

Catching the rays

Tanning made simple in seven easy months

By DON WOODARD

It wasn't long ago when one's only concern with getting a suntan was dealing with the dried gook in the spout of the "Sea and Ski" bottle. No one thought to treat his or her skin with a "pre-sun" product; Solarcaine was the only available *apres sol* "moisturizer." But as sure as the zinc oxide on an old person's nose in Miami Beach and the cocoa butter in your "tanning formula," simplicity has fallen by the wayside.

And just as it's fashionably hip to jab at the fashionably hip, catching the bennies—those beneficial rays of the sun—has evolved into an art. Forget the vanity of it all; disregard the masochistic implications: 'Tis the beginning of the seven month sunning season. And even if you weren't fortunate enough to follow the patches of blue as they made their way across Florida during spring break, there's plenty of time and technique to catch up with the bronzed Jones'. But to do so, you'll need to know how to get a tan, where to get a tan and what to do with that tan when you've finally earned it.

Sunning products are displayed as prominently in drugstores as the revolving Timex watch case of Dr. Grabo's rack of colored pipes. The hardsell approach to tanning began, one supposes, with the black dog tugging on the swimsuit of Coppertone's little girl. It was an acceptable practice; no one seemed to mind that she was topless and was having her rear-end exposed by Rover.

But Coppertone's young lady has grown up.

And just as the sales pitches have become sexier, the products themselves have made taking advantage of those precious days at the beach more complicated. When representatives of the skin-care industry

realized the suntan lotion market was flooded, they merely expanded the consciousness of the consumer's suntan needs. "Grades" of lotion were created; two additional layers of treatment were conceived—one to be applied beneath the usual anointment, the other above—and the rest is history.

As active ingredients go, "Paba" seems to be the popular favorite in the manufacture of both pre-sun and suntan lotions. One can imagine the industrial chemists running out to collect the mysterious element—from "Paba" bushes, no doubt—once scientists discovered its skin cell-protective properties.

Still, it is a well-known fact that most people will sacrifice health for cosmetic purposes. They assume that any agent reducing the harmful effects of the sun must also be inhibiting their chances of getting a tan. So with this in mind, the market allows for the more exotic, burn-baby-burn types of oil.

Oils—cocoa, coconut, baby, olive, corn, turtle, (yes turtle)—not only permit more rays to darken pigment, but also include the advantage of making one *feel* as if he or she is getting a tan. There is something psychological about watching your greasy body glisten that makes you think you look two shades darker than you actually are.

But if you're the daring sort, there's one additional step you can take up the tanning ladder: the Professional tan. Also advertised as the "ultimate" tanning oils, these lotions are not for the fair-skinned who freckle beneath the glow of a fluorescent lamp. One glance at the label should tell you: "Caution: This oil is very strong. You must be tan to use it." (Never mind the fact what the manufacturers really mean is that their oil is very weak and offers little protection at all.)

While selecting the suntan lotion that's right for you may not be an easy task, getting a suntan at Carolina requires little more than

12 square feet of space in an open area. Beside the obvious benefit of not having to drive for hours to the beach, campus "sun spots" are sand-free, a recognized advantage to anyone peeved by the uncomfortable mixture of grit and tanning oil.

If you're the antsy type who can't lie still long enough to roast on a beach towel, an afternoon in the stands of Boshamer Stadium affords ample time to sun yourself.

Perhaps the best places to catch rays are the residence hall "beaches," where loud music, out of control frisbees and discarded ring-tabs reign supreme. (Henderson Beach, located across from the Union on the lawn of Henderson Residence College, was for many years the most popular site of spring frolic. The predominance of Disco "music," however, blaring from a pair of dorm-room speakers—replacing the traditional rock 'n

roll sounds (remember when?)—has forced many to migrate to the beaches of South Campus.)

But more important than the "hows" and "wheres" of getting a tan, one should know what to do once the Bronze Age is realized. Your tan will do you little good if you study in the basement of Wilson Library and continually sport dark brown clothing. After witnessing the parade across campus of tanned bodies during the post-spring weeks, several tips come to mind.

- Pastels and whites are the obvious colors to wear to accentuate that healthy look.

- Never wear shorts cut above your "tanning line".

- Don't carry "post sun" moisturizer visibly on your person.

- Assume a "Tan? Me?" attitude as you stroll past the pit. Nothing is more obnoxious than someone who seems to feel good about their tan, when we're all aware of the sweat and discomfort that was involved in the tanning process.

Above all, don't panic when your skin starts falling off at an alarming rate. Peeling is merely nature's way of telling you that you should've stayed indoors and done something constructive in the first place. ■



The name of the torture is 'tan'

Don Woodard is associate editor for the Daily Tar Heel.

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