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## Cosmetics Clean-Out: How to Control the Chaos in Your Makeup Bag

by Heather Bouzan McHugh | December 14, 2009



We're not always optimistic about New Year's resolutions, but when the clock strikes 2010, we'd like to think we'll have control over something in our lives. And that something, we've decided, might realistically be our makeup bags.

For some, it's a simple task: toss this million-times-crimped tube of eye cream or that shadow shade that hasn't been worn since 1992. But for us, owners of enough travel-sized shampoos to equip a boutique

hotel, it's quite a different story. In search of answers, we headed to an expert: Sarah Buckwalter, owner of **Organizing Boston**, begins by asking clients to consolidate. "Sometimes [makeup is] in our car. There's some in our gym bag. There's some in our purse.... Sort it all out on a table and see what you have," says Buckwalter.

Once your inventory is accurate, begin the necessary eliminations. The casualties? Eye makeup more than six months old (toss mascara after two or three), impulse buys that were never realistically your color, powder compacts coated with any sort of weird sheen, and anything cream-based that's beginning to smell funky have all got to go.

For the purge-phobic, Buckwalter suggests donating unopened product to charitable organizations that collect beauty supplies for women in need. If that's not an option, just start with the obvious discards, working your way toward the more difficult decisions. "Start with something like, okay, this is all the old makeup; this is my 1980s makeup," Buckwalter counsels with a chuckle. "And, believe me, I find that in people's houses." Rachel Lockhart, makeup artist and owner of **Rachel's Makeup Studio** (176 Newbury Street, Boston, 617.424.0153), concurs. Lockhart, who offers makeup lessons with a makeup bag overhaul included, explains,



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"Women keep their eye makeup for years. I had a client who was in the other day who told me she had the same mascara for like seven years."

The dirty work done, it's on to ensuring that your makeup bag is stocked with all the necessities. In search of a little insight, we visited Emma Katrina Katzburg, Whole Body team leader at **Whole Foods Market** (181 Cambridge Street, Boston, 617.723.0004) — i.e., the go-to girl in the upscale-crunchy grocer's beauty department (where we've found some of the most unexpectedly obsession-worthy product we've seen in a long time). Her tip? Make sure you're equipped with the right tools.

"Brushes are going to be the most important thing to any makeup regime; if you're using the wrong brush, even the best makeup is going to look awful," says Katzburg. She emphasizes that every woman needs a kabuki brush for foundation and blush, as well as dedicated eyeshadow and concealer brushes.

From there, Katzburg's essentials include a multipurpose concealer for hiding blemishes, providing a base for longer-lasting lipstick and bolder eyeshadow, and, in dude world, masking ingrown hairs. "Really," says Katzburg, "if there was one product, stranded on a desert island, that you couldn't live without, it's that." A pressed-base mineral compact eliminates the need for any other foundations, while a great bronzer takes a daytime look into night and adds a little glow to bare legs and arms. In addition to her affinity for multipurpose products, Katzburg is a fan of mineral makeup — its lack of perishable ingredients means it can, in theory, last indefinitely. To round out one's repertoire, other must-haves include a hydrating mist (her fave is by Ann Webb), cotton swabs ("That way, if you mess up something on the road, you're not trying to wipe it off with your fingers," Katzburg says), and a nude lip gloss to add polish to even an otherwise bare face.

When it comes down to it, maintaining a well-edited beauty bag is often about just being practical with both disposals and acquisitions. "The fact is," Lockhart muses, "if you have something that's sitting in your makeup bag, just like anything that's sitting in your closet, if you're not going to ever wear it or you're not going to ever use it, what's the point? It's just taking up space." Space that's just waiting to be filled with our latest makeup-counter have-to-have-it splurges — all in the name of research, of course.

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