

## Sun Protection

As the summer season begins in most of the country, it is essential to understand how to defend yourself against harmful UV rays and dehydration. Although it is most dangerous over these next few months, the risk continues year-round. Don't let overcast, cooler days fool you. On days when you don't feel the heat, it is easier to forget about sun protection, increasing your risk of sunburn and UV ray exposure.

### Cover up

The best possible answer to staying safe in the sun is to cover up as well as you can. Don't wear just anything; most materials don't block the harmful UV rays that can cause skin damage and even cancer. Make sure the material you are covering up with is at least UPF-30 — UPF-50 material is better. I wear Simms fishing products because they're UPF-50 and light, comfortable and designed specifically for anglers.

Start with a great hat. There are two types of hats that can protect you well. The first type is a wide-brimmed hat that will protect you while also providing shade, which is the kind that I wear. The other type is a baseball style cap with flaps that cover the sides and back of your neck and ears.

For face protection, a buff or gaiter, as Simms refers to it, is an excellent way to protect more of your head and face. With a gaiter, you can get away with wearing a regular cap while the gaiter will protect your neck, ears and face.

For your upper body, go with a long sleeve shirt with the UPF-30 or UPF-50 rating. A long sleeve shirt is much more protective than a short sleeve shirt with sun block. The Simms shirts that I wear are protective and stylish. On tournament days, I am wearing my tournament shirt most of the time, which is also long sleeved. If you choose to wear short sleeves, get a pair of sun sleeves to wear underneath to protect your arms. As anglers, we spend a lot of time driving. Your vehicle windows do not provide proper UV protection, so a quality sun sleeve, especially on your left arm, will help to prevent damage from UV rays.

And don't forget your hands. I wear the Simms sun gloves, but there are plenty of other brands. No matter which you choose, make sure the glove covers as much of your hand as possible. Also, be sure they are comfortable to fish in all day. Having a pair of gloves that infringe on your fishing enough that you avoid wearing them does you no service. Check out your local retailers and find a comfortable pair of gloves you can fish in all day.

For pants, wear whatever is comfortable as long as it is UPF-50. On most days, I wear full-length, lightweight UPF-50 pants. Sometimes I wear shorts, but when I do I make sure to use a high-end sunblock for protection. There are lots of quality sunblock products that are waterproof. Find a brand you like and keep some in the boat and some in the truck. Make sure the sunblock

you choose blocks a wide spectrum of harmful UV rays. Reapply the sunblock two to three times a day for the most effective protection.

Shoes present a dilemma. I know most anglers wear flip-flops or some other form of sandal. I've done that, too. Now I am wearing wool socks and shoes. Believe it or not, I am actually quite comfortable in the wool socks. They wick moisture away from my foot and breathe well, keeping my feet cooler than expected. Cotton is terrible. Not only is it hot, but it doesn't block most of the sun's harmful rays.

### **Don't forget your eyes**

A nice pair of sunglasses will protect your eyes from the harmful UV light that you get not only from above, but also as a reflection in the water. I wear Kaenon Kore sunglasses with either the C12 (copper lens) in low light conditions or the G28 (gray lens) for brighter days. No matter what brand you choose, always make sure to wear sunglasses to protect your eyes while you fish.

### **Hydration**

The sun can be harmful to your skin, but days of fishing in intense sun also carry the risk of dehydration. Stay hydrated by drinking lots of water. Be sure to eat, as well; it is all too easy to go all day without eating when it is hot outside. I like to eat a lot of fruits and vegetables on the water. Also, a mixed fruit shake can fuel your body and cool you down at the same time. I drink a variety of mixed fruit shakes on the water. Find one you like; just make sure it doesn't have a lot of chemicals and unnatural sugars in it.

### **Replenish**

After a day on the water, a good shower to remove the sunblock from your skin is vital. More importantly, you'll need to replenish your skin with some moisture. I use Jafra's Royal Jelly as a lotion every day to keep my skin balanced.

The sun can be dangerous in many ways. Cover up, stay hydrated and replenish your skin to stay protected. Lesley and I have dealt with and have seen many friends deal with issues caused by the sun. Don't let it get you. Protect yourself!