The Sunscreen *Cheat Sheet*

What the SPF number actually means, how much you really need, and the brand-new filter the US finally approved.

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SPF 30

THE 60-SECOND VERSION

The best one is the one you wear.

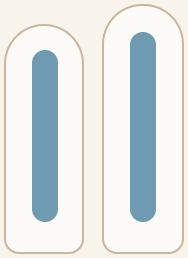
1. **SPF 30 is plenty** for most days. Higher numbers add very little.
2. **Use two fingers' worth** for your face and neck. Most of us use way less.
3. **Reapply every two hours** in the sun, and after swimming or sweating.

WHAT THE NUMBER BLOCKS (UVB, THE BURNING RAYS)



Going from 30 to 50 buys you about one more percent. SPF 100 is mostly selling you a feeling. And the number only measures UVB. For UVA, the aging rays, look for **"broad spectrum."**

THE TWO-FINGER RULE



Squeeze a line down your index and middle finger. That's about a quarter teaspoon, the amount for face and neck.

Sunscreen is half of anti-aging. It's cheaper than most serums, and it has more proof behind it than almost anything else on your shelf. If you only change one thing, make it this.

WHERE EVERYONE MISSES

Ears
and the back of your neck.

Eyelids
and the corners of your eyes. A stick makes it easier.

Hairline
and your part, if you're outside a lot.

Hands
and chest. They age too.

Mineral, chemical, *and the news.*

Mineral

Zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. Gentle for most sensitive skin. The trade-off: it can leave a white cast and feel thicker.

Chemical

Filters like avobenzone that absorb UV. Usually lighter and invisible. The trade-off: some people get stinging, especially around the eyes.

Both work. Pick the texture you'll actually put on every morning.

WHY EVERYONE BUYS EUROPEAN AND KOREAN SUNSCREEN

Until this year, the US hadn't added a new sunscreen filter since 1999, while Europe and Asia kept getting newer, more stable ones, especially for UVA. In June 2026 the FDA finally added **bemotrizinol** (you may know it as Tinosorb S), and US products with it are just starting to show up. If you buy imports, buy from the brand or a major retailer. Fakes do show up on marketplace sites.

"REEF SAFE"

Not a regulated term in the US, so read it as marketing. If it matters to you, check the actual filters on the back.

WHAT I'D ACTUALLY BUY

SAVE

Badger Unscented Mineral Sunscreen SPF 50

Why: zinc, sunflower oil, beeswax and vitamin E. That's the whole list. Unscented and water resistant.

SPLURGE

Good Weather Skin, any of them

Why: mineral, fragrance-free, and nice enough that you'll actually wear it every day.

TESTING NOW

Notes coming soon.

TWO MORE THINGS

SPF in makeup doesn't count as your sunscreen. You'd have to wear way more foundation than anyone does to get the SPF on the label. Think of it as a bonus layer.

Check the date. Sunscreen expires, and an old bottle that's been baking in your car won't protect like the label says. No date? Toss it after about three years.

The other half of anti-aging is *skipping the hype.*

That's what The Unbothered Edit is for. It's my free newsletter.

theunbotheredедit.substack.com