

STYLE

19 Insanely Useful Makeup Tips For Trans Women

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posted on Apr. 12, 2016, at 2:00 a.m.



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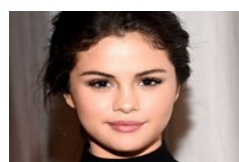
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19 MAKEUP TIPS

TIPS

THAT ARE ACTUALLY HELPFUL FOR

TRANS WOMEN



Monica Prata is an New York City–based feminine image consultant and makeup artist for people who are transgender, transitioning, or exploring gender fluidity.



Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

For over a decade, she's been working with her clients on feminizing makeup, wardrobe styling, and emotional coaching and support.

You can read more about Monica Prata's work [here](#).

Prata has a wealth of knowledge, so we asked if she'd share some of the most helpful, amazing makeup tips she's learned over the years.

We asked four trans women — Kacey, Diana, Kara, and Lea — to tell us a little bit about the makeup styles they each preferred. Then Monica created each of their ideal looks, teaching us everything along the way so we could share with our readers.

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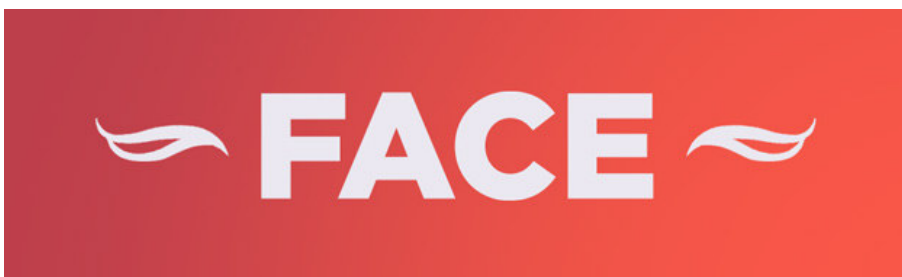
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The sheer volume of makeup available on the market can be daunting to anyone. And while no one needs to wear makeup or not wear makeup, we hope these tips will help trans women who want to explore their relationship with makeup to do just that.

Let's get started!



Andrew Richard / BuzzFeed

1. To help the makeup sit flat on top of your face instead of sinking into your skin, apply a makeup primer before foundation.

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed



A primer will essentially fill in fine lines and pores to give the skin an even, smooth finish. Smooth a pea-sized amount of the primer onto the area of skin where you need it. It will dry to a matte finish, on top of which you can then apply foundation. Apply it all the way down the neck for complete coverage.

Products Used: On Kara, Prata applied [Urban Decay Pore Perfecting Complexion Primer Potion](#) with a [MAC Cosmetics 193 Angled Foundation Brush](#).

Drugstore Option: [Revlon PhotoReady Perfecting Primer](#), \$10.39.

2. For coverage of areas where facial hair grows, apply a cream full-coverage foundation with a brush and “stipple” it into the area.



Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

Permanent hair removal is expensive so a lot of trans women struggle with concealing facial hair. This technique will help to conceal any facial hair and pores that may have become larger over time because of shaving.

“Pressing foundation into the skin rather than wiping helps to really hide the pores, and the makeup can sit on top of the skin. Whenever you’re covering hair, you want to change the tone (color) and use something that has an orange or red undertone for better concealing,” Prata explained.

[Here’s](#) even more information on what the stippling technique actually does.

Products Used: On Kacey, Prata used [Dermablend Cover Creme](#) in the shade Chroma. She brush she’s using is the [MAC Cosmetics 190 Foundation Brush](#).

Drugstore Option: [Maybelline Fit Me! Matte + Poreless Foundation](#), \$5.99

3. To make the face appear slimmer, use a foundation one or two shades darker than your skin tone and blend it onto the outer edges of your face.

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

Many trans women struggle with wanting to make their faces appear less broad and sharply angled. Contouring can make a big difference.

“Start just outside the jaw, stippling this product as well. Then, move to the forehead, along the temples, and onto the neck. Keep going on the perimeters of the face with the darker color. Contouring will help to soften the bone structure and the muscles,” Prata said. Then, use the foundation color that matches your skin tone in the center

area of your face (the nose, the forehead, chin, and cheeks) and blend the two shades together with your brush until you can't see where one begins and another ends.

Products Used: On Kacey, Prata used [DermaBlend Cover Creme](#) in the shade Toasted Brown. She brush she's using is the [MAC Cosmetics 190 Foundation Brush](#).

Drugstore Option: [Maybelline Fit Me! Matte + Poreless Foundation](#), \$5.99

4. To help your makeup stay on much longer without “melting” off, use a fluffy brush to stipple powder all over your face after you're done applying foundation.



“Don't use a sweeping motion. Gently pressing the brush with powder into your face will help to give a smooth finish. You can apply the powder to your ears, too, so that all of your skin has a similar texture. “Even if the powder appears thick at first, it will settle in about 30 minutes,” Prata said. The powder will absorb any oils from your skin that could otherwise make the makeup slip off.

Products Used: On Kara, Prata used [MAC Cosmetics Mineralize Skinfinish Natural](#) in the shade Medium. The brush is [MAC Cosmetics 134 Large Powder Brush](#).

Drugstore Option: [Rimmel Stay Matte Pressed Powder](#) in the shade Transparent, \$3.99.

5. To make your cheeks rosy, use a fluffy brush to sweep powder blush from the apple of your cheek toward the outer edge of your face.

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed



When picking a blush color, keep in mind that the lighter the color, the less dramatic the look. If you choose to use a liquid blush instead, the easiest way to apply it is with your fingers, blending until there aren't any fine lines or spots.

Products Used: On Lea, Prata used [Urban Decay Naked Flushed blush palette](#) in the shade Streak. The brush is [MAC Cosmetics 134 Large Powder brush](#).

Drugstore Option: [E.l.f. High Definition Powder](#) in the shade Translucent, \$3

6. To keep your makeup intact all day and night, spritz your entire face with a makeup-setting spray.



Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

Think of it like hairspray for your face: It keeps things in place. It's not something that you need to use every day, but it's especially helpful on hot days (when you could

sweat off your makeup) and long nights (when you've got somewhere to be and you don't want to be doing a lot of touch-ups).

Product Used: On Kacey, Prata used [Urban Decay All Nighter Makeup Setting Spray](#).

Drugstore Option: [L'Oreal Paris Infallible Pro Spray & Set Makeup Extender Setting Spray](#), \$13.79.

7. To cover dark circles under your eyes, apply a cream concealer with your fingertips to get as close to the eyelash line as possible.

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

“Apply concealer lightly underneath eyes with your fingers. Extend a little bit past the eye towards the temple, but focus on the area underneath your eye and closer to the bridge of your nose where most of the shadow tends to come from,” Prata said.

Concealer also comes in a few different shades for color correction, which is meant to be used underneath concealer that matches your skin tone. If you're looking for coverage of purplish dark circles, choose a concealer with a salmon or orangey tone. If you need coverage of a pimple or blemish, use a concealer with a green tint. These concealer shades will cancel out any discoloration on your face, which can then be completely covered up with the shade that matches your skin tone. Try the [NYX Color Correcting Concealer Palette](#).

Product Used: On Diana, Prata used [MAC Cosmetics Conceal and Correct Palette](#) in the shade NW 20.

Drugstore Option: [NYX Concealer Stick](#), \$2.50.

8. Use a textured makeup wipe to clean off your brushes when you're done with an application.

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

"Textured makeup wipes will help to grab the pigment off of the brush," Prata explained.

Keeping your brushes and the rest of your tools clean will help to make sure that your application is as smooth as possible. Cleaning brushes about once a week in a solution of warm water and soap will get rid of any bacteria that may be going on your face from the brush.

For more information on how to clean every tool in your makeup bag, check out [this post](#).

Drugstore Option: [Olay 4-in-1 Daily Face Wipes For Sensitive Skin](#), \$6.99/pack



Andrew Richard / BuzzFeed

9. Use tweezers to remove any stray hairs around your eyebrow area.



Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

One of the strongest signals of female presentation is groomed eyebrows, so tweezing can make a big difference in terms of being consistently perceived as female, especially early in transition.

If your skin is very sensitive, use [Baby Orajel](#) to numb the area about 20 minutes before tweezing. You'll get the best results with sharpened, slanted tweezers, pulling in the direction of hair growth.

For even more eyebrow tips, [read this](#).

Drugstore Option: [Revlon Expert Tweezer Slant Tip](#), \$5.33.

10. To create a filled-in, natural eyebrow shape, use a brow pencil to fill in sparse areas and create an arch with short, hairlike strokes.



Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

“Don’t add pigment to the areas that are already full. Instead, just focus on the areas that need filling in instead of looking at the whole eyebrow at once. No eyebrows are identical, so don’t try to do the same thing on one brow that you did on the other,” Prata explained. You can use a [spoolie eyebrow brush](#) to brush through your brows and smooth everything out once you’re done.

For more information on how to tweeze, trim, fill in, and transform your eyebrows, read [this post](#).

Product Used: Prata used [MAC Cosmetics Retractable Eyebrow Pencil in the shade Stud](#).

Drugstore Option: [Almay Brow Defining Pencil](#), \$5.99.

11. To create an even, smooth base for eyeshadow, use a cream-based shadow all over the lid from the eyelash line to brow bone.

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed



Use the pads of your finger to apply the product. Using a long-wearing base color like this will help other eyeshadows adhere to the eye for a longer period of time. Another option is to use an eyeshadow primer first, like the [Urban Decay Eyeshadow Primer Potion](#).

Products Used: On Kara, Prata used [MAC Cosmetics Pro Longwear Paint Pot in the shade Painterly](#).

Drugstore Options: [Maybelline Eye Studio Color Tattoo in the shade Creamy Beige](#), \$6.99

12. For a natural-looking but defined eye look, use a light eyeshadow shade on the lid and a soft brown eyeshadow as eyeliner on your lower eyelash line.



Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

For the eyeshadow, “Use a light, shimmery color [like [Urban Decay’s eyeshadow in Strange](#)] right on the eyelid and pack onto the ball of the eye for highlighting,” Prata says. But if you want your eyes to appear just a little bit larger, use a fluffy eyeshadow brush to sweep a very soft brown eyeshadow [like [Urban Decay’s eyeshadow in the shade Limit](#)] in the crease of your eyelid. The crease is the line between the top of your eyeball and the brow bone.

Then, use a small flat brush to apply a brown eyeshadow shade [like [Urban Decay eyeshadow in the shade Noon](#)] along the lower lash line. “Keep it really subtle. Less is more. For a natural look, pull colors that would appear on your skin naturally,” Prata explained.

Products Used: On Diana, Prata used [Urban Decay Naked3](#) eyeshadow palette and brush, [MAC Cosmetics 212 Flat Definer Eyeshadow Brush](#).

Drugstore Option: [Maybelline The Blushed Nudes](#) eyeshadow palette, \$9.99.

13. To get a dramatic smokey-eye look, use deeper eyeshadow shades on the outer corners of your eyes and blend.



Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

“Place the deeper eyeshadow color [Prata used [Urban Decay eyeshadow in the shade Black Heart](#)] just outside of the ball of the eye. Make a ‘sideways V’ shape on the outer edge of the eye and blend with the brush,” Prata explained. Finish the smokey eye with a shimmery color [like [Urban Decay Strange](#)] in the center of the lid over the ball of your eye. Highlight the inner corner of the eye and the brow bone with the same color. Blend it all together with a medium shade [Prata used the shade [Limit](#)] on the crease, using the eyeshadow brush to blend all of the eyeshadows to make it look seamless.

Product Used: On Lea, Prata used the [Urban Decay Naked3](#) eyeshadow palette and brush.

Drugstore Option: [Maybelline The Blushed Nudes](#) eyeshadow palette, \$9.99.

For more information on exactly what to do with eyeshadow, read [this post](#).

14. To clean up any eyeshadow that may have fallen beneath your eye, wrap your finger in a makeup remover wipe and gently wipe the area with it.



Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

If you need to, you can reapply concealer under the eye to even out any makeup that may have been removed. Another option is to use a product called [Shadow Shields](#) — cotton pads that adhere under your eye to collect all of the fallout eyeshadow instead of having it land on your face.

Drugstore Option: [Olay 4-in-1 Daily Face Cloths](#), \$6.99 and [Shadow Shields](#), \$9.99/30-pack.

15. For the “doe-eyed” look that makes your eyes appear larger, use liquid liner along your top lash line and extend the line just past the corner of your eye.

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed



“Keep the line thin and go half way, then dip the brush back into the liquid for the second half. Use the side of the brush and keep the line nice and tight. Use pointed Q-tips to clean off any smudges. If you have trouble using liquid eyeliner, doing your mascara first may help, since it provides somewhat of a ‘shelf’ for application.

Product Used: On Kacey, Prata used [MAC Cosmetics Super Slick Liquid Eyeliner in the shade On the Hunt](#) (black).

Drugstore Option: [L’Oreal Telescopic Precision Waterproof Liquid Eyeliner](#), \$9.99.

For more information on exactly what to do with eyeliner, read [this post](#).

16. Once you’re finished with the rest of your eye makeup, coat your eyelashes with mascara to make your eyes look bigger and more awake.

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

“Wiggle the wand back and forth as you’re applying. Direct the mascara towards the outer corner. In the center, lift the wand straight up,” Prata explained. Also, never pump the mascara wand into the tube to get more mascara on the wand. This will pump air into the tube, which will only dry the mascara. Instead, swirl it around in the tube.

Product Used: On Diana, Prata used [L’Oreal Voluminous Miss Manga Mascara in the shade Black](#), which is a drugstore product that costs \$7.99.

And you can clean up any stray black marks of mascara with a damp, pointed Q-tip.



Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

You can use pointed Q-tips to remove stray marks anywhere on your face, but they're especially helpful around the eye area because everything is so small and detailed. Just dampen the tip with a bit of water — but make sure it's not so wet that water is dripping out of the cotton. The wetness will help lubricate the makeup so it can lift off of your face.

Product Used: Prata used [Q-tips Precision Tips Cotton Swabs](#), which can be found at drugstores for \$2.99.

LIPS

Andrew Richard / BuzzFeed

17. You can apply lipstick directly from the tube, but for even more control of the product, use a lipstick brush instead.



Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

Dab the lipstick brush onto the lipstick itself, then swipe the brush onto your lips. “Start in center of the lip and bring out towards the outer corners of the lip. To make the bottom lip appear a bit fuller, extend the color just below the natural lip line,” Prata explained.

Products Used: On Kacey, Prata used MAC Cosmetics lipstick in the shade Deep Attraction and the [MAC Cosmetics 316 Lipstick Brush](#). This shade is discontinued, but a similar shade is [Rebel](#).

Drugstore Options: [Wet n Wild Mega Last Lipstick in the shade Sugar Plum Fairy](#), \$4.41

18. Accentuate your upper lip by overtracing the Cupid’s bow, which is the dipped point on your lip.

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

An area that a lot of trans women are self-conscious of is having thin lips. This technique will make lips appear larger but still natural.

The line of lipstick should be just above your natural Cupid's bow so that your lips look larger but not unrealistically large. Again, using a lip brush will help you trace this just right.

Products Used: For Diana, Prata used [MAC Cosmetics lipstick in the shade Peach Blossom](#).

Drugstore Option: [Rimmel London Lasting Finish in Airy Fairy](#), \$5.49.

For even more lipstick tricks, check out [this post](#).

19. To get your lipstick to look precise and your lips to look even more ~pouty,~ go over the color with lip liner that's one shade lighter than your lipstick.

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

“Start in the center of the lip and draw out, then repeat on the top lip. Adding a little bit of height at the Cupid’s bow will lessen the space between the nose and the upper lip,” Prata explains. Some people choose to use lip liner BEFORE lipstick — which is completely fine, too! — but this technique really lets you fill out the lip color precisely.

Products Used: On Kara, Prata used [MAC Cosmetics lip liner in the shade Edge to Edge](#) and [lipstick in the shade Craving](#). Other “My Lips But Better” lipstick shades from MAC Cosmetics include [Finally Free](#) (from Caitlyn Jenner) and [Bombshell](#).

Drugstore Options: [Maybelline New York Sensational Lip Color lipstick in the shade Bit of Berry](#), \$6.50 and [NYX Cosmetics Slim Lip Pencil in the shade Peek-a-Boo Natural](#), \$3.49.

Thank you to Kara, Lea, Kacey, and Diana for sharing your makeup experiences with us!

Lauren Zaser / Via BuzzFeed

Special thanks to Monica Prata for teaching us her tricks and to Andre Davis, the hairstylist who finished off the looks with lovely styling.

Makeup Artist: Monica Prata, [MonicaPrata.nyc](#)

Hairstylist: Andre Davis, [Julien Farel Salon](#) in New York City

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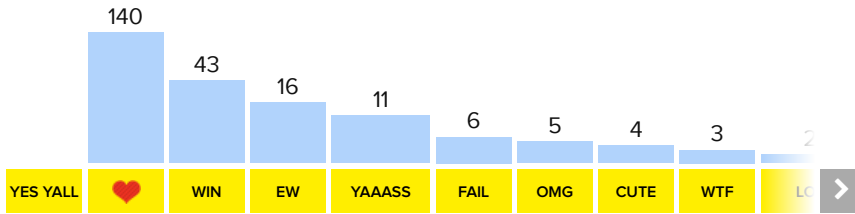
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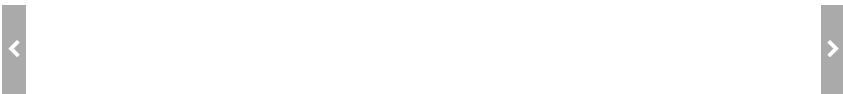
 

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