

FITNESS VIEW

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How to Get a South Beach Body Part One: The Perfect Tan

The view from my chaise lounge is a beautiful blue ocean shimmering in the sunlight, waves rolling gently onto a stretch of beach so soft and inviting you want to lie

down and make sand angels on it. The golden rays of the sun stretch across my body relaxing my muscles, making me smile. Pretty soon the color of my skin will match that of the many tanned, toned, South Beach runners I have admired from my chair, watching between sips of champagne as they jog leisurely along the shore.

It's high noon, the time of day you're supposed to stay out of the sun, according to most dermatologists. Even though I'm a pale New Yorker tanning for the first time this year, I'm not at all worried because "The Tanning Butler" has got me covered, literally, with all the right lotions in all the right places, courtesy of The Ritz Carlton South Beach Hotel. "You have to rotate and reapply in an hour", says Malcolm Vincent, the chiseled personal trainer who reminds me of a young Antonio Banderas. "And if you take a dip in the ocean", the bronzed statue continues, "You must reapply with a 30 SPF." Whatever you say, Malcolm. Just keep rubbing.

"The World's Only Tanning Butler", as he is billed by "The Ritz", Malcolm also teaches "Beach Boot Camp Workouts" for guests at the crack of dawn—but don't expect it to be a walk on the beach. Vincent was a master fitness trainer for his fellow troops in the U.S. Army, so when he says "get down and give me give me ten", he means business—and by the looks of his perfect physique, he gets results. Now while you'd expect Malcolm to know a good deal about fitness, what you might not expect is for this strapping young soldier to know so much about skin care and skin cancer prevention.

While massaging a variety of oils and lotions

onto my legs, back and shoulders from dispensers strapped around his hips like a six-shooter, he whispers sweet tips into my ear such as, "Bonnie, you really should have your doctor check out this freckle—it could be skin cancer." He also reminds me to avoid tanning during hours when the sun is at its most blazing hottest, like now, and to make sure I remember to apply a lotion under my make-up in the morning with a SPF of 30.

When he asks me to turn over so we can apply lotion to my face and my eyelids, "Sensitive areas women tend to forget", he says, I close my eyes and let him work his magic. The tanning tips roll on, but much gets lost in translation, and I hear only key words or phrases, like "in the morning you should...never ever try to...sunless spray...Rachel Ray." Kind of what I imagine my toy yorkie hears when I am talking to her, especially when I am brushing her, which she loves.

When he drizzles some oil down the front of my thigh, I quickly tune back in and notice how his biceps and triceps pop a little as he smooths the oil in a circular motion. I watch as his t-shirt falls forward revealing his perfect six-pack, his shirt brushing ever so slightly against my stomach as he leans across my chair to rub oil on my opposite thigh. He stands up, his quadriceps muscle flexing as he puts his weight on his hip to squeeze some lotion out of a dispenser in his holster. He stops and considers for a moment...then decides on a different one. "We're switching to a higher SPF lotion now. Your shoulders look a little red...turn over."

With military precision and firm, sensitive strokes, he rubs his final selection onto my back and shoulders. Then the master of all that tans glances over at my drink tray and leans in very close, as if to tell me a secret...his final tip of the day. "You know, Bonnie, it's also a really good idea not to tan alone, or if you do, don't drink a lot of alcohol. You could pass out and burn". Wow! A "Don't drink and tan" public service message. Or you could say, "Friends don't let friends tan drunk". Or alone either, apparently. Now while I am painfully aware of how dangerous it is to drink and dial, (and especially to drink and text), I honestly thought I could handle drinking and tanning, even alone. And besides, when I tan by myself, I like to be alone.

My viewpoint on this tip changed dramatically about two hours, two mimosas later when I fell asleep and burned—just a little. I guess "The Tanning Butler" can't be everywhere at once to lend a lotioned hand. But seriously, the service he performs is not as frivolous as it may seem at first glance. Sure, having the right lotions with a 30 SPF helps prevent burning, and having a super stud apply them is certainly an enjoyable way to keep up with your applications. But that little

freckle Malcolm spotted on my back is really there, and is something I should keep an eye on as melanoma is a deadly form of skin cancer caused by sun damage that a lot of sunbathers don't take seriously until it is too late.

According to Dr. Stephen Mandy, a leading South Beach dermatologist who treats sun worshippers day in and day out, there were three million skin cancer cases reported in the U.S. last year total, but most types were not fatal. "The exception was melanoma, which claimed 50,000 lives, and is projected to do so again this year," Dr. Mandy says. "It's a good idea to get in front of the mirror and give yourself a thorough daily body exam, looking for any changes, like odd-shaped freckles or marks, especially if you are fair-skinned." Dr. Mandy continues his tough tanning love, "Don't wait to see your doctor. Go in immediately if you suspect something is wrong. Don't be embarrassed if it turns out to be nothing—so what? Hesitating a couple weeks too long could be a matter of life or death. It's always better to be safe than sorry."

More "Better To Be Safe Than Sorry!" Tanning Tips from Dr. Mandy:

- Always tan using a sun block with a SPF of at least 30 and reapply every two hours—kids too, as skin care should start young.
- If you are fair-skinned, try SPF 60 with mexoryl, a chemical ingredient that specifically targets UV-A rays, the most damaging rays.
- Avoid tanning beds; they age your skin prematurely and emit UV-A rays.
- Wear a sunhat, sunglasses, and look for shade from 11am-3pm, when sun is strongest.
- Try sunless tanning lotions and spray mists. No tan lines and no sun damage, (and very slimming too!)

Now, do you have a little more respect for "The Tanning Butler", and what an important role a tanning butler can play in your overall health and well-being? I think everyone should have a tanning butler: I know I want one.

Coming Up: South Beach Diet Tips

A fresh take on fruit salad with edible flowers and organic energy smoothies with South Beach gourmet Chef Jeff McGinnis, the Chef de Cuisine at the Dilido Restaurant at The Ritz Carlton South Beach Hotel.

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Check out clips from Bonnie's "South Beach Body Shape-Up" Inside Fitness television series in May. That's where you'll find all of Bonnie's Brooklyn View archives including tanning, toning, and dieting tips from South Beach to get your body beach-ready for the summer.