



Pre-Contest Tanning

By Kevin Richardson, Founder Naturally Intense System of Diet & Exercise™

Perhaps the most overlooked aspect of contest preparation for figure competitors, and their bodybuilding counterparts as well, is tanning. Competitors put full emphasis in their training and dieting, but my experience has been that things like tanning are often left to a hasty application of some unknown product after a hurried visit to the tanning salon a day or two before a contest.

I cannot emphasize enough, how many figure competitors that I have seen onstage that were very much in shape to win their class, fall short because their tan wasn't optimal. You hear the complaints after the show, that they were in better condition than the class winners, and very often they do have a valid point. But the most important aspect of competition is that it does not matter what you look like, all that matters is what the judges see, and if your tan is not spot on, you won't look the way you do at home under the bright white lights of the stage, and all of your hard earned definition becomes mostly invisible.

Lights & The Principles of Color Onstage

Almost every contest employs the use of bright white lights to illuminate competitors onstage. These lights, are not exactly the best for physique presentation, as the white light has a tendency to wash out the cuts and definition on all but the darkest colored physiques. You could be in terrific shape, but stand under the lights without a tan, and almost magically, the finer lines of separation disappear.

This happens whether you are of a light or dark complexion, as there simply is not any natural skin color that will allow optimum muscle visibility. Plainly put, everyone needs to tan, regardless of skin color. Most beginning competitors find it odd that they need to tan or use a tanning product as part of their contest preparations, but it is very much required if you are serious about being your best onstage.

There is another factor involved as well, and that is the very reality that most people are not at all one complexion all throughout their bodies. For most, your face and arms are somewhat darker than the rest of your body, as they tend to be exposed to more direct sunlight than your torso and your legs. That difference in shade, while almost imperceptible to you looking in a mirror under normal lighting conditions, becomes very apparent under the hot, bright, white lights of the stage. So much so, that you end up looking like a multicolored quilt, which not only takes away from your overall physique presentation, but it also blurs the hard earned conditioning that you trained and dieted so hard to display..

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Kevin Richardson is a visionary **personal trainer**, author and the founder of the ground breaking Naturally Intense System of Diet & Exercise which has helped hundreds lose weight and get into fantastic shape training only 10 minutes 3 times a week over the past 18 years of his career. For more cutting edge articles on weight loss, health and fitness and to learn more about the Naturally Intense System of Diet & Exercise visit Kevin's official website at www.naturallyintense.net.