



Skin Care

12 Best Sunscreen Sticks for Mess-Free Application

Swipe and go.

By **Brigitte Earley**

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You already know you should be applying [sunscreen](#) every day. It can be a drag, but nowadays SPF formulas come in all shapes and sizes—from the best sunscreen sticks to family-friendly pump-top bottles and [TSA-approved sprays](#).

Best Sunscreen Sticks 2023:

- **Best for Kids and Toddlers:** [MDSolarSciences Mineral KidStick SPF 40](#), \$18
- **Best for Face:** [Shiseido Clear Sunscreen Stick SPF 50](#), \$30
- **Best for Dark Skin Tones:** [EltaMD UV Stick Face and Body Sunscreen SPF 50+](#), \$35

- **Best for Sensitive Skin:** [Mustela Baby Mineral Sunscreen Stick SPF 50](#), \$13
- **Best for Acne-Prone Skin:** [MDSolarSciences Tinted Solar Stick SPF 40](#), \$24
- **Best for Over Makeup:** [Neutrogena Ultra Sheer Face & Body Mineral Sunscreen Stick SPF 50](#), \$14

The most convenient application, however, is probably stick form. Rather than dealing with tubes of gloppy liquid or bulky sprays that tend to sting the eyes (and somehow also end up in your mouth or all over your food), sunscreen sticks are self-contained in, well, a stick, so all you have to do is swipe the formula on your [face](#) or body. They're also usually tiny, meaning you can toss them into a giant [beach bag](#) or the tiniest [designer tote](#) for reapplying throughout the day (and they won't leak).

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The formulas pack a punch too. [Debra Jaliman, MD](#), a board-certified dermatologist based in New York, says sunscreen sticks are just as effective as any other [mineral SPF](#) or [body sunscreen](#), adding that they're particularly desirable for an intense concentration of sunscreen in small areas like noses, ears, and the jawline.

The only downside: "While they are effective on other areas of the body, it's really not very practical to use a small sunscreen stick for full-body application," says [Peter Young, MD](#), a board-certified dermatologist and the medical director of [Nurx Dermatology](#), a telehealth practice. This is why experts recommend stocking up on both sticks and either lotions or sprays for continuous broad-spectrum protection all over.

To help you find the best formulas out there, we asked dermatologists for their go-tos, plus scoured popular retailers for the most highly rated options to add to your skin care routine.

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Coola Organic Mineral Sunscreen SPF 50 Sunblock Stick

This zinc-oxide-based sun stick, which is made with organic ingredients like shea butter, avocado butter, and coconut oil, is nourishing for the skin, glides on smoothly, and is super easy to apply. “Additional ingredients like raspberry seed oil offer natural sun protective qualities, and tamanu oil and chamomile extract add skin-soothing and anti-inflammatory benefits,” says [Keira L. Barr](#), a dual board-certified dermatologist and menopause specialist. “To ensure you are getting full coverage, make at least four passes back and forth on the skin.”

- **Pros:** Fragrance-free, moisturizing formula, water-resistant for 80 minutes
- **Cons:** Expensive
- **Type:** Mineral
- **SPF:** 50
- **Size:** 0.6 ounces

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MDSolarSciences Mineral KidStick SPF 40

I always recommend mineral block sunscreens made with zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide for children, since these provide broad spectrum coverage against both UVA and UVB portions of the spectrum,” says [Sonia Batra](#), MD, a board-certified dermatologist and founder of [Batra Dermatology](#). The mineral ingredients in this stick form a physical block that shields skin from harmful UV rays, and—just as important—the stick is small and easy for kids to apply themselves or to take along in a backpack to school, sports practices, or the beach.

- **Pros:** Safe for sensitive skin, water-resistant for 80 minutes, unscented
- **Cons:** Can be hard to spread
- **Type:** Mineral
- **SPF:** 40
- **Size:** 0.6 ounces



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Shiseido Clear Sunscreen Stick SPF 50

“The lightweight formula is perfect for all skin types and can be applied over and under makeup, making it easy to reapply every two hours,” says [Michele Green, MD](#), a board-certified cosmetic dermatologist in New York City. It has another defining characteristic that makes it one of her favorites: The stick is made with innovative technology that responds to heat stimulus, making this broad-spectrum sunscreen form an even stronger UV barrier in the heat, Green explains.

- **Pros:** Goes on clear; also targets wrinkles, dark spots, and dullness
- **Cons:** Expensive
- **Type:** Chemical
- **SPF:** 50
- **Size:** 0.7 ounces

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EltaMD UV Stick Face and Body Sunscreen SPF 50+

“My favorite sunscreen stick is EltaMD UV Stick, which is a broad-spectrum SPF 50+ all-mineral sunscreen containing zinc oxide,” says Dr. Young. It protects against both UVA and UVB rays, and does not leave the same white cast that other zinc oxide sunscreens do. It’s also water-resistant for a full 80 minutes—ideal for those sweaty summer days by the pool.

- **Pros:** Fragrance-free, water-resistant for 80 minutes, noncomedogenic, safe for acne-prone and oily skin
- **Cons:** None
- **Type:** Mineral
- **SPF:** 50+
- **Size:** 1.3 ounces

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Supergoop! Play! 100% Mineral SPF Stick

Fans of Supergoop's [Glow Stick](#) looking for a mineral alternative should check out this one. "I love this mineral sunscreen, because even my patients with sensitive skin can use it without significant risk of developing irritation," says [Bradley Glodny, MD](#), a board-certified dermatologist in New York City. It's also ideal for those with dry skin, since the formula contains plenty of hydrating ingredients, including shea and cocoa butters, plus jojoba, olive, and chia seed oils.

- **Pros:** Safe for all skin types, vegan and cruelty-free formula
- **Cons:** Leaves a slight white cast
- **Type:** Mineral
- **SPF:** 50
- **Size:** 0.67 ounces

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MDSolarSciences Tinted Solar Stick SPF 40

Another vote for MDSolarSciences, but this time for the brand's best-selling adult product, which won't clog pores and leave you with a constellation of breakouts. "I love this brand in general, but this stick is great, because it is much richer compared with its competitors," says Dr. Glodny. "Like their other sunscreens, it feels velvety smooth when applying." As a bonus, the tinted sunscreen stick not only protects but also helps give your skin a nice glow.

- **Pros:** Tinted formula, lightweight, hypoallergenic
- **Cons:** Doesn't spread as easily as some others
- **Type:** Mineral
- **SPF:** 40
- **Size:** 0.6 ounces

Save when you shop the best sunscreen sticks with these Dermstore promo codes.



Cetaphil Sheer Mineral Sunscreen Stick

"I recommend mineral-based sunscreen sticks containing zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide, as these are going to be broad spectrum, safe for sensitive skin, and reef safe," says Emily Wood, MD, a board-certified dermatologist at Westlake Dermatology in Texas. Her favorite is this one by Cetaphil that's easily found on drugstore shelves. "I like to use it on my lips, since it does not leave a white cast," she says. Plus, "it has a nice compact size."

- **Pros:** Portable, versatile
- **Cons:** Some users say it has a slightly greasy feel
- **Type:** Mineral
- **SPF:** 50
- **Size:** 0.5 ounces

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Mustela Baby Mineral Sunscreen Stick SPF 50

Don't be fooled by the name—this sunscreen stick is perfectly suitable for adults too. In fact, it's one of Dr. Jaliman's favorites. "It's another SPF 50 that is made with zinc oxide, plus it has 70% organic ingredients and is fragrance-free," she says, noting it's one of the best bets for sensitive skin. It even earned a seal of approval from the National Eczema Association.

- **Pros:** Great for sensitive skin, mostly organic ingredients
- **Cons:** Some people don't like the smell
- **Type:** Mineral
- **SPF:** 50
- **Size:** 0.6 ounces

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CeraVe Mineral Sunscreen Stick for Kids & Adults SPF 50

“My favorite stick sunscreen stick is the Cerave Mineral stick, because it's good for kids and adults,” says [Pearl Grimes, MD](#), a board-certified dermatologist and director of the Grimes Center of Medical and Aesthetic Dermatology in Southern California. “It applies with ease, is nongreasy, and is a 100% mineral product.” It also happens to be readily available on drugstore shelves, plus is relatively inexpensive compared to other similar formulas.

- **Pros:** Spreads well, budget-friendly, matte finish
- **Cons:** Leaves a slight white cast
- **Type:** Mineral
- **SPF:** 50
- **Size:** 0.47 ounces

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SunBum Chemical Sunscreen Face Stick SPF 30

“I really like SunBum Original SPF 30 Sunscreen Face Stick,” says [Jennifer Linder, MD](#), a board-certified dermatologist practicing between Jackson Hole, Colorado, and San Francisco. “I use this a lot on my kids and also have them carry it in their backpacks for reapplication throughout the day.” Like other SunBum products, it smells divine—like a tropical paradise. But its real claim to fame is the unbeatable sun coverage. It goes on nice and smooth, thanks to the spreadable vitamin E-infused formula.

- **Pros:** Great smell, easy to blend in, includes antioxidants
- **Cons:** Relatively low SPF of 30
- **Type:** Chemical
- **SPF:** 30
- **Size:** 0.45 ounces

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Coppertone Pure and Simple Baby Sunscreen Stick SPF 50

If you're spending any time swimming or sweating, Linder suggests reaching for this drugstore pick. The SPF 50 may be hypoallergenic and made from naturally-derived zinc oxide, but it offers water-resistant protection for up to 80 minutes. It also contains cocoa butter to make it easier to spread, plus nice and hydrating for the skin.

- **Pros:** Spreads well, water-resistant for up to 80 minutes, hydrating
- **Cons:** Very small
- **Type:** Mineral
- **SPF:** 50
- **Size:** 0.49 ounces



Neutrogena Ultra Sheer Face & Body Mineral Sunscreen Stick SPF 50

For those who want to preserve a fresh face of makeup, it's important to pick a clear formula—which can be surprisingly hard to come by when trying to get the sun protection you need. But this one can give you the best of both worlds, says [Vladyslava Doktor, MD](#), a board-certified dermatologist at [Skin Center Boston](#). The SPF 50 is a mineral formula powered by a whopping 21.6% zinc oxide, but it goes on entirely sheer for layering purposes.

- **Pros:** High concentration of zinc, goes on clear
- **Cons:** A little too large for only covering small areas
- **Type:** Mineral
- **SPF:** 50
- **Size:** 1.5 ounces

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