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Makeup on the Move: the Rise of Commuter Cosmetics



We all have tricks to shave time off our morning routine, whether it's skipping breakfast or showering the night before. Surveys reveal that as many as 67% of British women do makeup on the move. As more of us live in cities, putting on makeup on public transport is now so popular a time-saver it has forced the beauty industry to develop more portable, compact and easy-to-apply-on-the-move products, according to market research agency Mintel.

“Women are defending their right to apply makeup on-the-go,” says cosmetics analyst Charlotte Libby, who predicts the arrival of more solid formats, and products that can be applied one-handed or straight from the pack. In 2014, 4% of product launches involved on-the-go application strategies; by 2016, this figure had almost doubled. Sephora's Fingertip Eyeliner features a cap you stick on the end of your finger, so the liner feels like an extension of your own hand. Pout Case, the “world's first beauty phone case”, has a hidden makeup palette that slides down, and can hold three products. Lipstick Queen's “lip transformer” can be used safely without a mirror because the sheer colour adapts to the pH of your lips, to create a shade that flatters your skin tone.

The same goes for the cult brand's Invisible Lip Liner (£18), which creates an invisible barrier around your mouth. Minimising the volume of makeup you're carrying around also looks set to get easier thanks to clever compacts, such as Trinny London's stackable pots, with every product “formulated for fingertip application”. Fashion guru Trinny Woodall said last month: “I can do my entire makeup in two minutes without a mirror, in between tube stops,”

Women have been shamed on social media for using makeup on public transport – Tokyo's tube company even made a video asking women not to do it. But, the tide is beginning to turn: Drew Barrymore, who has her own makeup range, Flower Beauty, posted an Instagram image of her putting on mascara on the subway last summer with the caption #commuterbeauty – and transport-friendly cosmetics look set to make it even easier for women to stick their lipsticks up in protest at those who object.