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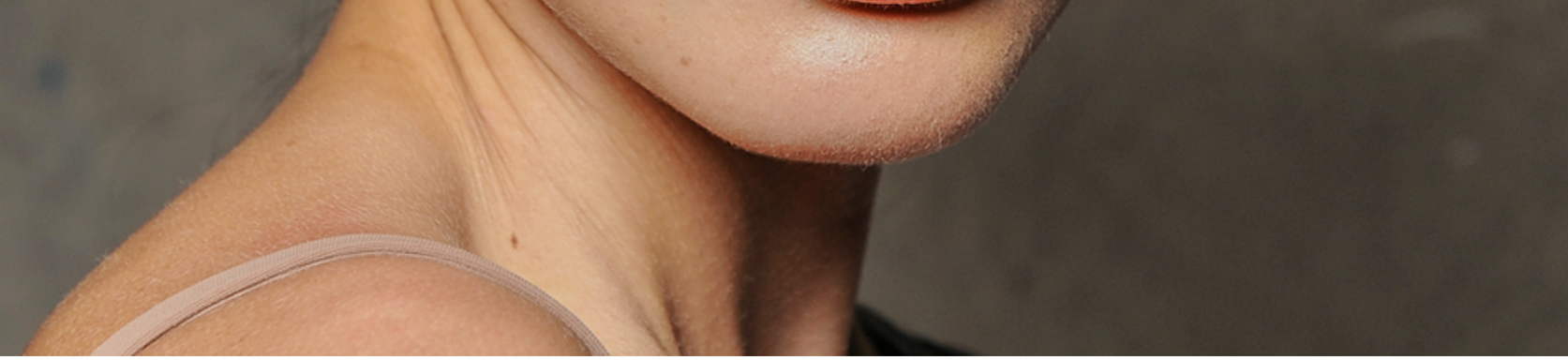
# 17 Best Setting Powders in 2023 for Makeup That Lasts, Tested and Reviewed

Your midday oil attack has officially met its match.

BY SIENA GAGLIANO, BETH GILLETTE AND AMA KWARTENG PUBLISHED: AUG 23, 2023

SAVE ARTICLE



Getty Images

My skin is unpredictable—some days, I'm an oily greaseball, and other days, my skin is dull, meh, and has dry patches. This can be attributed to the ~wonderful~ NYC humid summers and really freakin' cold winters. So how do my tinted moisturizers, cream blushes, and face glosses stay put all day long, you ask? A really good setting powder, which, FYI, **contains ingredients that "lock" liquid and cream formulas to your face to help extend wear time**. As makeup artist Tayaba Jafri puts it, they're "one of the oldest makeup tricks in the book."

And thanks to my own chaotic skin, **I've personally tested 25+ setting powders in the last six months** to find the best for my skin type and makeup ~vibes~. And with the help of Jafri and makeup artist Tobi Henney, we've handpicked every setting powder that gets our seal of approval, below. Here's a sneak peek:

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✔ ***FYI:*** *We updated this article in June 2023 to give you the most up-to-date info on setting powders, including new products the internet won't stop talking about, deleted outdated oldies, and checked in on the latest in setting powders, just for you.*

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## Our top picks for the best setting powders in 2023:

BEST PRESSED SETTING POWDER

1

## Charlotte Tilbury Airbrush Flawless Finish Setting Powder

**$45 AT SEPHORA**

read more

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2

BEST LOOSE SETTING POWDER

## Uoma Beauty Trippin Smooth Powder

**$29 AT ULTA BEAUTY**

read more

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3

BEST MATTE SETTING POWDER

## Laura Mercier Translucent Loose Setting Powder

**$43 AT SEPHORA**

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4

BEST SETTING POWDER FOR OILY SKIN

## Fenty Beauty Pro Filt'r Instant Retouch Setting Powder

**$20 AT SEPHORA**

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5

BEST SETTING POWDER FOR DRY SKIN

## By Terry Hyaluronic Hydra-Powder

**$60 AT DERMSTORE**

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Why take the time to put on a full face of foundation, concealer, and bronzer if it's just going to melt off in a few hours? My thoughts exactly. Now keep reading to find the best setting powder for your skin type, along with the difference between setting powder, finishing powder, and powder foundation at the end.

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# 1

**Best Pressed Setting Powder**

## Charlotte Tilbury Airbrush Flawless Finish Setting Powder

**$45 AT SEPHORA**

**$40 AT WALMART**

**$48 AT NORDSTROM**

Credit: Courtesy Image

| PROS | CONS |
| --- | --- |
| Finish can be built up without getting heavy | Some reviewers wish it were more blurring |

As much as I love the weightless feel of a loose setting powder, sometimes I need something with a little extra coverage to smooth out my textured, acne-prone skin—and that's where this GOAT pressed powder from Charlotte Tilbury comes in. It **has a ~smidge~ of tinted coverage that helps even out your makeup and skin tone** without looking heavy or obvious, thanks to its super-fine consistency. The result is incredibly even-looking makeup that legit lasts.

- **Type:** Pressed powder
- **Finish:** Matte
- **Shades:** 4

***THE REVIEWS:*** *One reviewer writes, "Love this product! After setting my makeup, I noticed the difference in my face both in photos and in person. You definitely don't look cakey. This is my second time buying it."*

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# 2

**Best Loose Setting Powder**

## Uoma Beauty Trippin Smooth Powder

$29 AT ULTA BEAUTY

$27 AT JCPENNEY

$29 AT SHOPBOP

Credit: Courtesy Image

| PROS | CONS |
| --- | --- |
| Twist dispenser is less messy than regular powder jars | Lightest shade has a yellow undertone that didn't work for some fair-skin testers |

After covering one too many jeans with powder dust, I honestly swore off messy setting powders. And then this Uoma powder and its brilliant packaging brought me back. You just turn the bottom of the powder while the lid is still closed, and when you open it, you can dip your brush or beauty sponge into **the bottom of the jar without powder flying everywhere**. Plus, the powder is formulated with glycerin and mushroom extract, so it lightly hydrates your skin to help reduce cakiness and dry patches.

- **Type:** Loose powder
- **Finish:** Matte
- **Shades:** 5

***THE REVIEWS:*** *"Let me just say the packaging is genius," writes one reviewer. "If you've ever tipped over or dropped a jar of loose powder, you know what I'm talking about. Never again with this product. It goes on like a dream too, even over products from different brands."*

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# 3

**Best Matte Setting Powder**

## Laura Mercier Translucent Loose Setting Powder

**$43 AT SEPHORA**

**$30 AT WALMART**

**$40 AT SAKS FIFTH AVENUE**

Credit: Courtesy Image

| PROS | CONS |
| --- | --- |
| Leaves skin with a soft-matte finish without feeling heavy<br>Testers say it makes their makeup last 12+ hours | Can be too matte on dry skin types, some testers say |

No roundup of the best setting powders would be complete without the mention of the iconic Laura Mercier Translucent Loose Setting Powder. You'll find this in the makeup bags of celebrities (*cough cough* Lori Harvey, who has the smoothest damn skin I've ever seen), makeup artists, and editors alike. Why? It has **a fine, airy texture that feels light on your skin** while giving you a smooth, blurred, matte finish. To really nix shine, Jafri recommends pressing the powder into your skin with a powder puff instead of brushing it on, which "creates a sweeping motion and moves the product around instead," she says, "while pressing the powder into the skin results in long-lasting makeup," she says.

- **Type:** Loose powder
- **Finish:** Matte
- **Shades:** 4

***THE REVIEWS:*** *"This product is SO good," writes one reviewer. "I get oily skin throughout the day, so when I started using this, it made a significant difference. It leaves my skin looking soft and matte."*

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# 4

**Best Setting Powder for Oily Skin**

## Fenty Beauty Pro Filt'r Instant Retouch Setting Powder

$20 AT SEPHORA

$36 AT ULTA BEAUTY

$39 AT WALMART

Credit: Courtesy Image

| PROS | CONS |
| --- | --- |
| ⊕ Jar holds a lot of product | ⊗ Has a slight sweet fragrance some testers didn't love |
| ⊕ Comes in eight shades from light to deep with varying undertones | |

Ever since my skin turned on me and became as greasy as a teenage boy's, I always have this setting powder nearby to mattify my skin (no joke; looking at it right now). It's full of talc, silica, and dimethicone, which **makes my skin look luxe, smooth, and velvety**. Just a lil tip tho: If you're not ready to commit to a full-size version yet, grab the mini. You only need a light dusting across your entire face, so you'll def be able to make it last a while.

- **Type:** Loose powder
- **Finish:** Matte/natural
- **Shades:** 8

***THE REVIEWS:*** *"On my T-zone area where I have large pores with some texture from past breakouts and where foundation usually gets cakey, my skin stays baby smooth all day with this powder," writes one tester. "Before this powder, I'd actually press the Fenty blotting powder over the most textured pore areas on my cheeks to blur the pores, and now using this powder, I don't have to do that step! It's so blurring."*

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# 5

## Best Setting Powder for Dry Skin

# By Terry Hyaluronic Hydra-Powder

$60 AT DERMSTORE

$54 AT WALMART

$54 AT BLOOMINGDALE'S

Credit: Courtesy Image

| PROS | CONS |
| --- | --- |
| Made with microfine hyaluronic acid to soften skin while setting | Testers wish the packaging was more travel-friendly |
| Completely translucent | |

Listen, I get it: Dry skin and setting powder usually don't mix. But after a zillion layers of serums, creams, foundations, and concealers, even the driest skin will need some help to prevent creasing and sliding. Enter: By Terry's Hyaluronic Powder, a lightweight, fine-milled setting powder that **actually hydrates your skin with hyaluronic acid as it blurs and sets**. Henney notes this powder is one of her favorites because it's "so silky-smooth, so it disappears into your skin"—which is exactly what you want when you're working with dry patches.

- **Type:** Loose powder
- **Finish:** Matte* (*the added hyaluronic acid prevents your already dry skin from looking chalky or settling into dry areas or patches)
- **Shades:** 1

***THE REVIEWS:*** *"I love this translucent powder for setting makeup or too glowy sunscreen," reads one review. "It gets rid of too much shine instantly, and my makeup lasts forever. But is NEVER drying or settles into lines. The perfect setting powder!"*

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# 6

**Best Drugstore Setting Powder**

## Maybelline Fit Me Loose Finishing Powder

amazon's choice

**Now 31% Off**

**$7 AT AMAZON**

**$7 AT WALMART**

**$10 AT ULTA BEAUTY**

Credit: Courtesy Image

| PROS | CONS |
| --- | --- |
| ⊕ Has more than 40,000 positive reviews on Amazon | ⊗ Some testers found the finish too heavy on their skin |
| ⊕ Less than $10 | |

When I first reentered the powder game, I wasn't ready to drop $$$ for a setting powder, which led me to this drugstore fave (like, there are so many positive reviews). And now that I've tested dozens, I'm shocked at how well it sets my makeup for the price. I just **brush it lightly across my skin for a satin finish** or press it in with a sponge to seriously mattify. And when I feel like baking (aka when you cover your makeup with a heavy layer of powder, let it sit for a few minutes, then dust it away), I don't feel bad using so much product since a refill costs less than $10.

- **Type:** Loose powder
- **Finish:** Satin
- **Shades:** 8

***THE REVIEWS:*** *"I was recommended this powder by a friend, and it didn't disappoint," writes one tester in a review. "It's a light/sheer-feeling powder, but it gives you good coverage if you build it up. I use it to set on most days, but if I want to bake, it's also a nice powder to use. It doesn't have a scent, and it lasts me all day unless I need to touch up my T-zone area. I like how it looks and feels on my skin too."*

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# 7

**Best SPF Setting Powder**

## Colorescience Brush-On Sunscreen Mineral Powder

$69 AT AMAZON

$45 AT WALMART

$69 AT NORDSTROM

Credit: Courtesy Image

| PROS | CONS |
| --- | --- |
| ⊕ Has a fluffy brush on one end to easily apply and reapply | ⊗ Darkest shade won't be deep enough for very-dark skin (sigh)<br>⊗ The brush may get gunk-y over time |

I kid you not, just about every single dermatologist I've talked to in my beauty editor career recommends this powder sunscreen from Colorescience. Why? Not only is it mineral-based (meaning gentler for sensitive skin), but it's also formulated with **broad-spectrum SPF 50 to protect against infrared, UVA/UVB rays, blue light, and pollution**. It's also just a damn good powder for blotting away midday shine. Just tap the tube (cap-side down) a few times against your palm to dispense powder into the brush, then sweep it over your face for touch-ups and protection.

- **Type:** Loose powder* (*finishing powder)
- **Finish:** Matte
- **Shades:** 4

***THE REVIEWS:*** *"I love using this when I'm running out the door to walk the dog or run errands and I'm due for an SPF reapplication," writes one tester. "I almost never notice it once on my face, and I have never been told by people that they could see the powder on my face or a change in my appearance."*

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# 8

**Best Setting Powder for Combination Skin**

## Givenchy Prisme Libre Loose Powder

$59 AT SEPHORA

$38 AT WALMART

$59 AT NORDSTROM

Credit: Courtesy Image

| PROS | CONS |
| --- | --- |
| ⊕ Sets your makeup with a radiant finish | ⊗ Have to mix all four shades together in the lid, which can be messy |
| ⊕ Includes a powder puff | |

This cult-favorite powder is a mix between a traditional setting powder (which helps “set” your makeup so it lasts longer) and a finishing powder (which helps “blur” visible texture in your makeup). The result? **Softer, smoother, airbrushed-looking makeup that actually lasts until you take it off**. Four sheer, color-correcting powders are housed in one compartmentalized jar. Just flip the jar over, tap the powder into the lid, and mix the shades together to brighten, smooth, and neutralize, all at once.

- **Type:** Loose powder
- **Finish:** Natural
- **Shades:** 6

***THE REVIEWS:*** *"I am NOT a powder girlie," writes one tester. "I have incredibly dry and acne-prone skin. I bought this on whim during the sale, and WOW, it blurs imperfection without totally mattifying my skin. My skin maintained a glow while looking blurred and healthy, which I loved."*

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# 9

**Best Setting Powder for a Radiant Finish**

## Saie Airset Radiant Loose Setting Powder

**$30 AT SEPHORA**

$56 AT WALMART

| PROS | CONS |
| --- | --- |
| Has micro-shimmers that add a glowy sheen to your skin | Might be too shimmery for oily skin |

A powder that makes your skin look glowy, not flat? YUP, Saie's clean loose setting powder is **filled with itsy-bitsy flecks of mica (ethically sourced!) that give a bit of radiance** back to your skin, which makes it look surprisingly seamless and natural. Plus, it's made with hydrating squalane, which won't moisturize your skin like a face cream or facial oil would, but it will help keep the naturally drying silica from clinging to any dry patches you might have.

- **Type:** Loose powder
- **Finish:** Radiant
- **Shades:** 3

***THE REVIEWS:*** *"I think this powder is amazing," writes one tester in a review. "Not only did it prevent creasing, but it didn't dry my under eyes out. I was worried about the shimmer, but it isn't noticeable on your skin and adds a nice, subtle glow."*

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# 10

**Best Luxe Setting Powder**

## La Mer The Powder

$115 AT SEPHORA

$122 AT WALMART

$115 AT NORDSTROM

Credit: Courtesy Image

| PROS | CONS |
| --- | --- |
| ⊕ Has encapsulated oils to help smooth skin | ⊗ Filled with fragrance and botanical extracts that could be irritating on sensitive skin |
| ⊕ Looks v chic on your vanity and comes with a powder puff | |

Don't sue me! I get it, this thing is expensive as hell, but just look at it: La Mer's powder comes in a frosted glass jar that deserves a permanent spot in ~~the Met~~ on your vanity. And when you look at the ingredients list, you'll find **the same seaweed extract that's in all of La Mer's skincare**, along with sesame seed oil, sunflower seed oil, and sweet almond oil that help lock in some of your skin's moisture while you wear it.

- **Type:** Loose powder
- **Finish:** Natural
- **Shades:** 1

***THE REVIEWS:*** *According to one reviewer, "I know this is hella expensive, but I'm telling you, this powder is something else. It's completely translucent, and the powder even has a very soft, minimal shimmer to it. It gives your skin that extra*

*radiance look while still being matte. This is my holy grail powder, and it goes onto the skin so smoothly with a nice, fluffy brush."*

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# 11

**Best Under-Eye Setting Powder**

## Pat McGrath Labs Sublime Perfection Blurring Under-Eye Setting Powder

**$30 AT SEPHORA**

Credit: Courtesy Image

| PROS | CONS |
| --- | --- |
| ⊕ Leaves your skin looking radiant, without glitter or shimmer | ⊗ Powder can crack in the pan easily, according to reviewers |

I'm convinced Pat McGrath created this under-eye-setting powder just to fulfill my previously unattainable list of requirements, namely that a formula be lightweight (check), that it reduces creasing (check), and that it has a luminous-but-not-glittery finish (check). I just **dust it under my eyes with a fluffy brush to set my concealer**, then swipe the excess over my smile lines and forehead. It leaves my skin looking truly natural, without highlighting any of my fine lines. Ty, Pat.

- **Type:** Pressed powder
- **Finish:** Radiant
- **Shades:** 4

***THE REVIEWS****: "I am 53, and I have tried every powder known to man on my dry skin and under eyes," reads one review. "I am FLOORED at how nice this looks on my under eyes. I will never be without this."*

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# 12

**Best Talc-Free Setting Powder**

## Kosas Cloud Set Baked Setting & Smoothing Talc-Free Powder

$34 AT SEPHORA

$35 AT NORDSTROM

$63 AT WALMART

Credit: Courtesy Image

| PROS | CONS |
| --- | --- |
| Reviewers say you can barely feel it on your skin | Doesn't come with a mirror or powder puff for touch-ups |

If you don't like the chalky, heavy feeling of loose powder, try Kosas's talc-free pressed powder. It's **so lightweight you can barely feel it on your face**, even though it leaves behind a satin, skin-like finish. FYI: Hailey Bieber swears by this setting powder to lock her makeup in place without ruining her signature "glazed donut skin" glow. And I, too, would like to have Hailey Bieber's skin, so pls give me three.

- **Type:** Pressed powder
- **Finish:** Satin
- **Shades:** 10

***THE REVIEWS:*** *"My absolute favorite," writes one tester in a review. "I love how this wears! I am always reaching for this because I love using it to refresh my makeup. I'm obsessed with the texture (or lack thereof) it leaves on my skin—it feels nearly weightless."*

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# 13

**Best Blurring Setting Powder**

## It Cosmetics Bye Bye Pores Poreless Finish Airbrush Pressed Powder

$32 AT AMAZON

$16 AT WALMART

$32 AT ULTA BEAUTY

Credit: Courtesy Image

| PROS | CONS |
| --- | --- |
| ⊕ Silicone-based to "blur" your skin texture | ⊗ Some testers say the powder cracks easily |
| ⊕ Comes with a powder puff for a full-coverage finish | |

True story: When I became a beauty editor, I gifted this smoothing powder to my mom as repayment for all the times I ~borrowed~ it from her makeup bag. She's got an oily T-zones with prominent pores (especially with all those dewy skin tints I've made her test with me), and this powder **sets down her makeup and eliminates shine without emphasizing her pores or uneven texture**. Tbh, my mom's skin is so smooth, she gets mistaken for my sister now at 52 more than she did 10 years ago.

- **Type:** Pressed powder
- **Finish:** Matte
- **Shades:** 3

***THE REVIEWS:*** *One review reads, "I never hear anything about this powder, but it's STUNNING. It leaves a matte finish on my face without drying me out and is perfect to help control oily skin."*

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# 14

## Best Lightweight Setting Powder

## Hourglass Veil Translucent Setting Powder

$49 AT SEPHORA

$49 AT NORDSTROM

$49 AT ULTA BEAUTY

Credit: Courtesy Image

| PROS | CONS |
| --- | --- |
| Reviewers say it barely feels or looks like they're wearing anything | Might not be mattifying enough for very oily skin |

Tbh, this is the powder for people who think they hate powder. It was my starter-powder a few months ago (and look at me now!), because **it feels and looks like absolutely nothing on my skin.** It helps tone down excess shine without fully mattifying the dewy finish from my creamy concealers and blushes, helping me keep my ~lit-from-within~ glow. I just sweep it all over my skin with a big, fluffy brush, and then, with a smaller brush, layer a bit more over oil-prone areas, like around my nose and over my T-zone.

- **Type:** Loose powder
- **Finish:** Natural
- **Shades:** 3

***THE REVIEWS:*** *"This is the gold standard of setting powders," writes one reviewer. "It helps to blend and melt makeup together wonderfully and sets my makeup all day. Looks good with literally any liquid/cream product I use it over too."*

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# 15

**Best Setting Powder for Fine Lines**

## Haus Labs Bio-Blurring Talc-Free Loose Setting Powder

$38 AT SEPHORA

$95 AT WALMART

Credit: Courtesy Image

| PROS | CONS |
| --- | --- |
| Slightly blurs fine lines and textured skin | Not mattifying enough for oily skin, said some testers |

Legit, this powder **feels like actual silk when you pat it into your skin**, which is how it creates a velvet-y-smooth finish on your skin. So don't worry about it highlighting or settling into fine lines, forehead wrinkles, or skin texture. Just be sure to press the powder into your skin with a puff or brush instead of dusting for that blurred effect.

- **Type:** Loose powder
- **Finish:** Natural
- **Shades:** 5

***THE REVIEWS:*** *"I love it," writes one tester. "It's so good. I have been using it to set my makeup, and it does not crease! I can use it to set the concealer for my dark circles, and it keeps it in place and does not accentuate my fine lines."*

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# 16

**Best Brightening Setting Powder**

## Huda Beauty Easy Bake Loose Baking & Setting Powder

**$34 AT SEPHORA**

Credit: Courtesy Image

| PROS | CONS |
| --- | --- |
| Available in pink and yellow shades for different undertones | Contains fragrance that can be irritating for some |

I didn't believe this hype with this brightening, pink-toned powder for a long time. But I'm eating my words now, as I sit here looking like I got the best eight hours of rest when I actually took a four-hour red-eye flight next to a screaming baby. **The rosy pigments counteract the dark tones under my eyes to disguise them** a little bit, even without a full-coverage under-eye concealer. And on the days that I need some extra help, I can dab it on with a sponge, and it smooths out my skin to slightly create an illusion that my under-eye bags are a bit flatter.

- **Type:** Loose powder
- **Finish:** Matte

- **Shades:** 9

***THE REVIEWS:*** *One reviewer writes, "Wow! After months of hearing about the hype surrounding this product, I finally was able to get it, and it's literally so stunning. It brightens the under-eyes so well and definitely is the best pink setting powder I've tried!"*

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# 17

**Best Waterproof Setting Powder**

## Urban Decay All Nighter Waterproof Setting Powder

$35 AT AMAZON

$31 AT WALMART

$35 AT ULTA BEAUTY

| PROS | CONS |
| --- | --- |
| Reviewers say it keeps their T-zone shine-free<br>Gives your skin a satin finish | Only one tinted shade that was too dark for some fair-skin testers |

If you're dealing with heat and humidity (hi, my subway commute), dust this water-resistant powder over your skin, and you **won't have to worry about your makeup sliding or running**. You'll get a satin, skin-like finish wherever you pat it on without your skin feeling dry and heavy. And trust me: It frickin' lasts—like, reviewers say this kept their makeup looking fresh for 12+ hours.

- **Type:** Pressed powder
- **Finish:** Matte
- **Shades:** 1

***THE REVIEWS:*** *According to one tester, "I've repurchased this three times, and it is a phenomenal powder! Sets my face, blurs pores, and makes me look flawless without drying my skin out. My makeup stays in place and looks beautiful!"*

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# What is setting powder?

**“Setting powder helps keep your makeup from moving** and does exactly what it says: sets it in place,” says makeup artist Tobi Henney. “You should use it on top of cream and liquid products, like foundation and concealer, because it can eliminate shine.” These powders can be loose or pressed and are usually translucent or in a few extremely light coverage shades that come in natural, luminous, and matte finishes. Consider it like swiping a top coat on your nails after painting them.

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# What's the difference between setting powder and finishing powder?

No, setting powder and finishing powder are not the same thing, and yes, **using the incorrect formula can seriously mess with the results** you're trying to get. Here's the general breakdown:

- **Setting powder:** Medium-weight formula without coverage for setting and prolonging makeup
- **Finishing powder:** Lightest formula with no coverage that is dusted over your skin as the final step in your makeup routine to blend everything together and sometimes add a glow
- **Powder foundation:** Densest formula with coverage meant to even skin tone and replace liquid foundation (not meant to be used as a setting powder)

“One of the biggest mistakes I see is people using powder foundation to ‘set’ their base foundation,” says makeup artist Tayaba Jafri, “which **can add a heavy layer to your skin and look cakey or dry.**” Basically, powder foundation is foundation; it’s not meant to be used as a topper. But if you’re trying to keep your makeup matte and locked in place? Reach for setting powder. And if you want to save your shiny glow but “blur” your skin, finishing powder will be your BFF.

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## Is setting powder really necessary?

I mean, no makeup step is truly “necessary” (there are no rules in makeup, and I stand by that). But setting powder is important if you want to **mattify your makeup, set your liquid and cream products, and make your makeup stay on longer.** Basically, if you want your work to last, you should try incorporating a setting powder.

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**Siena Gagliano**
**ASSOCIATE EDITOR**

**Siena Gagliano is the associate editor at *Cosmopolitan*, where she primarily covers beauty** in the makeup, skin, and hair spaces, as well as some fashion and lifestyle. Wanna know how to get the best brows of your life? Gotchu. What about how to achieve ridiculously glowing skin, a super bouncy blowout, or exactly how to use that viral face mask? Check, check, and check. Before joining *Cosmopolitan*, Siena was a writer at *Bustle* and several other media outlets. As NYC's newest resident, she has vowed to find the best (extra) dirty martini this city has to offer—and yes, that means ~attempting~ to try every cute cocktail spot in the city (hit her up with some recs, pls). Follow Siena on Instagram where you'll see that her account is mostly dedicated to pics of her cute dog and that magazine life.

**Beth Gillette**

Beth Gillette is the beauty editor at *Cosmopolitan*, where she covers skincare, makeup, hair, nails, and more across digital and print. She can generally be found in bright eyeshadow furiously typing her latest feature or hemming and hawing about a new product you "have to try." Prior to *Cosmopolitan*, she wrote and edited beauty content as an Editor at The Everygirl for four years. Follow her on Instagram for makeup selfies and a new hair 'do every few months.

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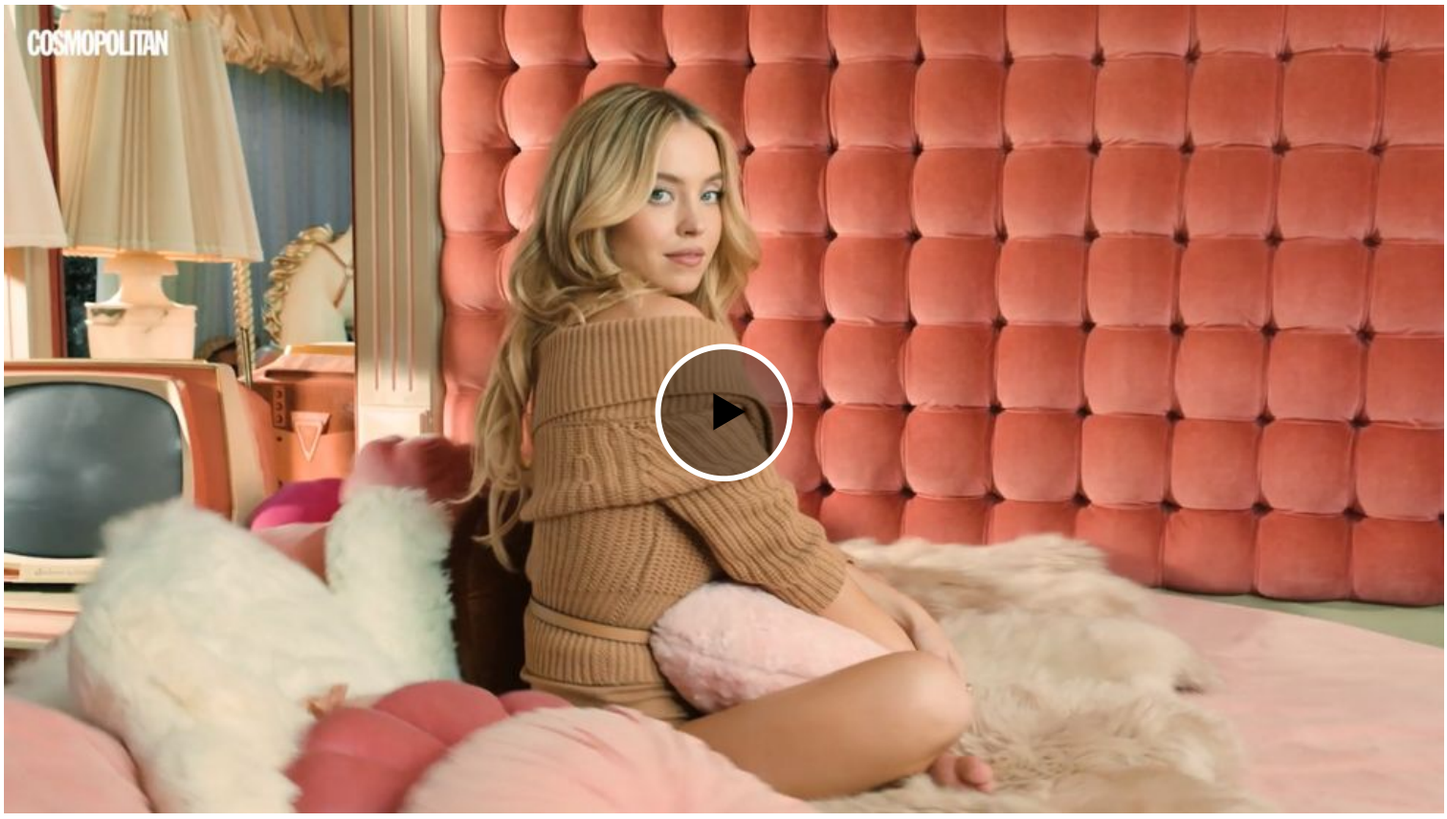


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