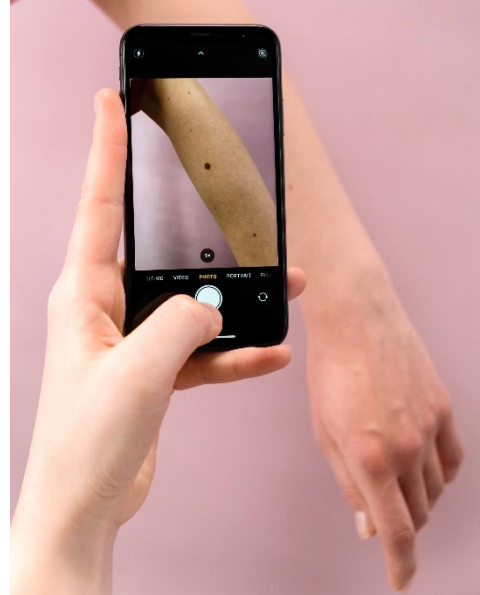


# How to Perform a Skin Self-Exam

When identified and treated early, skin cancers are highly curable. Checking your skin from head to toe every month is a simple and potentially life-saving way to spot any changes and recognize warning signs of skin cancer.

A thorough self-exam requires the following simple supplies: a bright light, a full-length mirror, a hand mirror, two chairs or stools, and a blow-dryer. Be sure to document your findings by writing them down or use your phone to take pictures.



1. **Examine your face** – especially your nose, lips, mouth, and ears — front and back. Use one or both mirrors to get a clear view.
2. **Inspect your scalp** – Thoroughly inspect your scalp, using a blow-dryer and mirror to expose each section to view. Get a friend or family member to help if you can.
3. **Check your hands** – Palms and backs, between the fingers and under the fingernails. Continue up the wrists to examine both the front and back of your forearms.
4. **Scan your arms** – Standing in front of the full-length mirror, begin at the elbows and scan all sides of your upper arms. Don't forget the underarms.
5. **Inspect your torso** – Focus on the neck, chest, and torso. Lift the breasts to view the undersides.
6. **Scan your upper back** – With our back to the full-length mirror, use the hand mirror to inspect the back of your neck, shoulders, upper back, and any part of the back of your upper arms you could not view in step 4.
7. **Scan your lower back** – Using both mirrors, scan your lower back, buttocks, and backs of both legs.
8. **Inspect your legs** – Sit down; prop each leg in turn on the other stool or chair. Use the hand mirror to examine the genitals. Check the front and sides of both legs, thigh to shin. Then, finish with ankles and feet, including soles, toes, and nails (without polish).

If you see something **new**, **changing**, or **unusual**, contact your dermatologist or healthcare provider right away. This includes:

- A growth that increases in size and appears pearly, transparent, tan, brown, black, or multicolored.
- A mole, birthmark, or brown spot that increases in size, thickness, changes color or texture, or is bigger than a pencil eraser.
- A spot or sore that continues to itch, hurt, crust, scab, or bleed.
- An open sore that does not heal within three weeks.

Source: Skin Cancer Foundation ([skincancer.org](https://www.skincancer.org))