

# Black clothes can put years on you

## The side-effect of fashion's favourite colour

By Fay Schlesinger

**BLACK** has long been lauded for its ability to flatter women's figures and suit every occasion.

But the colour has a rather less flattering side-effect say the experts – it ages the face.

Black clothing can highlight dark lines under the chin, shadows around the eyes and wrinkles on the face, colour consultants say.

And it can even make those who wear it appear to have dark 'spokes', or fissures, in the iris.

While black does give the appearance of a slimmer figure by making the shadows from curves less visible, wearing it next to the face brings out the worst, explained colourist Jules Standish.

Wrinkles and sunken areas appear deeper and more pronounced, meaning the effect is more prominent in older women.

Dark scarves, hats, polo neck jumpers and high-collared coats are apparently particularly likely to emphasise ageing features of the face.

But fear not. The effect can be tempered by a splash of colour around the neck – in the form of a scarf or chunky jewellery – or a low neckline, Mrs Standish advised. 'The majority of British women will not look young and healthy with black against their faces,' she said. 'In fact, it will age their skin tone dramatically.'

'Black gives the illusion of slimming down the wearer, and designers will have us believe that it's the colour of the season and you must not be seen in anything else. But it can also bring out dark circles under the eyes

### HOW TO AVOID THE SHADOWS

■ Do not wear black in a polo neck or scarf against the face.

■ If you are going to wear a black top, have a low neckline (like Nigella Lawson, pictured) so your skin tone will reflect your face.

■ Wear a colourful scarf, shawl, stole, cape or

pashmina. Pearls or gold work with warm skin tones, silver for cooler skin tones.

■ Black worn from the waist down can be flattering on waists, hips and legs so team it with coloured tops.

■ Go for little black dresses that have colour in the top.



and lines. The effect can be as serious as making women feel drained, self-conscious and introverted.'

Just one in five of us apparently have the correct skin tone to wear black well.

Celebrity cook Nigella Lawson and actress Joan Collins are among the few who can get away with it, Mrs Standish added.

But those who should consider changing their wardrobes include actress

### 'It looks for dark things on the face'

Joanna Lumley, former *Strictly Come Dancing* judge Arlene Phillips, and socialite and model Peaches Geldof, even though she is just 19.

This is because most women in Britain have what is known as a 'warm' skin tone, based on yellow, orange and gold colours.

Wearing black detracts from the healthy-looking golden hue by 'flattening' it and bringing out tired-looking

darker patches on the face. The one in five Britons who suit black close to their faces have 'winter' complexions consisting of pale, cool and dramatic colouring.

'Warm skins do not cope well with black against their faces as it takes away all the golden glow that they have as a basic skin tone,' Mrs Standish said.

'Black instead looks for dark things on the face such as the shadows, lines and dark circles, and highlights them, particularly as women age.'

The good news for those who seek refuge in a little black dress for evenings out is that a simple test can help determine whether they can wear black well.

'Hold the colour up against your face, stand in front of the mirror and look for dark lines under the chin, shadows around the eyes or lines on the face that are highlighted,' said Mrs Standish.

'If there are no dark areas or shadows, you can probably wear black close to your face and look great – otherwise, change your ways.'

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