

Why clients aren't getting tan, tanner or tannest

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The Coaching Lens

When units perform, lamps are fresh, acrylics are sound, and maintenance is on time, stalled color usually lives on the client side. Biology, medications and supplements, topicals, and routine choices can dull outcomes. The fix is coaching, not blame. Coach what you can control, teach cadence and recovery, and celebrate small wins.

Biology First

Fitzpatrick skin typing sets the ceiling. This is a 6-point scale classifying skin based on its reaction to UV light, from Type I (always burns, never tans, very fair) to Type VI (never burns, deeply pigmented), helping assess skin cancer risk and guide sun protection. Note that lower skin types need realistic targets. Endocrine shifts such as thyroid and menopause can alter turnover and melanocyte activity. Low iron or poor perfusion (blood flow) can blunt development. Mature skin often exfoliates unevenly.

Action plan: gentle minute increases, steady hydration, barrier support at night.

Medications and Supplements: Say It Right

Some products increase UV sensitivity,

while others calm pigment formation so visible depth takes longer.

Watch lists:

- **Retinoids and strong topicals:** thin the stratum corneum, keep minutes conservative.
- **Hormonal agents:** can shift response or create unevenness.
- **SSRIs and other psych meds:** may change heat tolerance, progress in smaller steps.
- **Antibiotics, antifungals, NSAIDs, acne meds:** common photosensitizers, keep times conservative.
- **Antihypertensives and diuretics:** can impact perfusion or heat tolerance, shorten if needed.
- **High antioxidant stacks (vitamin C, polypodium leucotomos):** excellent for wellness, may slow the look of depth.
- **Glutathione and NAC:** tone may look clear and even, deeper shades can take longer; pace minutes.
- **Copper and tyrosine status:** influence tyrosinase; oral L-tyrosine evidence is mixed.

Staff guideline: never advise stopping medications; suggest a physician consult for concerns.

Micro script:

"Your supplements are excellent

for skin health. Because they calm pigment signals, your color may build more slowly. We will hydrate and pace minutes so you reach your best natural shade."

Topicals and Wash Habits

Hidden SPF, zinc or titanium residues, and mineral makeup can block UV. Brighteners such as niacinamide, arbutin, kojic acid, licorice, vitamin C, hydroquinone, and azelaic acid can reduce melanin formation or transfer. Heavy balms act as occlusives, helpful at night but not before a session. High-pH washes dehydrate. Over-exfoliation strips color early. Skipping an accelerator leaves skin dry, and light scatters.

Training move: Tan Positive Shelf

- Tan-safe cleanser with no SPF residues
- In-session accelerator
- Evening barrier moisturizer

Micro script:

"Your daily primer protects you outside. In the salon, it can block light. On session days, we switch to tan-positive care."

Routine and Timing

Session spacing drives melanogenesis. Clients should follow

an every-48-hour rhythm. Stack sessions too close, and you add redness without color. Go too far apart, and momentum stalls. Hot showers, chlorine, and scrubbing right after a session undo gains. Shave the night before, not right before. Encourage electrolyte water and healthy fats.

Training move: Tan Builder Card

Confirm Fitz type, minute plan, next-visit spacing, approved cleanser and moisturizer, and hydration target. Save notes in the client account for quick staff access.

Wellness Equipment Integration

Select one support per visit to protect hydration and recovery.

Vibration plates: 3 to 5 minutes pre-UV, low to moderate intensity. Avoid with pregnancy, DVT history, recent surgery, or unstable joints.

Script: “Two minutes wakes circulation, then we tan.”

Red light therapy (PBM panels and facials): 8 to 12 minutes pre-tan as a primer, or 10 minutes post-tan for recovery. PBM does not tan; it helps skin perform.

Script: “Prime with red light, moisturize after, steady rhythm.”

Infrared therapy and saunas: brief warmup of 5 to 10 minutes if used before UV, then cool water, pat dry, apply accelerator, and tan. Best used after UV or on non-UV days. Shorten with antihypertensives, diuretics, SSRIs, or heat intolerance.

Script: “Short warmup, rehydrate, tan, longer sauna later.”

VersaSpa Pro WellFit treatments: Prep to balance pH and clear residues before UV or spray; Moist

after to lock water; Legs add-on helps below-knee lag.

Script: “Prep replaces your primer on session days so color can build.”

Cryotherapy (whole body or local): schedule after UV or on non-UV days. Do not chill right before UV. Follow device label (1.5 to 3 minutes), rewarm slowly, hydrate, and moisturize. Use caution with uncontrolled blood pressure or Raynaud’s, a condition where cold temperatures can limit blood flow

Script: “Tan first, cryo later for great recovery.”

Wellness pods, vibroacoustic cushions, gemstone mats: 10 to 20 minutes post-UV or on off days.

Script: “Recover today so the next session stacks cleanly.”

Fast Troubleshooting Flow

- Confirm equipment variables are green.
- Identify Fitz type, set a realistic endpoint.
- Scan intake: medications, supplements, brighteners, hidden SPF, exfoliants, shower and shave timing.
- Touch test for dryness. If dry, postpone UV; use WellFit Prep, red light, moisturizer, and tan next visit.
- Adjust dose and spacing, select one support device.
- Align retail and reassess in seven to ten days.

Staff Scripts That Build Trust

“Your skin is responding; it needs the right cadence. Today, two minutes on the plate, a conservative UV step, red light after, and barrier care tonight.”

“Some daily products are designed to block pigment. On session days, we switch to WellFit Prep and an accelerator.”

“Heat feels great, but a long sauna right before UV dehydrates. We will tan first, sauna later, with water and electrolytes included.”

“Cold helps recovery. We will schedule cryo after UV or on a non-UV day.”

Quick Win Stories

Dry Skin Detour: Fitz II stalled at light beige. Tan-safe cleanser, accelerator, spacing at 48 hours. Two weeks later, clear jump, no redness.

Brightening Stack Slowdown: Glutathione plus NAC, face lagged. Removed hidden SPF, boosted hydration, steady spacing. By week three, even medium tone.

Circulation Lift: Fitz II with cool extremities. Two minutes of vibration pre-UV and red light post-UV, spacing at 48 hours. Day ten, legs matched torso.

Residue Reset: Fitz III using vitamin C primer and mineral makeup. WellFit Prep plus PBM primer, sauna moved to off days. Week three, even face and chest.

Compliance Reminder

Never tell a client to stop or change a prescription. Never diagnose. Follow device labels for eyewear, distance, time, and contraindications. Use neutral language and refer medical or heat concerns to the client’s healthcare professional. Document photosensitizer and heat flags in POS notes.

Bottom Line

Coach what you can control. Standardize intake and retail. Pair one device support per visit. Teach cadence and recovery, and celebrate small gains. Clients move from not tanning to tanner to tannest with safety and predictability. ●