The 5 Best Sunscreens of 2025 (With No Microplastics)

7 MIN READ

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When it comes to sunscreen, not all formulas are created equal.

Some of the most popular drugstore picks may contain ingredients that raise red flags for both human health and environmental safety. Many popular sunscreens use one of two types of ultraviolet (UV) filters: organic (chemical) or inorganic (mineral).

- **Organic (chemical) filters** (like oxybenzone and octinoxate) absorb ultraviolet radiation and convert it into heat.
- **Inorganic (mineral) filters** (such as zinc oxide and titanium dioxide) sit on the skin's surface and physically block or scatter UV rays.

Both types of UV filters are designed to protect your skin from sunburn, premature aging, and skin cancer. But not all filters are equally safe for you or the planet.

That's why we set out to find the best sunscreens that avoid microplastics and controversial chemicals filters. These compounds have been shown in some small studies to act as endocrine disruptors in **humans and wildlife**, accumulate in **breast milk**, and contribute to **coral bleaching and marine toxicity**.

A 2025 review in ***Marine Pollution Bulletin*** found that several common chemical filters, like oxybenzone and octinoxate, can build up in the environment and harm marine life, including coral reefs, shellfish, and even tiny organisms that keep ocean ecosystems balanced. These ingredients have been detected in waters around the world, from tropical coastlines to the Arctic.

Mineral filters, like non-nano zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, which are used in many clean or reef-safe sunscreens, tend to be a safer bet when it comes to environmental impact. That said, nano versions of these minerals and sunscreens containing

microplastics or harsh additives can still pose risks.

That's why we set out to find the best mineral sunscreens that are effective, EWG-verified, microplastic-free, and low-impact on ocean ecosystems. We also spoke with **Dr. Naana Boakye**, MD, MPH, a board-certified dermatologist, who **reminded us**: "The best sunscreen is the one you'll use daily, happily, and without a cast."

Whether you want something lightweight for your face, strong enough for sport, or affordable for the whole family, these five sunscreens hit the sweet spot between effectiveness, cosmetic elegance, and peace of mind.

Some UV and Sunscreen Basics

UV Rays:

- **UVA (315–400 nanometer (nm)):** Penetrates deep into the skin, causes aging, and contributes to skin cancer via oxidative stress.
- **UVB (280–315 nm):** Causes sunburn and is directly linked to DNA damage and skin cancer.

UV Filter Types:

- **Physical (Inorganic):** Zinc oxide & titanium dioxide reflect UV light. Broad

protection. Lower allergy risk. Coral-safe.

- **Chemical (Organic):** Oxybenzone, octinoxate, avobenzone absorb UV and convert it to heat. Some are linked to hormone disruption, allergies, and coral reef harm.

How We Chose the Best Sunscreens

For this story, we spoke with Dr. Boakye who shared expert insights on choosing the most effective and skin-friendly sunscreens for people over 40. “A common mistake is choosing a sunscreen based solely on sun protection factor (SPF),” says Dr. Boakye. “It’s equally important to consider ingredients, skin type, hydration, and whether the formula offers true broad-spectrum protection.”

We evaluated dozens of products using a multi-layered screening process:

- **We cross-referenced EWG’s Skin Deep database**, only selecting sunscreens with an EWG Verified mark or ingredients with a hazard score of 2 or lower for both human and environmental safety.
- **We ran every product through the Beat the Microbead** database to ensure no hidden microplastics.
- **We prioritized mineral-based sunscreens** with transparent ingredient lists, at least SPF 30, and no oxybenzone or octinoxate.
- **Finally, we considered real-world usability**, water resistance, price, texture, finish, and user reviews, especially from those with sensitive or mature skin.

This curated list reflects our commitment to health, safety, environmental impact, and real-life performance. All picks were independently selected to meet the needs of our

longevity-minded readers.

The 5 Best Sunscreens of 2025

1. Best Water-Resistant/Sport Sunscreen:

Freaks of Nature Peak Performance SPF50

Pros:

- Water- and sweat-resistant for up to 80 minutes
- Skin-barrier-strengthening ingredients
- Dermatologist-tested and reef-safe
- Minimal white cast
- Cruelty free and vegan
- No microplastics

Cons:

- May leave a slight white cast on deeper skin tones

Freaks of Nature's Peak Performance is a high-performance mineral sunscreen that doesn't mess around with unnecessary extras. Designed for both endurance and elegance, this formula is water- and sweat-resistant for 80 minutes. It's tough enough for triathletes but smooth enough for everyday use. This non-nano mineral SPF 50 formula glides on easily with a clean, bare-skin feel that won't melt, streak, or sting your eyes. There's a portable stick format, too, that makes reapplication seamless whether you're mid-hike or mid-pickleball match.

But it's not just high performance; it's also skin-supportive. Formulated with

microbiome tech, microalgae oil, and barrier-reinforcing actives, it helps keep skin hydrated, resilient, and calm, even under environmental stress. Plus, it’s made without microplastics, chemical filters, or animal testing and packaged in ocean-bound recycled plastic for maximum impact with minimal footprint.

2. The Best Sunscreen for Face

Mad Hippie Hydrating Facial SPF

Pros:

- Doesn’t leave a white cast
- Made with hyaluronic acid and antioxidants
- Fragrance free
- Water-resistant up to 80 minutes
- Cruelty free and vegan
- No microplastics

Cons:

- Only SPF 25+
- Higher price point

Your face is one of the last places you want to exposed to the sun without a quality sunscreen, as it can promote wrinkles, reduce elasticity, and lead to early aging. **The Mad Hippie Hydrating Facial SPF** is filled with ingredients that your face will love, including zinc oxide for anti-aging, hyaluronic acid for hydration, and ferulic acid for skin firmness. The fragrance-free sunscreen also packs in carrot seed and red raspberry seed oils to protect against environmental factors.

“As we age, our skin’s moisture levels decrease. Look for sunscreens with added moisturizing ingredients like hyaluronic acid, glycerin, or ceramides to help lock in hydration,” says Dr. Boakye.

Verified reviewers rave about its lightweight, non-greasy formula that works under make-up. While the price point is higher, since you’ll only be using it on your face, the bottle will last you some time.

3) Best Sunscreen for Sensitive Skin

Mustela SPF 50 Mineral Sunscreen Stick

Pros:

- Fragrance-free, reef-safe, and certified by the National Eczema Association
- Gentle enough for babies, effective enough for adults
- Formulated with 70% organic ingredients
- SPF 50 and 19.7% non-nano zinc oxide for broad-spectrum UVA/UVB protection
- Water- and sweat-resistant for up to 80 minutes
- No microplastics

Cons:

- May leave a slight white cast
- Stick format may take longer to cover body

Mustela’s Mineral Sunscreen Stick offers no-compromise sun protection for the most sensitive skin types. With nearly 19.7% non-nano zinc oxide, it delivers SPF 50 broad-spectrum defense without synthetic filters, fragrance, or preservatives. Approved by pediatricians and dermatologists, it’s enriched with calming botanicals

and organic plant oils like avocado and sunflower to help soothe and moisturize fragile skin.

What sets it apart is its National Eczema Association Seal of Acceptance, which means it meets strict ingredient and irritancy standards for use on eczema-prone or highly reactive skin. They use 70% organic ingredients and are committed to sustainable sourcing, making this travel-friendly stick not just safe, but exceptionally trustworthy.

4) Best Tinted Sunscreen For Face

ILIA Super Serum Skin Tint SPF 40

Pros:

- Combines tinted coverage, SPF 40, and skin-replenishing actives in one
- Infused with hyaluronic acid, niacinamide, and squalane to hydrate, plump, and refine
- 30+ adaptable shades for a spot-on skin match
- Clinically shown to improve the look of dryness, blemishes, fine lines, and uneven tone
- Vegan, fragrance-free, non-comedogenic, and safe for sensitive skin
- No microplastics

Cons:

- Not water-resistant
- Must shake before use (no silicones means natural separation)
- Receives a higher hazard rating from EWG (despite low-hazard ingredients)

ILIA Super Serum Skin Tint SPF 40 blends mineral sun protection, light coverage, and active skincare into one skin-perfecting formula (Men, this isn’t just for

women). With 12% non-nano zinc oxide, it offers broad-spectrum SPF 40 while delivering a luminous finish in 30+ adaptable shades. Powered by hydrating hyaluronic acid, pore-refining niacinamide, and moisture-sealing squalane, it visibly improves dryness, tone, and texture over time. It's vegan, fragrance-free, non-comedogenic, and safe for sensitive or mature skin.

While the product is beloved and widely awarded, it's worth noting that EWG gives it a higher overall hazard rating (6–8). This isn't because the ingredients are harmful (most score 1–2 individually) but because of the lack of public UVA efficacy data and potential formulation transparency gaps. It's still considered a safe and effective choice by dermatologists and consumers alike, but worth reapplying diligently if you're outside for long stretches.

5) The Best Overall Sunscreen

Babo Botanicals Super Shield Mineral Sunscreen Lotion

Pros:

- SPF 50
- Formulated for sensitive skin
- Can be used on the body and face
- EWG Verified
- Water-resistant up to 80 minutes
- Cruelty free and vegan
- No microplastics

Cons:

- Higher price point
- May leave a slight white cast

Protecting against UVA and UVB rays, types of UV radiation, **Babo Botanicals Super Shield Mineral Sunscreen Lotion** has powerful SPF 50. The fragrance-free formula is safe for the body and face, *and* it's OK for people of all ages, including kids. This mineral sunscreen has earned the EWG Verified mark, meaning it's transparent about its ingredients and avoids potentially harmful ones.

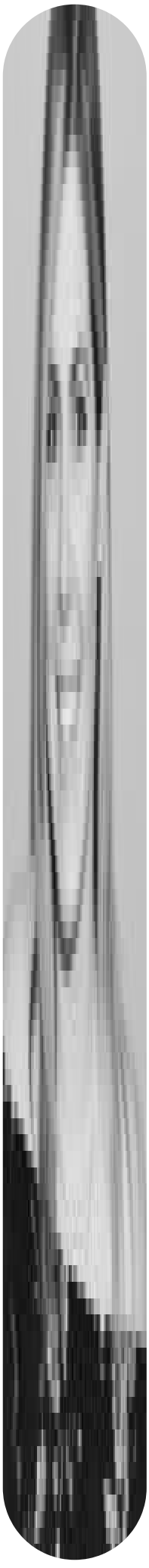
"As skin becomes more delicate and thinner with age, a higher SPF (at least SPF 30 or higher) provides better protection against UV damage," says Dr. Boakye.

This Babo Botanicals pick will cost more than you're probably used to paying for sunscreen, but its water resistance up to 80 means and cruelty-free, vegan formula are worth it.

We hope this guide helps keep you safe and healthy. **Write and let us know** if you use any of these and your experience, or tell us about your favorite sunscreen!

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