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A PROFESSIONAL ARMPIT SNIFFER HAS A THING OR TWO TO TEACH US ABOUT DEODORANT



GOOD LOOKS

by ZOE WEINER, JULY 24, 2019

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The first thing I want to tell Barrie Drewitt when I get him on the phone is: “Damn, dude—You’re brave.”

You see, Drewitt a professional underarm sniffer (technically, he’s a lead researcher at the Princeton Consumer Research Center and specializes in odor) which means his job, quite literally, the pits. It



involves researching and testing different body odors, and seeing which products work to mask them—currently, he's working closely with Secret deodorant on a project. In addition to armpits, he's also sniffed scalps, feet, and had to “give an odor grade to used tampons.” Repeat after me: I love my job, I love my job, I love my job.

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But let's back up for a second, and address why the job of “professional armpit sniffer” exists in the first place. “Companies put different claims on their products,” says Drewitt. His job is to make sure they’re legit. “So for example if a brand wants to say that something is efficacious for up to 24 hours, it means we’ll treat the area the day before and then [the tester] will come back 24 hours after the treatment, and we’ll go through a whole series of tests to make different evaluations [and see how it holds up]” says Drewitt. “That’s a typical day in the life.”

It goes without saying, Drewitt knows a thing or two about making sure your pits don’t stink. Here, he shares his top tips for smelling like daisies all day long.

Your best friend’s deodorant may not work for you

The first word of armpit-related advice that every Drewitt imparted on me was a critical one: Different deodorants work differently on different people. If you’ve ever used your boyfriend’s deodorant and found yourself sweating through it before breakfast time, you’ve likely learned this the hard way (I certainly have). “A lot of our daily routines differentiate, which means we sweat differently, and because we sweat differently, bacteria grows differently on different parts of our bodies,” explains Drewitt, adding that the “best” deodorant comes down to personal preference and individualized efficaciousness—which means there’s no general rule as to which brand, formulation, or scent reigns supreme. “I’ve tested everything from Secret to Gillette to Tom Ford to natural products to ones with aluminum, but it always comes down to personal choice. I think you’ve got to try it to get the one that works and the one you want to use.”

Clean pits are the best pits

Real talk: Swiping some DO on a set of pits that are already sweating and stinking isn’t going to do you much good (honestly, I feel like I have personally learned *all* of these deodorant lessons the hard way). “The main thing is to make sure that you’re clean, and that you’ve washed under the arms.” When you’re in the shower, give your pits a full lather and rinse and dry them completely before you apply your product.

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Once you're clean, apply product the right way

Coating your pits in deodorant may not exactly be rocket science, but there actually is a “right” way to do it. “The key thing is applying correctly,” says Drewitt. “I’ve seen so many different consumers with so many different products say, ‘it’s just not working,’ but it’s because of how they apply.” You want to cover the *entire* area, and give your armpit a nice coating of product so that it can do its job correctly.

Swipe throughout the day

Ain’t no shame in the re-application game. “Even though a product may have a 24 hour claim, there’s no harm in carrying some with you in your purse and re-applying throughout the day,” says Drewitt. “Apply two or three times a day if that’s what you have to do. Really, it’s a hygiene practice.” As in, put on deodorant if you start to stink like hot garbage, and the world will be a happier and better smelling place.

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If you think natural deodorant “just doesn’t work for you,” [read this](#). Plus, here’s what happened when one of our editors [treated her pits with CBD](#).

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