

Keep it smooth, men

When thinking of men and skin care, many would picture a man splashing water on his face, grabbing for his shaving cream, followed by a quick shave. Recently, however, the men's cosmetic industry has grown quickly, spurred by both the availability of information on skin care and new lines of products just for men.



The men's cosmetics industry has doubled its profit in the last 12 years. Most men at CNU, however, have limited their use of products to lotions and chapstick. (Audie Sumaray/The Captain's Log)

The men's cosmetics industry doubled in profit in just 12 years—from \$2.4 billion in 1997 to \$4.8 billion in 2009. This jump has given particular rise to new products for men. Several companies are now marketing lines of men's cosmetic products, such as skin care sets. The most popular products in this sector are facial cleansers, moisturizers and exfoliates.

However, these products are not the most popular for men at Christopher Newport University. Some men at CNU are totally impervious to this new trend of lotions and potions. Freshman Billy Lockard said, "I don't use anything on my face. The first time I learned to shave, I learned to dry shave. I am a real man."

Although not every guy at CNU subscribes to this belief, many stick to the basics of skin care. "I don't necessarily use a particular line of skin care, but I am more conscious of my skin. I do use a facial lotion daily though," said Senior Alan-Michael Weatherford. Becoming more aware of the effects of aging on skin has made men more conscious of the products they use.

According to cosmetics industry veteran Edward Schack, there are many factors that have helped the men's cosmetic industry grow. "I think what paved the way was the 'Metrosexual' movement several years ago. This movement allowed men to feel comfortable about using products outside the traditional shaving area," Schack said. Schack stated several other factors that opened the door to men becoming more aware of both their skin and the aging process.

“With the dawning of the Internet age, technology has provided men with information that was just not available years ago and (now we) understand the importance of active ingredients such as Resveratrol. Another factor is that today’s man wants to live a healthier life and wants to look younger. All these have led to the major surge we see today,” Schack said.

Men at CNU are definitely aware of the effect that life can have on their skin and they are taking steps to care for it.

“I am skin conscious because I want to look good and I really just hate acne. I also know that not taking care of my skin makes me more prone to be wrinkly when I get older and I don’t want that either. It also just makes me feel good to know my skin is clear,” said Junior Roy Fuller.

As men are taking steps to become more conscious of their skin, more companies are jumping on the men’s cosmetic bandwagon. Companies traditionally marketed toward women are now crossing over.

“These companies are recognizing the growing men’s area and are responding to it. Today’s man is more concerned for his overall health and well-being and a large part of that ties into taking care of his skin. Feeling healthy and looking healthy can no longer be relegated just to women,” Schack said.

These companies are promoting product sets and specific items just for men. For example, one student mentioned that he used a skin care line developed by Clinique that is just for men. In addition, other companies are trying to make men feel more comfortable with products that may seem more made for women.

“I have Nivea chapstick for men. I am not sure what makes it for men, but I like it,” said Senior Jake Frasier. “Sometimes I don’t like using chapstick because it seems like lipstick, but this is for men so I feel better about it.”

At CNU the most popular men’s products are various shaving creams and colognes. Most men use Gillette shaving cream or an electric shaver. The most popular colognes and skin care sets that CNU men use are by Polo Ralph Lauren, Axe for men, and Dove. Next time you reach for just a dry shave, remember that it is OK to moisturize and keep that skin beautiful, boys.