOR, £8.50, FAKE BAKE BEAUTY [5]

Find hand-held sponges small and fiddly? Try this sponge-on-a-stick. Offering the same control and 'swish' as a brush, the fatter sides move foundation across the face without streaks.

