

Contouring and highlighting

Contouring and highlighting are one of the makeup techniques that every makeup addict should master. They can totally transform your face by playing up your features and downplaying your flaws and they usually go hand in hand.



Rule of thumb: Darker colors push back areas while lighter colors bring them forward.

So are contouring and highlighting necessary for everyone? No but everyone can definitely benefit from a little contouring and highlighting. All you need is practice and make sure everything is well-blended (seriously, who would want lines on their faces?!)

Contouring and highlighting also look best under evening lighting so if you are going to be in an environment with really bright light, I would recommend keeping it to a minimum.

What You Will Need

* To contour, you will need a color that is one to two shades darker than your foundation. You can use a brown eyeshadow, bronzer or a darker foundation.

* To highlight, you will need a color that is one to two shades lighter than your foundation. You can use a shimmery white/beige eyeshadow, a lighter foundation or a highlighter.

* I highly recommend using pressed powders or cream formulas as they are the easiest to use. Remember to pick a color that is neutral, i.e. one that is not too yellow or too pink.

Areas to Contour

- * Under your cheekbones
- * Along both sides of your nose
- * Bottom of your chin
- * Jawline
- * Creases of your eyes
- * Temples

Areas to Highlight

- * Front of the forehead
- * Along the bridge of your nose
- * Right above your cheeks
- * Inner corner of your eyes
- * Browbone
- * Center of your chin
- * Cupid's bow (lips)

Contouring with makeup can be applied to reshape certain areas to correct or minimize flaws. The basic idea is that applying tones darker than your skin color creates the illusion of shadow on areas you would like to hide, while applying tones lighter than your skin color highlights areas you'd like to emphasize. Several parts of the face and body can be manipulated by contouring and highlighting, but this article will only discuss basic contouring of face shapes (cheeks, forehead, chin).

There are six basic face shapes:



Oblong



Rectangle



Round



Square

Before you begin Color Contouring with a Client, help her get her basic face shape identified.



Heart



Diamond



Oval

oval, round, oblong, square/rectangle, heart, and diamond. Ideally, most people contour to create the illusion of an oval-shaped face, which is taken to be the model shape.

You will need a contour powder or cream (or any matte bronzer, foundation, concealer, or nude blush slightly darker than your skin color); a small, round or angled blush brush; your choice of blush color; and a highlighter (illuminating/shimmery, light powder or cream).

Oval-Shaped Face:

Characterized by: forehead and jaw are almost the same width, jaw is only slightly narrower than temples, prominent cheekbones, gently rounded hairline.

Contouring tips: since this shape is ideal, there's not much to be done. You may either lightly contour right below your cheekbones or skip it all together. Apply blush starting directly below the outer part of the iris (of your eye), and blend along your cheekbones towards the top of the ear. Apply a highlighter to the top of your cheekbones (above the blush), and bring it up to the brow-bone in a C shape around the eye.

Round Face:

Characterized by: equal length and width, small forehead, fully-rounded jaw, full/wide cheeks.

Contouring tips: contour on either side of the jaw up to the earlobes. Also contour along the hollows of your cheeks (right below cheekbones). Apply blush vertically from the center of the apples of the cheeks to slightly below your lip corners, then blend along the hollows of the cheeks along with the contour. Highlight above your cheekbones, middle of forehead, and center of chin.

Oblong:

Characterized by: long and slender, narrow chin or high forehead.

Contouring tips: contour along the hairline and jaw line. Apply blush to the outer edges of your cheekbones (start from and focus color on apples of cheeks, then blend horizontally toward ears). Highlight right above the blush.

Square/Rectangle:

Characterized by: square/strong/sharp jaw line, sometimes square hairline.

Contouring tips: apply contouring shade to either side of forehead and jaw line, then lightly blend toward center of face. Blush placement should start at the apples of the cheeks and then blended toward the upper half of the ears. Highlight right above the apples of the cheeks, center of forehead, and center of chin.

Heart:

Characterized by: wide hairline and temples, narrow/pointy chin.

Contouring tips: contour either side of forehead and temples. Blend temple contour along outer cheekbones. Apply blush to the apple of the cheeks and blend toward the top of the ear. Highlight jaw line.

Diamond:

Characterized by: narrow forehead and chin, wide cheekbones.

Contouring tips: contour along the outer corners of the cheekbones. Apply blush in a curved shape starting at the apple of the cheeks and blending out toward the hairline. Highlight either side of the forehead and jaw.

Using these techniques should slightly change your face shape and enhance the overall look of your makeup. Make sure that all of your work is well blended so that it seems natural. If your face is a combination of some of the basic shapes (which is not uncommon), try combining the techniques for those shapes and see which combination works out best for you. Have fun!