

PRODUCT FOCUS

Brush Off

The perfect makeup application depends on having the right brush.

With so many different shapes of makeup brushes and fibers to choose from today, deciding which brush to use is not always easy. "Throughout the years, different hair and hair blends have been utilized in brush-making, resulting in an enormity of different grades and types of hair, including goat, pony, squirrel, sable and synthetic," says Karen Bock, founder of Brushes By Karen, which offers 400 different styles of brushes in various grades. "A makeup artist can use up to four or more different shapes just for the eye alone."

Often though, the type of product you are using determines what type of fiber you should use. "Synthetic brushes, including most foundation, lip and concealer brushes, are best for cream and liquid products," says Michael DeVellis, founder of The Powder Group, which produces seminars and workshops for makeup professionals. "Natural fibers—goat, pony, badger and sable—are best for powder." Bock says pure squirrel brushes are extremely soft and sought after by professional artists. "As a general guide, if you like a sheer application, the silkiness of squirrel hair will apply powders with a sheer, airbrush-like finish," she says.

The shape of the brush also matters. "A point or narrow tip with soft bristles is great for depositing and blending color, while angled brushes are good for drawing lines around the eyes or lips," says Luc Bouchard, a MAC senior artist. "But when using an angled blush or an eye shadow brush, you should only use one side of the brush or else it defeats the purpose of having a shape."

The density of the hair fibers is another factor to consider when selecting a brush. "A dense brush will have a tightly packed hair bundle and deposit more product, which is great for buffing product into the skin or laying down a solid application of base eye shadow," DeVellis says. "A loosely packed hair bundle will apply less product and not push it so much into the skin. This is great for dusting powder over a lid or lightly applying sparkly bronzer on the shoulders."

DeVellis says you must also consider your client's face shape when deciding on the right tool. "Look at the size of the eyelid, then choose an appropriate brush. The same brush will not necessarily make a great tool for lid application on every client," he explains. "If someone has a smaller face, you may want to use a blush brush as your powder brush. Don't always look at what the manufacturer calls the brush, look at what you need to use it for." —CARRIE WATSON



1. **ADESIGN** Cream Cheek Brush is made with a blend of pony and goat hair. 2. **MAC** 191 Square Foundation Brush is synthetic. 3. **MIRABELLA** Powder Brush is made of pliable Bai Jiang Feng goat hair. 4. **AVEDA** Flax Sticks Fine Eye Liner Brush is made of 100-percent taklon. 5. The Silk/Fiber Allover brush from **BRUSHES BY KAREN** softens highly-pigmented colors. 6. This **JAPONESQUE** Angled Foundation Brush is made of taklon. 7. The **KRYOLAN** Contour Brush is ideal for applying bronzer. 8. **SIMPLE BEAUTÉ** Squirrel Brush #13 is extremely soft and silky, perfect for sheer applications. 9. **JANE IREDALE**'s Angle Liner/Brow Brush, made of toray and taklon nylon, can be used wet or dry. 10. The Chisel Sable Fluff Brush from **BRUSHES BY KAREN** is perfect for applying eye shadow. 11. **ROYAL & LANGNICKEL** Masterpiece-Pro Powder Brush is made of squirrel hair. 12. The pure sable Angled Eye Liner/Brow Brush from **ROYAL & LANGNICKEL** creates perfect brows. 13. This goat-hair powder brush from **THE POWDER GROUP** is great when you want a light dusting of powder.

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