

Yachtmaster Tom Partridge left the UK in 2013 onboard *Adina*, his Hylas 46, to sail around the world with partner Susie Plume



**For more information**  
**British Association of Dermatologists**  
[www.bad.org.uk/sunawareness](http://www.bad.org.uk/sunawareness)  
**Cancer Research UK** [www.sunsmart.org.uk](http://www.sunsmart.org.uk)  
**Skin Cancer Foundation** [www.skincancer.org](http://www.skincancer.org)  
**The College of Optometrists**  
[www.lookafteryoureyes.org/eye-care/sun-and-sunshine](http://www.lookafteryoureyes.org/eye-care/sun-and-sunshine)

# How and why to take care of your skin



**LEFT: Check regularly for new 'moles' or existing ones that change shape or colour**



PHOTO: GRAHAM SNOOK/IM; INSET: LEFT: ALAMY

**A wide-brimmed hat protects ears, nose, neck, and any bald spots**

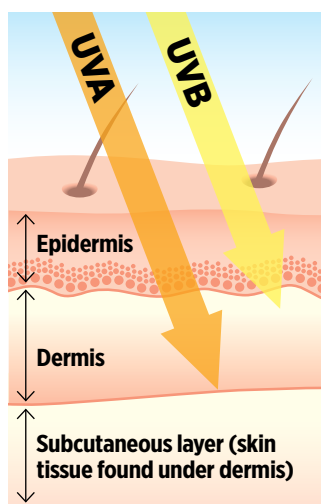
Skincare afloat is easy and inexpensive, and it's more important than ever, says Tom Partridge

**W**hen we planned our round the world voyage on *Adina*, our Hylas 46, our dreams included endless days soaking up the sun. Before setting off, a check-up with the local GP and a referral to a dermatologist forced us to become more aware of our skin and its protection.

Many people get caught out unprotected on cloudy, cool days and call it windburn. Windburn doesn't exist, it's sunburn: 30-40% of the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays can penetrate the clouds.

It's often thought that 'Sunburn is worse at sea because the water reflects UV.' In fact water reflects just 5% of UV, compared to 85% for snow. Ski wear covers and protects most of the skin though, not so for sailors.

Around 13,300 cases of malignant melanoma skin cancer were diagnosed in 2011 in the UK – that's 37 people a day. Men and women over 65 are now ten and five times more likely, respectively, to contract malignant melanoma than they were in the 1970s, a rise linked with the 1960s package holiday boom. Cruisers get more sun than most.



GRAPHIC: SKIN CANCER FOUNDATION

**Both UVA and UVB are damaging but UVB has the strongest links to skin cancer**

### How does sun damage skin?

UV radiation from the sun, in the form of UVA and UVB rays, reaches our skin. UVA rays have the longest wavelength and penetrate deepest; they are responsible for skin aging, wrinkles, and can cause skin cancer. Shorter wavelength UVB rays cause sunburn and skin damage, and are strongly linked to skin cancer.

Rather than a sign of good

health, a tan is in fact damaged skin trying to protect itself. Sunburn is the result of too much UV, which causes blood cells to swell and blood to rush in to protect your skin. This is why sunburn is red. If you do burn, stay out of the sun, apply cold compresses and take paracetamol to reduce inflammation.

### Can I spot skin cancer?

Check regularly for brown spots or patches, like moles, that appear to change in size, shape or colour. If you find one, or think you have, ask your GP for a referral to a consultant dermatologist.

For your best chance of avoiding skin cancer, there are a few easy steps you can take to protect your skin – and regardless of age, you must.

### Wear a good sunscreen

Sun Protection Factor (SPF) indicates how much protection from UVB rays a sunscreen will provide before you burn. In Britain, SPFs range from 6 to 50+. The British Association of Dermatologists recommends a minimum SPF of 30.

Buy sunscreen that provides both UVA and UVB protection – so-called broad spectrum products. A UVA rating shows protection from deeper penetrating UVA rays. In Britain, look for the five-star system, and ensure there is a EU UVA circle logo on the label.

'To cover the body of an average adult, the bare minimum you should apply is six full teaspoons of sunscreen,' says Matt Gass of the British Association of Dermatologists. 'Apply 15-30 minutes before going out in the sun, allow it to dry, then again shortly after heading outdoors. Reapply at least every two hours.' On longer passages a once-a-day sunscreen can be a good option.

Sunscreens with a 'water resistant' or 'very water resistant' rating will retain their SPF rating after 40 or 80 minutes respectively if you're swimming. Towel drying rubs it off so drip-dry or reapply.

### Wear the right clothing

Most UK sailing clothing manufacturers sell products with an SPF or UPF (Ultraviolet Protection Factor) rating, to show how much UV radiation can penetrate the fabric. A rating of 50 means 1/50th of the sun's UV rays can pass through.

The denser the fabric, the tighter the knit, the better the protection. Look for products with polyester, lycra, nylon and rayon, as these offer the best protection. Darker colours are more effective. Choose long sleeves, high collars and ideally long trousers.

Protect your face, neck and ears by wearing a hat with a wide brim all the way around. Broad-brimmed, solar topi or legionnaire hats offer the best protection.

*On a day like this you've not a care in the world – except skincare*



PHOTO ABOVE: ALAMY; LEFT: TOM PARTRIDGE

### UVA protection five-star rating system



UVA protection has a star system in the UK

Protection	UVB SPF
Low	SPF 6 - 10
Medium	SPF 15 - 25
High	SPF 30 - 50
Very high	SPF 50+

**UVA**

The UVA circle denotes protection of at least a third the labelled SPF, as recommended by the EU

Baseball caps won't protect the back of the neck and ears.

### Wear sunglasses

Long-term exposure to the sun's rays can help cause the formation of cataracts and skin cancer in delicate areas around the eye, and may contribute to the formation of age-related macular degeneration. 'I would recommend that everyone is aware of what is normal for their eyes and eyesight,' says Dr Susan Blakeney of the College of Optometrists. 'If you notice any changes in or around your eyes, or have any concerns, make an appointment with your optometrist.'

The best style of sunglasses for sailing is the type with wrap-around frames that prevent light entering from the sides of the glasses. Make sure that your sunglasses fit you well so that

they stop light entering from above and below too. Polarised lenses are a great choice as they help block glare from the water. Choose sunglasses that carry the British Safety Standard BS EN ISO 12312-1:2013 or the CE mark, which is your assurance that they meet European safety standards. You may also see the British Standard 'kitemark', which is an indication that the glasses have been independently tested.

### Protect and survive

For us nothing beats a glorious sunny day, steaming along with the sails full of wind, but look after your skin. Slap on a good sunscreen, put on your sunglasses, sport a broad-brimmed hat and wear UV-protective clothing. ▲

PHOTOS: TOM PARTRIDGE



**Look for dark fabrics with a tight weave as these offer the best protection. Many will display SPF or UVP ratings to help you choose**

**ABOVE: SPF measures protection against UVB as a multiple of the time it would take to burn without sunscreen, so with SPF30 you can get 30 times more sun without burning**

