

That brings me to the most important point of this book: Don't do something unless you're totally devoted to it. Don't do anything in a half-hearted way. A natural look is difficult to achieve and you've got your work cut out for you. The chances of success are slim to nil, but if you keep working hard towards your goal, you will find the success you seek.

Glamour Versus Natural

There are two styles of makeup application, glamour and natural, and the latter could be seen as the logical progression of the former, especially for the male-to-female transgender woman. As with any skill, you should always learn how to walk before you can run and many beginning transgender women fail to realize that makeup application is a skill that needs to be continually practiced and updated. In a roomful of hideous crossdressers, drag queens, and other assorted oddities, there sometimes stand one or two tgirls who clearly outshine the rest and give a lot of good-looking full-time tgirls and genetic women a run for their money.

You should strive to be like these anointed few. Even if you aren't like that now, your goal should be to be like them. Nike had a wonderful ad campaign for Michael Jordan in his heyday. The slogan, "Be Like Mike," was a big draw for Nike sneaker sales and it encouraged the nation's youth to look up to a good role model. By the same token, every transgender woman should have one or two role models to look up to. It doesn't have to be me, but I would be honored if you chose me as your role model.

I will assume that you have mastered all of the techniques in **Volume 1: Glamour Makeup** (see Appendix D for more details). I will also assume that you are ready to take the next critical step towards your advancement as a passable transgender woman. I don't really like the word "passable," because it suggests that people are trying to be something they're not, almost as if they are acting a part in a play and want to do a convincing job of it. From now on, you should think of your journey as not of passing, but of being. Once you think of your existence as being rather than passing, you will be able to understand more of what I'm talking about in terms of thinking, acting, and being like a genetic woman. Once in a while, I may still use the word "passable" in my descriptions, but this is for lack of a better word and you will understand what I mean when I say it.

Realness

All tgirls who care about their appearance strive to look real. When they've reached some pinnacle of success, onlookers may give them one of the following two comments:

"She looks so beautiful it doesn't matter that she wasn't born female."

This is usually the end goal of tgirls who do glamour makeup. Most tgirls opt for a glamour look every time they go out. While the glamour look is great for fall or winter evening looks or formal black-tie dinners, it's not a great look for the spring and summer months. Also, when was the last time you, as a tgirl, was invited to a black-tie event? Be very honest. Most tgirls don't live such grand lives. The best we can hope for is to pick and choose our events and if glamour makeup is appropriate for an event, so be it.

"She looks so beautiful."

This is what we strive for in natural makeup and notice that it is a much more powerful statement than the previous one. The first statement implies that you're a tgirl. The second implies that you're a woman. Most glamour makeup in inappropriate settings end up making tgirls look like whores or worse, men in drag. Glamour makeup is not and never will be the norm for everyday women. Most women just don't play their makeup up like that and those who do are few and far between.

Makeup is all about learning and making mistakes before you succeed. If you don't have the heart for criticism, you may as well stay home and never go out. It would be a shame if there weren't more tgirls walking out and about, but on the other hand, I and others like me would rather see people who put their best faces forward than men in their wives' clothes who do nothing but give our tgirl community a bad name.

Girls nowadays just don't wear a lot of heavy makeup. They certainly do not wear the kinds of colors that crossdressers and female impersonators tend to wear. For example, the color vixen, or dark burgundy, is not a good spring or summer color. Think pink and think light makeup and use your natural features to your advantage.

A lot of you may look justifiably confused at what I just said. A friend of mine, who has made passability a lifelong goal, has read that only 5% of all transgendered women are truly passable, even after hormones and plastic surgery. How does that apply to you?

It means that you're probably not passable. It means that you'll probably never be passable. With that statement, you might be cursing at me, my friend, and the available evidence. How dare I even suggest that a fellow transgender sister is not passable, you may say. After all, when you go out, you probably get a lot of compliments, right?

Consider the source. Do you really get compliments from everyone or only a select few? Are these select few your friends or are they truly objective people? More likely than not, you will get compliments from friends and, let's face it, friends are not the most objective people in the world. If we could always be in the company of friends, that would be great, but the world is cold, cruel, and harsh, and a six foot tall crossdresser who looks like a football player in drag isn't going to win any beauty contests any time soon. I'm sure there are contests for football players in drag to win, but beauty isn't one of them.

Now that I've played with your mind a little and got you a little upset and irritated, it's time to redirect that energy into a truly constructive effort. For example, do you know why you're not passable? Most people honestly do not know or refuse to acknowledge that they're unpassable. Some choose to rest on their laurels once they find a decent look. Some keep the same look for years on end. Makeup trends change, but these tgirls' looks haven't, so they end up looking like dreadful dated products of yesteryear.

There is hope, as I keep saying. You have to devote a lot of time, effort, patience, and money toward perfecting your look. Nothing ever comes easy in life and the same can be said for transformation. There is no magic pill that will magically transform you into Pamela Andersen's twin. However, there are learnable skills that you can grasp and use to help you look like a better you. In this world of copycats and sameness, I'd rather look unique than look like Pamela Andersen any day.

Skin Care and Health

Every crossdresser who walks in public and tries to be a woman has a fear of being discovered, or read. I believe this fear is the reason why crossdressers overdo their makeup. The makeup no longer serves to enhance their features, but to mask them. It's okay to mask one or two bad features, but to mask everything on your face is ridiculous.

I want you to make use of your natural skin as much as possible, to the point of skipping the concealer step. To do so, you have to eliminate the dreaded five o'clock shadow from your face after shaving. You will need to determine how important it is to have facial hair. Will not having facial hair cause you to not earn a promotion or pay raise? Usually not. Will it raise eyebrows at your workplace? Maybe, but if you've kept a close shave for a while, nobody should notice. It is a wonderful feeling to not have to shave every day.

A series of twenty laser hair removal treatments should remove all but the most stubborn of facial hair. Anything left over can be easily shaven and is usually so sparse that only an onlooker who examines you with a magnifying glass would see stubble. Laser hair removal also has the added benefit of making the areas of treatment look more uniform. If a pulsed light "laser" is

used, the same device with different handpieces can be used to treat acne, pigmented lesions, and spider veins.

If you're in the downtown Philadelphia area, there is a wonderful laser hair removal service called Philadelphia Hair Removal that uses Palomer Technologies' Intense Pulsed Light System with the Rs handpiece. They are very gay- and transgender-friendly and their usual fees are reduced if you inform them that you're transgender. I recommend you take advantage of this transgender discount if you are in the Philadelphia area. If you are not, seek out a passionate laser hair removal service that will give transgender people a break.

How long does tweezing or waxing last?

Some of you may opt to tweeze or wax your hair rather than remove it by laser. While this is certainly a cheaper alternative, it's more time-consuming. I'd rather have you spend your time learning makeup techniques and practicing them than plucking hair. Hair regrowth depends on the person. For some, it can take just a few days for hair to start growing back. For others, hair can start growing back in a few weeks, starting as light peach fuzz. Eventually, the hair will grow back to its former thickness because of the tapered nature of hair.

Laser hair removal advocates purport that the hair growing back should be permanently lighter and thinner after it's zapped. Because it comes back lighter, it'll be easier to shave before going for the next laser hair removal treatment. The hair eventually becomes so thin and fragile it dies and is gone forever, but to get to this point, you will need many treatments.

<i>Method</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Cost</i>
tweezing	40 minutes	\$10 (one-time cost of tweezers)
waxing	20 minutes	\$35 to \$50 each time
laser	20 minutes	\$60 to \$100 each time

While laser certainly costs more in the beginning, it eventually approaches the cost of waxing after numerous sessions. Laser is not a permanent hair removal solution for some people. Even electrolysis may not be permanent for these people. The problem with all of these hair removal methods is you won't know how effective they are until you try them, but the same can be said for a lot of things. If a method works for you, then great. If not, move on. Even though laser hair removal services are usually offered by medical doctors and nurses, none of the services is covered by medical insurance because hair removal is considered cosmetic.

A series of facials, glycolic peels (and/or chemical peels involving TCA, or trichloroacetic acid), and microdermabrasion treatments over the course of two to three years should smooth out your skin and make it look more radiant, healthy, and younger. Please be aware that any claims of making your skin look years younger in just a few days to weeks are, for the most part, untrue or marketing hype. It took years to get the skin you have now and if it's not radiant, healthy, and young-looking right now, then it will take years to make it look more so. Following a skincare

regimen will shorten the length of time it takes to achieve beautiful skin, but don't expect miracles.

When is it too late to start a skincare regimen? In your twenties? Thirties? Forties? Fifties? The answer is it's never too late, but the younger you start, the better off you'll be in your later years. I get emails from skeptical crossdressers who've known me for more than ten years and they finally realize what I've been saying all along. They have only recently begun their skincare regimens, but wish they listened to me years ago. Don't let this happen to you. However old you are now, it is never too late to start a skincare regimen and the sooner you start, the better. Even if you just use over-the-counter local pharmacy face moisturizers, that's better than nothing, however, never let cost be a deciding factor in skincare.

One of the most critical things I've learned over the years is that appearance is exceptionally important to my feminine image, so I spend a lot of money on skincare. A lot of crossdressers just don't understand why they will never look great and why their friends are progressing faster than them. The secret is skincare. If you devote time and money to skincare, it will pay you back in terms of looking exceptional for years to come.

I use Ivory bar soap for my face and body every day. I get the really big bars. This soap is inexpensive, powerful, and strips away dirt better than any other soap on the market. In the shower, I wipe it in circular motions all over my body. I rub it in my hands, lather up, and rub it on my face in the same circular motions. I rinse off everything and use a facecloth to wipe away any soap from my eyes.

I wash my hair with Aussie Moist shampoo, which is available at your local pharmacy. This shampoo is closest to my previous all-time favorite, Vidal Sassoon D, which is no longer available in the United States.

I towel dry myself, pat my face gently with a bath towel, and use a hair dryer on my hair. I comb my hair while drying it. That way I don't need to use any styling products in my hair. Too much styling product can damage your hair.

After drying myself, I apply a small amount of Elizabeth Arden First Defense antioxidant lotion all over my face. This lotion contains SPF 15 so it offers my face some minor protection from the sun. I also rub a little Nivea Crème on my occasionally dry elbows to moisturize them. Over the course of the day, I may wipe off the antioxidant lotion from my face, especially if my face looks greasy.

In the evening, right before I go to bed, I apply a little Prescriptives All-You-Need Oil-Free Moisturizer to my face. I feel this is the best moisturizer on the market, but it can be harsh on those parts of your face that are sun-damaged or raw from glycolic peels or microdermabrasion treatments, so avoid applying this moisturizer to sensitive areas for one month after a glycolic peel or microdermabrasion treatment. Just let your skin repair itself.

Once you get into a daily routine of moisturizing your skin, you will need to develop a skin rejuvenation regimen. If you've never had a facial before, it is time to start thinking about seriously incorporating a facial into your skin care regimen. Remember that making yourself look beautiful is a way of life and it's not cheap. I'm not made of money, but I understand the importance of skin care in my total beauty regimen and I don't care if skincare bites 10% out of my salary. It's worth it.

You must have beautiful skin in order for a natural makeup look to succeed. Everyone should have a facial treatment done at least three or four times a year, but never more than once a month. A basic facial typically includes basic cleansing of the face, exfoliation (the removal of dead skin cells), extractions (the removal of whiteheads), treatment mask (a series of lotions that nourish your skin), and oxygen therapy (basically a light mist of water sprayed on your face). The cost of a facial ranges from \$65 to \$95 in most salons. Other, more sophisticated and expensive facials exist and some actually have decent benefits for the money while others seem to be nothing more than window dressing or filler on a menu. I would stick with basic facials for at least six months before moving on to one of the more expensive facials.

I trust glycolic peels as a facial add-on or by itself. A glycolic peel removes the top layers of your skin. Your skin will repair and rejuvenate itself over the next week. A series of six glycolic peels done every two to four weeks will definitely improve the appearance of your skin. I have seen marked improvement in my face after six treatments. The next six treatments done a year later did not show the same percentage improvement, but that's okay because the initial treatment did most of the work to take my skin to the next level. Think of it this way. Every time you get a treatment, you improve your appearance by a little bit, so let's say the first time you get a facial, you improve your appearance by 20%. The next facial will improve your appearance by 10%. The next will improve your appearance by 5% and so on. The cost of a glycolic peel ranges from \$60 to \$85 in most salons. I will warn you that your face can appear red after a treatment, but the redness should subside in 24 hours.

Glycolic peels fall into the category of chemical peels or fruit acid peels. All of these peels basically use gels that contain strong acid chemicals that melt away your skin when left on for a while. A skin care specialist applies the gel and monitors its reaction on your skin. She will time the process, remove the gel once time is up, and slough away the melted layers of skin. The process sounds harsher than it actually is, but don't think these peels aren't as strong as what you can get from a medical office. See pictures E3 and E4 for an example of a pumpkin acid peel that stayed on my face too long, the result of going to an incompetent skincare specialist. Trust only those skin care specialists who've been performing skin care treatments for five years or more.

Microdermabrasion, also known as "crystal exfoliation," is another treatment that some skin care specialists classify as a facial. Microdermabrasion uses a handheld device that shoots out sand crystals and sucks them back in. The process can smooth out the surface of the skin in much the same way as a sandblaster can smooth out a wooden surface. Wrinkle lines, uneven texture, light scars, and pigmentation conditions can be ameliorated with these treatments. I recommend getting microdermabrasion in a series of six treatments done once a month. The cost of a

microdermabrasion treatment ranges from \$90 to \$135 in most salons. I will warn you that your face can appear red after a treatment, but the redness should subside in 24 hours.

These three treatments - facial, glycolic peel, and microdermabrasion - are the secrets that will lead to more beautiful skin. Start with facials, add glycolic peels six to nine months later, and then add microdermabrasion a six to nine months after that. Give the treatments at least two years and take pictures of your face once a month. Every three or four months, evaluate your face and note the improvements. I think you'll be very happy with the results.

Maintaining overall health is very important to your success as a tgirl. Exercise is not only good for your body, but builds stamina and teaches patience and determination. I recommend performing sit-ups and crunches at least three times a week. Start off with one set of 30 sit-ups and then slowly increase this number by 10 per week until you hit 120. After you sustain doing 120 sit-ups per session for three weeks, ease up on the sit-ups a bit and incorporate crunches into the workout. Do as many crunches as you can following your sit-up sets. I now do 60 sit-ups and 40 crunches to maintain the waist I have.

I take a GNC Women's Ultra Mega multivitamin twice a day as per the directions on the bottle. I recommend the women's formulation of the Ultra Mega as it does not pump your body up with excessive vitamins. I take one with a glass of water every morning at 8:30am and do the same at around 8:30pm.

At least a couple of times per week, I engage in a walking while eating dinner. I buy a sandwich or some food item that I could eat with my hands. A burrito is excellent for this. I make sure I'm getting four of the five major food groups in anything I eat this way. Walking while eating is an excellent way to burn off calories.

The Five Major Food Groups

Grains - Limit yourself to three units of grains each day where one unit equals one slice of bread or one cup of cold cereal or half a cup of cooked rice, cereal, or pasta. A burrito skin counts as two units. Any more grains than this and you will get fat!

Vegetables - Choose from dark green vegetables, including broccoli, spinach, and other dark leafy greens. Eat orange vegetables, such as carrots and sweet potatoes. Eat dry beans like lentils, pintos, and lima beans. Limit yourself to two cups of vegetables per day.

Fruits - Any fruit is good, whether it be fresh, frozen, dried, or canned. Go light on fruit juices, which are loaded with artificial crap. Limit yourself to two cups of fruits per day.

Milk - Drink low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt. Drink lactose-free milk if you are lactose intolerant. Drink at least three cups of milk per day.

Meat and Beans - Choose low-fat or lean meats and poultry. Low-fat does not mean no fat. It's okay to eat a little fat per meal. Eat fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds. Bake it, broil it, or grill it. Limit yourself to five ounces of meat and beans per day.

The suggested servings here are geared towards genetic females, but can be applied to girls, too. I encourage you to eat less than you'd normally eat as a man and to seldom stuff yourself. Once a week, if a good opportunity presents itself, you can eat a little more, but try not to have more than one big meal per week.

After dinner, I like to take warm showers to get my body to sweat and release toxins, basically simulating the effect of a sauna. The sweat is immediately washed off and I'm left with nice, clean skin. I recommend showering twice a day, once in the morning before you go to work and once in the evening about an hour after you eat dinner. Opening up your pores this way prevents them from getting clogged and developing whiteheads.

The Natural Look Step-by-Step

Along with beautiful skin, the next step towards a natural look is to find makeup colors that look great on you. After one year of skin care and laser hair removal treatments, you can eventually skip using concealer and just apply foundation and powder. Remember that the benefits of skin care treatments will take some time to be noticeable.

If a close shave is all you can do or afford, you will need to continue wearing a layer of concealer as the first step in your makeup process, but be aware that this will impair your ability to look truly realistic and natural. I recommend tweezing your facial hair if you can't afford laser hair removal or electrolysis.

The steps in your makeup process should look something like this:

- Concealer (with zero to four laser hair removal treatments)
- Foundation
- Loose powder
- Eyebrow pencil
- Eyeliner
- Eyeshadow
- Blush
- Lipliner
- Lipstick
- Mascara

Let's look at each of these steps in detail. The concealer step is necessary for those of you who wish to hide skin texture imperfections or bluish undertones seen with shaven facial hair. Skin texture imperfections may include acne scars, razor cuts, knife wounds, etc. In other words, anything that makes your skin look less than flawless.

The foundation step is necessary for making your skin tone or coloring look more uniform. A canvas should look flawless or as flawless as possible. Some people prefer a more dewy, wet look while others prefer a more matte finish to their makeup. While the choice is entirely yours, I recommend lip glosses and colors that are more iridescent, or sparkly, in appearance for wet, dewy looks because the look you're trying to achieve is one of a "sunkissed," or suntanned look. I recommend at most one item be iridescent if you want to go with a matte finish. That one item would usually be eyeshadow or lipstick, but never both. Too much sparkle on a matte surface is just plain wrong.

The loose powder step is necessary for setting your foundation and keeping it from looking wet on your face. This extra layer also adds more uniformity to your skin tone or coloring. If your skin has uneven texture, this step will certainly ameliorate the look of the uneven texture. Women who have flawless skin to begin with can skip the foundation step and just apply loose powder to their faces to tone down sweat or oily skin. Loose powder should be applied before you ever sweat, not to blot sweat. If you have visible oil on your skin after you put on the loose powder, blot the oil with blotting papers.

If oily skin is a problem for you, before you start any of these steps, take a cotton ball, soak some Prescriptives Immediate Matte Skin Conditioning Tonic for Normal/Oiler Skin on it, swipe it all over your face, and let it air dry. The tonic is actually a skin toner. Toner lessens the chance of oils and sweat from appearing. If you live in a very humid environment, I recommend not wearing any concealer, foundation, and loose powder at all, but in order for this to work, you should undergo a series of ten or more laser hair removal or electrolysis treatments and at least four years of skin care treatments to achieve smooth, hair-free skin.

"I just want women's skin," a crossdresser said to me some years back.

It's nice to hope and want, but without a skin care regimen, it is very difficult to achieve the look and feel of women's skin, so this person would benefit from studying everything I've said so far.

The eyebrow pencil step is necessary for enhancing the look of your eyebrows. If you have bushy, unkempt eyebrows, it's time to start tweezing them on a regular basis. Before you even think about shaping your eyebrows, you should first get a basic shape going. Tweeze away all hair on your eyelids. Tweeze away all hair in between your eyebrows, especially if you have a uni-brow. Tweeze away any stray hairs below the eyebrows that do not contribute to a uniformly defined eyebrow. Get your eyebrows to look sharp and defined. Get a little bit of an arch going with each eyebrow. Some of you may not have a complete eyebrow. It may stop short somewhere and not continue completely across the eye. That's okay because you can use an