

Beginners gel nail

Training manual



Beginners gel nail

Gel polish is a popular nail treatment that is known for its long-lasting, chip-resistant, high shine finish in a variety of colours.

Learn how to safely and effectively apply gel polish. This course covers:

- Nail preparation
- Gel polish application
- Gel polish removal

This course recommends Lecenté Create gel polish system.

You will work independently through the theory modules, completing a series of question and answer sections to assess your learning progress. You will have access to the gel polish training manual together with a video tutorial to guide you through the step by step process.

In addition, one of our professionally qualified trainers will be available to address your personal requirements as you work through the course content.

You will have successfully completed the course once you have worked through the theory modules, Q&A's and submitted your assessment video which we will review and provide feedback.

Supporting training manual

This manual supports the online training course, use it to help you work through the modules.

Each module includes an examination these must be completed online to move through the course, the treatment videos are available to view online at the end of module 6.

To pass the course and to gain certification pass the final examination and upload the videos requested of you performing the treatment.

The certification is accredited by The Guild of Beauty Therapists, International Practitioners of Holistic Medicine (IPHM), endorsed by HABIA and can be used to gain insurance.

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Welcome

Welcome and thank you for choosing the Ellisons beginner gel polish online training course.

You will work through the modules at your own pace, answering the end of module examinations to test your learning. You are required to submit a practical demonstration of yourself performing a gel polish nail treatment which will be assessed by an Ellisons educator.

You will have completed the course when you have passed all of the required theory, module examinations and received notification of your competent practical assessment. You will then receive an accredited certificate to download.

Please email any questions throughout your learning experience to academy@ellisons.co.uk we will respond by the next working day.

Introduction to the treatment

Gel polish is usually applied as an overlay to the natural nails and can last for 14 days or more.

Gel polish is applied in layers with the individual coats being cured in a UV or LED lamp. Gel polish enables clients to enjoy their nail colour for longer compared to traditional nail lacquer via a protective coating which allows the natural nail to grow longer, stronger and helps to prevent chips and cracks.

Available in a variety of colours and with a high shine finish, gel polish is normally removed after 14 days or when the client wishes to change their nail colour.

Gel polish should always be professionally removed to prevent damage to the natural nails.

Unit 2: Aims and outcomes

Aims and outcomes of the course

This course is designed to ensure you:

- Maintain safe and effective methods of working when providing a gel polish nail service
- Understand the structure of the nail
- Understand how to recognise nail diseases and disorders
- Effectively consult, plan and prepare for the treatment with clients
- Understand and perform the procedure required for gel polish nail service
- Recognise the features and benefits of the treatment
- Identify opportunities for your business
- Understand the importance of aftercare and communicate this effectively to clients

Features and benefits of the treatment

- Gel polish is designed to offer long lasting colour for your regular manicure clients
- Offers a variety of colours and finishes (brand dependant) suitable for all nail types
- Each coat of gel polish requires 30 or 60 seconds in LED or UV lamp (brand dependant).
Offering a long lasting, chip resistant manicure
- Easily removed to reveal, longer stronger natural nails

Allergies and overexposure

Allergic reactions to products and chemicals can happen at any time and to anyone, sensitivities can also develop into an allergy, however the risk of this can be reduced if correct working practices are followed.

It is extremely important to understand chemicals and how they should be used. Chemicals used incorrectly in the salon can have an unsafe level of exposure to nail technician and client but are completely safe when used correctly. Once an allergy to a chemical or product has developed, it is likely that the person will always be allergic.

Warning signs of an allergy developing include swelling, redness, irritation, itchy skin, blisters or headaches. The symptoms can vary from person to person and may also depend on the exposure. It can take weeks, months or even years for overexposure to present itself.

Overexposure to vapours from liquids can cause symptoms such as, headaches, nausea, dizziness, drowsiness and confusion. Dust masks do not protect against vapours from monomers, removers, acetone, nail polish and other liquids. Good ventilation is essential.

When products are used incorrectly, the risk of overexposure increases. All products should be used following the manufacturer's instructions.

COSHH regulations must always be adhered to, all chemicals should be stored and disposed of correctly. Nail technicians must follow good working practices at all times in order to reduce the risk of over exposure.

It is important that gel polish is fully cured to avoid adverse reactions. Follow the manufacturer's curing times, use a compatible nail lamp and avoid applying product too thickly. An insufficiently cured gel nail may feel hard to the touch. When 50% of the material is cured, the nail will be hard enough to file but will still contain large amounts of uncured material. This will cause the nail to be inferior with reduced adherence, resistance and longevity. When filing an under cured nail, the resulting dust will contain reactive residues. When this dust comes into contact with the skin or is inhaled, it can cause allergies.

It is important to wear gloves to protect the skin from contact with dust generated when filing nail enhancements, this dust can cause severe problems to the respiratory system and allergies when inhaled. It is irritating and dehydrating to the skin and can cause skin conditions such as dermatitis.

Dust extraction is essential when working with nail enhancements or e-files.

Allergies

Allergic reactions on the skin would usually present themselves as redness, swelling, blisters or rashes. Signs of an allergic reaction on or under the nail plate would usually appear as separation, discolouration or thickening of the nail plate/ hyponychium beneath the nail. Reactions like this can take months or even years' to develop.

If an allergic reaction occurs, remove all product from the nail by safely soaking in acetone, wash the hands in cold water and recommend the client seek the advice of a pharmacist, doctor or dermatologist.

Nail technicians and allergic reactions

Nail technicians can also become allergic to the products they work with. Following these simple guidelines will help to reduce the risk.

- Wash hands between each client with soap and water
- Wear clean gloves for every treatment
- Wear a dust mask
- Keep dust to a minimum and use dust extraction
- Always keep lids on pots when not in use
- Use only disposable tissues or couch roll on the desktop and change them regularly
- Do not touch the bristles of the brush with your fingertips
- Dispose of contaminated tissues or nail wipes immediately
- Ensure brush handles, bottle tops and pots are always clean

Creating a safe working environment

- Ensure your workspace is always clean and disinfected
- Avoid skin contact with monomers and gel products
- Use a complete system including the nail lamp
- Ensure your dustbin is lined, has a lid and is emptied regularly to minimise vapours
- Use a dust extractor and ensure you have good ventilation

Important: Avoid touching the skin with any part of the nail brush. Gel products must be used as a complete system with the matching lamp.

Salon Hygiene

The importance of good hygiene cannot be stressed enough when working within the nail industry. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), 'Hygiene refers to conditions and practices that help maintain health and prevent the spread of diseases'. Often, we associate the word 'hygienic' with cleanliness. Cleanliness is included in the concept, but hygiene means so much more. It could be described as a mindset, circumstances and practices that together, create a safe and healthy environment for you and your client.

Good hygiene practice in the salon is important to minimise the risk of transmitting disease or infections and to ensure a safe environment for the nail technician and their clients.

Always follow local authority and government guidelines and never neglect hygiene practices and procedures, doing so will increase the risk of spreading disease and put both the nail technician and the client in potential danger.

Best practices in the salon

Gloves should be worn when working with chemicals. Healthy skin is always the best protection against infections. It is therefore of great importance to take good care of your skin and keep it smooth, clean and dry. Damaged or dry cracked skin is vulnerable for chemicals or pathogens to enter the body, increasing the risk of skin reactions, bacterial and fungal infections.

Wearing jewellery can increase the risk of infection, providing an opportunity for micro-organisms to accumulate under rings and watches.

Clean gloves should be worn for every treatment. Hands should be washed as soon as gloves are removed.

Hand washing

Hand contact is the most common way for micro-organisms to be transmitted. Hand washing with soap and water for 20 seconds removes visible dirt and greatly reduces the number of micro-organisms on the skin.

Use liquid soap and disposable or individual towels when washing hands. Bacteria can survive several weeks on towels and soap bars. Wash your hands and ensure the client washes their hands for at least 20 seconds prior to starting the treatment.

Hand sanitiser

The use of alcohol-based hand sanitiser reduces the number of germs and bacteria on washed hands. It should be applied after the hands have been washed and dried using a disposable towel. This should not be used in place of hand washing, but as an additional protection.

Please note, once your client has washed and sanitised their hands, ask them not to touch their hair, face, phone or go in their handbag, if they do, they will need to wash their hands again.

Clothing

It is advisable to wear a uniform when performing nail services. Work clothes should be washed at a temperature of at least 600 C.

Masks

Dust masks may be worn to help protect the respiratory system, they protect against larger particles of dust and some viruses and bacteria. Dust extraction should also be used.

Decontamination

There are 3 methods of decontamination

- Sterilisation which kills all living organisms
- Disinfection which kills most but not all living organisms
- Sanitisation which kills some living organisms

Sterilisation

Sterilisation is the process that destroys all living organisms and their spores.

Living tissue (hair and skin) along with the hard surfaces in the salon i.e. nail stations, floors and walls cannot be sterilised. Items that can be sterilised include metal and plastic tools and implements.

Autoclave

An autoclave is the most suitable form of sterilisation for small metal tools. An autoclave is a metal container that is specifically designed to create and withstand heat and pressure. It uses high-pressure and or steam at a temperature of up to 230°C. Tools should be placed in sterile pouches which can keep them sterile once the process is complete.

Ultra-violet light

Ultra-violet light can be used to create a sterile environment for tools which have already been sterilised, however it is not considered a method of sterilisation. A UV cabinet can provide a clean environment for storage purposes.

Disinfection

Disinfection can be performed physically and mechanically.

Physical methods include heat, steam, boiling water and radiation. The best method from an environmental and efficiency standpoint is cleaning and disinfection. Metal tools should be washed and submersed in a disinfectant solution. Paper files should be washed and sprayed with a disinfection solution. A file that has come into contact with broken skin or blood must be discarded. It must never be used on another client.

Chemical disinfection methods such as hospital grade disinfectants can be up to 99.99% effective in killing all living organisms. They should be used with care and should not come into contact with the skin. All disinfectants should be capable of killing a variety of pathogens and should include bactericides, fungicides and viricides.

The most used disinfectants are those containing; - Alcohol (ethyl or isopropyl), Chlorine compounds and iodine.

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and dilute disinfectant to the correct level if required. If the concentration is too weak the mixture will not remove the pathogenic bacteria and may only act as a sanitiser.

Sanitisation

Sanitisation is the reduction of bacteria to safe levels (set by public health standards) to decrease the risk of infection. Sanitisation may not kill all viruses; however, it kills a greater number of bacteria than simple cleaning. A hand sanitising gel should not be used in place of an antibacterial hand soap with running water. Sanitising gels should be used in addition to hand washing.

Cleaning

Cleaning the salon's surfaces and floors is an important and essential part of good salon hygiene. All touch points should be cleaned and disinfected regularly; these include workstations, chairs, reception area and bathroom facilities. For treatments, disposable items should be used where possible, including files, buffers and paper towels. Metal tools and instruments should be chemically disinfected or sterilized in an autoclave

Preventing the spread of infection

Using good hygiene practices is the most important measure to prevent the spread of infection. All staff in the salon should always apply basic hygiene routines.

Viruses

Viruses are pathogenic but smaller than bacteria. Being in contact with an infected person can spread the virus. Viruses are responsible for a variety of conditions including infections of the mouth, throat, coughs, colds and flu.

Some viruses cannot be eliminated by the body despite the efforts of the immune system, can cause lifelong or chronic infections. This is often the case with hepatitis B and hepatitis C. The immune system may keep chronic infections at bay for periods of time, but certain factors may trigger the virus to become active again. For example, herpes virus which causes cold sores. Herpes is present in the body but not always active and an emerging cold or stress may cause it to flare up.

Since viruses change and adapt, new viruses will keep emerging, some of these do have the ability to pose a global threat and pandemic.

Fungus

The category of fungus includes yeasts, rusts, mould and mushrooms. They are widespread and can be found in the soil, air, on plants, animals and humans.

Some species of fungus can infect and cause disease in humans. The most common route of infection is damaged skin.

The yeast *Candida albicans* is opportunistic and usually inhabits the mouth, throat, colon and reproductive organs without causing any problems. Disease, age and hormonal changes can however, cause the candida to grow out of control. The result is a fungal infection. Some fungal species can infect our feet and nails.

Parasites

Parasites are organisms that live on, or in a host organism. The relationship is only beneficial to the parasite and may cause a disease in the host. Bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasitic worms, lice, scabies, fleas and ticks may all be categorised as parasites. They constitute a large group that can be divided into two groups, either ectoparasites, which live on the body of the host, these include ticks, fleas, leeches and lice, or endoparasites, which are found inside the body.

Parasites sometimes need a third organism to carry them into or onto the host body. A good example of this is malaria, which is caused by mosquito bites. They can also be transferred directly from an animal to a human, as in fleas jumping from an animal directly to a human. They can also spread via contaminated food, water or soil.

Illness and infections

The incubation period of a disease is when the risk of transmission is at its highest. In this phase, symptoms have seldom started to show and the infected person has not yet started to feel ill. They may not be aware they can transmit the infection.

This emphasises the importance of always implementing a good hygiene routine. If good hygienic practices are always in place, the risk of transmission at the salon is constantly very low. All clients should be treated in the same way. Hands, files, tools, surfaces and instruments should always be kept clean. It is not appropriate for a nail technician to work whilst they are ill or with any active infection.

Eye protection

The use of an electric file spreads dust particles and larger debris that can be harmful and irritate the eyes. It is therefore recommended that the nail technician use protective eyewear such as safety goggles, reading or prescription glasses offer good protection against dust and any debris.

Risk assessment

A full risk assessment must be performed before providing nail services on clients. The purpose of a risk assessment is to -

- Identify hazards
- Decide who could potentially be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks and decide on the precautions
- Record your findings
- Review your risk assessment and update if necessary

Look around your workplace and think about what may cause harm (these are called hazards). Consider -

- How people work and what equipment is used
- What chemicals and substances are used
- What safe or unsafe work practices exist
- The general state of your working environment

Look back at your accident and ill health records as these can help you identify less obvious hazards. Take account of non-routine operations, such as maintenance, cleaning or changes in production cycles.

Think about hazards to health such as manual handling, use of chemicals and causes of work-related stress.

For each hazard, think about how employees, clients or members of the public might be harmed.

Assess the risk(s)

Once you have identified the hazards, decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how serious it could be. This is called assessing the level of risk and should consider the following -

- Who might be harmed and how
- What you're already doing to control the risks
- What further action you need to take to control the risks
- Who needs to carry out the action
- When the action is needed by

Control the risk(s)

Look at what you're already doing and the controls you already have in place. Ask yourself -

- Can the hazard be eliminated altogether
- If not, how can I control the risk to eliminate harm

If you need further controls, consider -

- Working effectively and hygienically to reduce exposure to chemicals
- Identifying and implementing practical measures needed to work safely
- Providing personal protective equipment and make sure all workers are wearing it

Put the controls you have identified in place. You are not expected to eliminate all risks but you need to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm. This means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the real risk in terms of money, time or liability.

Product storage

Storage

Ensure that all products are stored in their original containers, then place in a cool, dry, dark area out of direct sunlight.

Gels are cured by UV light so it's important to keep your pots of gel away from the UV lamp and any sunlight, however minimal, as this will cure your whole pot of gel, or any gel left on your brush, and you will be unable to use it

Never store chemicals with or near food, the food can easily absorb the vapours which could be ingested when consuming the food.

Safety data sheets (SDS)

Material Safety Data Sheets provide chemical information on each product. Important information found on SDS includes

- All potentially hazardous ingredients in the product
- Information to help you avoid potential hazards
- Handling and proper storage of products
- How to prevent fires, falls, burns, and other accidents
- Warning signs of overexposure

Copies of all material safety data sheets can be obtained from Ellisons hair and beauty.

Legislations

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

Employers should make formal arrangements for maintaining and improving safe working conditions and practices. This includes competency training and risk assessments.

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence regulations (1995)

Employers should report any such cases to the HSE Incident Contact Centre. This includes loss of sight, amputation, fracture and electric shock. In all cases where a personal injury of any type occurs, it should be recorded in an accident book.

Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations (1981)

Whatever the size of your business, you should ensure that you have a first aid kit on site and an eyewash bottle. You should ensure the first aid kit is fully stocked at all times.

There should be at least one person on hand to take charge in an emergency, this person should hold a HSE approved basic first aid qualification. You can contact the HSE on 0845 345 0055 for a list of suitable training providers.

Manual Handling Operations Regulation (1992)

This is relevant wherever manual lifting occurs to prevent skeletal and muscular disorders. The employer should undertake a risk assessment for all activities involving manual lifting.

Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations (1992)

This covers the use of display screens and computer screens. This specifies the acceptable levels of radiation emissions from the screen, as well as identifying the correct posture and the number of rest periods.

Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (1998)

This states the duties for any users of equipment. It identifies the requirements in selecting and maintaining suitable equipment, as well as the training and safe use of it.

The Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at Work Regulations (2002)

This requires employers to identify activities which require special protective clothing, which must then be made available.

Cosmetic Products (safety) Regulations (2008)

These regulations require that cosmetics and toiletries are safe for their intended purpose and comply with labelling requirements.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (2005)

All premises must have adequate means of dealing with a fire and all members of staff should know where these are. This can include fire extinguishers and blankets; however, you should only operate a fire extinguisher if you have been properly trained to do so. All equipment should be checked and maintained regularly.

Fire drill notices should be clearly displayed and should inform people of what to do in case of a fire. All staff should be trained in the location of alarms, exits and meeting points.

Electricity at Work Regulations (1989)

Electrical items are potentially hazardous and should be used and maintained properly.

You should always ensure that you are fully trained on a piece of equipment before operating it. All electrical equipment should be regularly PAT tested to ensure it is safe to use. If any equipment is deemed to be faulty or unsafe, you should stop using it immediately and report the problem.

Ensure the equipment is clearly marked as faulty until the problem has been corrected to avoid it being used by other members of staff.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

COSHH regulations cover the essential requirements for controlling exposure to hazardous substances and for protecting people who may be affected by them. You should carry out a COSHH assessment to identify all chemicals, products or other substances that could cause harm.

A substance is hazardous if it can cause harm to the body. It poses a risk if it is inhaled, ingested, in contact with the skin, absorbed through the skin, injected into the body or introduced to the body through cuts.

Always check the ingredients and instructions of all products to see what they contain and ensure they are stored properly. If the product could cause harm, it should be listed on your COSHH assessment, together with what the risk is and who is at risk from it.

Next, decide on the degree of risk and who to minimise that risk. If you can, try to replace high risk products with lower risk ones. Never leave chemicals identified as hazardous in areas accessible to the general public. COSHH substances include both those used for treatments and cleaning.

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (1982)

A special treatment license will be required if you perform treatments such as massage, electrolysis, ear piercing and tattooing, as they may produce blood and body tissue fluid. Each Local Authority in the UK has different requirements so you should contact them to see whether they require you to hold a license for the treatments you offer.

Consumer Protection Act (1987)

This act aims to protect the customer from unsafe or defective services or products. All staff should be trained in using and maintaining products.

Sale and Supply of Goods Act (1994)

This states that goods must be as described and of satisfactory quality. They should be fit for purpose and safe for use. It is the responsibility of the retailer to correct a problem where the goods are not as described.

Trade Descriptions Act (1968 and 1972)

These acts prohibit the use of false descriptions of goods or services. Information must always be accurate, false comparisons must not be made and misleading price comparisons must not be made. A product may not be of a 'reduced' price if it has not been available at the higher price for a minimum of 28 days.

Disability Discrimination Act (1996)

You should ensure that clients are not discriminated against on the grounds of disability. You cannot use this as a reason to refuse to provide a service, provide a service to a lesser standard or fail to make reasonable adjustments. The premises must be able to facilitate access for disabled people.

The Equality Act (2010)

Gives disabled people important rights of access to everyday services. Service providers have an obligation to make reasonable adjustments to premises or to the way they provide a service. It may take only minor changes to make a service accessible.

Module examination

Complete the module examination online to move to the next module.

The structure of the nail

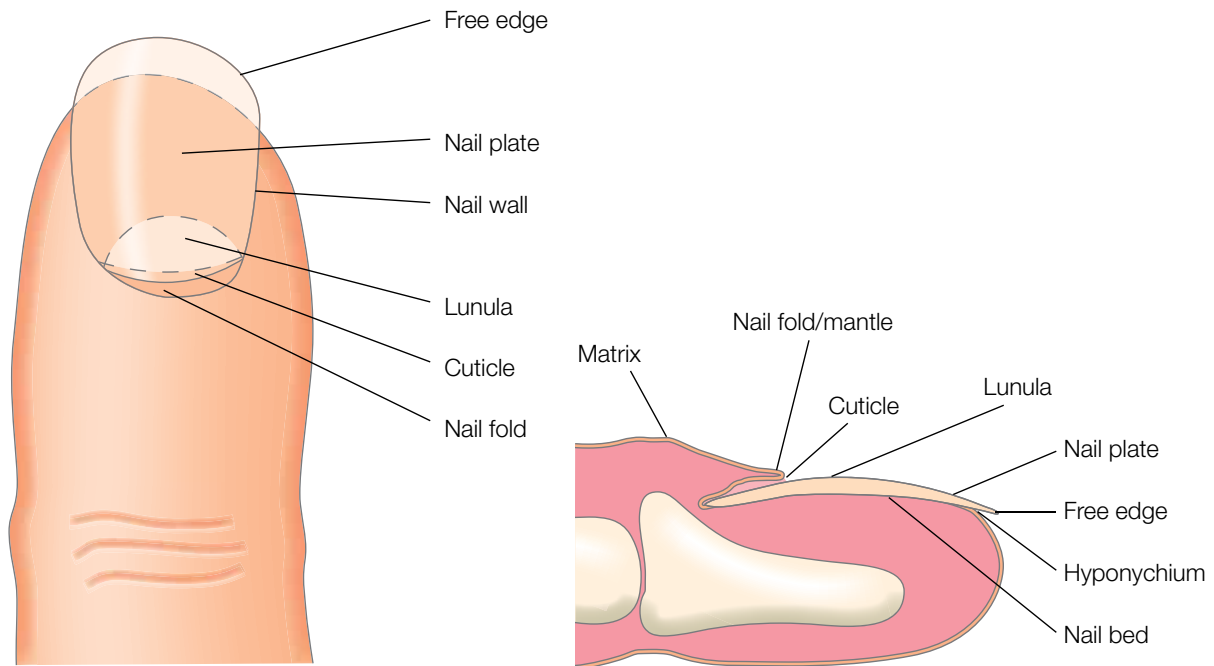


Illustration by Edwin Allan MA (Oxon)

Nail wall

This is the name given to the cuticle and the skin surrounding it. If the cuticle is allowed to adhere to the nail it will be pulled forward as the nail grows and will eventually split, causing hang nails.

Matrix

This is directly under the proximal nail fold and it is where new cells are reproduced. It is the living part of the nail where new cells are formed that push old cells forward which form the nail plate itself. A rich blood supply ensures healthy nails. The quality and health of the cells which are produced here determine the strength, quality and general condition of the nail which will, months later, appear as the free edge. Permanent damage to the matrix will produce faults and flaws that appear in the nail plate.

Lunula or half moon

This is the crescent shape which is the only visible part of the matrix. It is not always visible although it can usually be seen on the thumb nails and is mostly absent from the little finger.

Never try to force the cuticle back to reveal the half moon, this will damage the growing part of the nail.

Nail plate

This is the visible part of the nail from the lunula to the free edge. It is composed of compressed skeleton cells which contain neither blood nor nerves and which were originally produced in the matrix. These cells lie in three layers which are held together by a minimal amount of moisture and fat. The cells of the nail are hard as they contain a protein called keratin, it is this that gives nail cells their texture.

Nail bed

This appears almost as a continuation of the matrix with the appearance of ordinary skin. It acts as a support for the nail plate. The nail plate adheres to the nail bed by means of minute ridges present on both the underside of the nail and the nail bed.

Free edge

This is the part of the nail that is free of the nail bed and protrudes from the fingertip. It is because of this protrusion that the edge is vulnerable to damage from many causes e.g. collision with heavy objects, incorrect filing etc. The skin beneath the free edge is called the hyponychium. It is essential to file this area correctly with a nail file. Incorrect filing can result in a flaking condition.

Nail groove

This is the channel on each side of the nail on which the nail moves as it grows.

Cuticle

This is the thin semi-circular piece of the skin that overlaps the nail. The cuticle is also called the perionychium.

Nail mantle

The area of the skin behind the cuticle above the nail fold or root (epidermis). This provides a junction between the cuticle and the skin of the finger.

Fold/root

Approximately one fifth of the nail plate lies beneath the nail fold or root at the base of the nail.

Contra-indications

A contra-indication is a pre-existing condition which will prevent or restrict the treatment.

Restrictive contra-indications must be avoided and may require the treatment to be adapted. It is important to explain how the treatment will be adapted and to ensure the client understands the reasons why.

Contra-indications which prevent the treatment should be avoided until the client seeks medical assistance or the condition has resolved.

Contra-indications that will prevent the treatment include –

Whitlow

Highly contagious bacterial infection.

Impetigo

Highly contagious bacterial infection that is characterised by inflammation, blisters pustules and yellow crusts.

Allergies

Indicative by swelling, rash, itchiness, blisters, soreness and open sores.

Verrucas and warts

Warts are small, rough lumps that often develop on the skin of the hands and feet. When they affect the feet, they are called verrucas.

Fungal Infections

A common condition which begins as a white or yellow spot under the tip of the fingernail or toenail. As the infection spreads, the nail fungus may cause discolouration, the nail plate will thicken and begin to crumble.

Onychomycosis

Fungal Infection. Fungal spores have a tough and durable exterior which allows them to lie dormant until the environment is suitable for them to grow and reproduce, creating a yellow colour on the nail plate.

Paronychia

An infection of the sidewalls characterised by swollen red tissue; sometimes pus filled.

Onycholysis/nail separation.

The nail plate becomes separated from the nail bed. Trauma to the nail or surrounding area or an allergic reaction can be the cause.

Psoriasis

Characteristics are painful itching overgrowth of skin cells. Nails can also be affected and become severely pitted and be accompanied by Onycholysis. This may be a hereditary condition and is not contagious. Nails should be kept at a short and sensible length.

Tinea unguium/Ringworm

Highly contagious and caused by a vegetable parasite which invades the free edge and spreads down towards the cuticle.

Onychophagia/severe nail biting

This habit is responsible to a vast number of nail deformities and is usually accompanied by biting of the skin surrounding it. It can lead to nails and skin becoming infected by disease. No enhancements should be applied to these nails until the nail and the cuticles have healed.

Pseudomonas

A bacterial infection usually caused by bacteria or moisture becoming trapped within the nail enhancements.

Beau lines

Horizontal lines which may appear slightly dark in colour. There are many factors that cause this condition, including dehydration, ageing and exposure to harsh chemicals.

Onychauxis

The nails are abnormally thick and can be the result of many health factors.

Onychorrhexis

Nails are brittle and often split vertically, peeling or have vertical ridges. This can be a result of using strong chemicals or solvents. It could also be hereditary.

Koilonychia

Also known as spoon nails. The nails are concaved in the centre and raised at the edges. This condition can be caused by trauma or an iron deficiency.

Melanonychia

Recognised by a vertical pigmented band that forms at the matrix.

Ptergium

This is an inward advance of skin over the nail plate at the free edge caused by damage to the nail or surrounding area.

Onychocryptosis

Commonly known as in-growing nails. There can sometimes be an infection where the nail has grown into the skin tissue.

Epilepsy

If severe, fitting and seizures can be triggered by flickering lights, especially when switching on UV lamps or foot spas.

Hypersensitive skin

Anyone with hypersensitive skin should avoid any products that have a high level of chemicals or stimulants such as cinnamon or caffeine to prevent reaction. A patch test is advisable on a small area of skin on the inside of the arm prior to any treatment.

Contra-indications that may restrict the treatment include -

- Minor nail separation
- Asthma
- Phlebitis
- Oedema
- Minor eczema or psoriasis (not active)
- Slightly bitten or damaged nails
- Leuconychia (white spots)
- Ridged nails
- Hangnails
- Splinter haemorrhage
- Lamellar dystrophy (splitting or peeling nails due to lack of moisture)
- Asthma
- Broken bones
- Hypersensitive skin
- Thin/damaged nails
- Pregnancy
- Medication

Module examination

Complete the module examination online to move to the next module.

Beginners gel nail

Unit 1 : Equipment required

Module 5: Equipment and product knowledge

Equipment required

- Client record card
- Manicure table or trolley
- A selection of towels
- Cotton wool
- Tissues
- Cuticle tool
- Cuticle nippers
- Nail prep/dehydrator
- Primer
- Base coat
- Colour coat
- Top coat
- Inhibition layer remover
- Cuticle oil
- Selection of nail files and buffers

Product knowledge

Nail cleanser/ Lecenté nail prep and dehydrator

Easily cleanse, dehydrate and remove debris from the nail plate before applying gel polish.

Apply using a lint free nail wipe and allow to dry before applying base coat.

Nail primer/ Lecenté universal primer

Primers are an optional addition to increase adhesion and longevity to a nail service.

An acid free primer is an alkaline substance and contains ingredients that causes a temporary change in the pH of the natural nail which is acidic. Changing the pH of the natural nail helps the product adhere to the nail plate.

The nail surface returns to its natural pH state after 20 minutes. Ensure the primer is only applied sparingly to the nail plate and does not touch the surrounding skin.

Thorough preparation of the nail plate, including the application of the chosen primer can help eliminate service breakdown and encourage longer wear.

- Ensure the primer is only applied to the nail plate and does not touch the surrounding skin
- Acts as a double-sided adhesive for all types of Lecenté gel products
- Remains sticky
- Apply sparingly – too much reduces the adhesiveness and product will not stick as well

Base coat/ Lecenté Create original base coat

Base coat should be applied directly on to a prepared, clean and dry nail plate. Creates a bond between your client's nail plate and their chosen colour.

Cure in a UV or LED nail lamp according to manufacturer's instructions.

Apply in a thin layer leaving a tiny free margin around the cuticle and side walls.

Seal the free edge for optimal performance.

Cure for 30 seconds in the Lecenté lamp.

Lecenté Create solid bond base coat (HEMA)

A multi-use, medium thickness base coat for natural nails. Provides additional strength and support to natural nails when the nail condition requires it. Features 'smoothing' properties which will help to rectify spoon shape and ridged nails.

The perfect solution for those clients who require some extra strength and help with longevity. Beneficial for clients who have some ridging or shaping issues. This base coat is suitable for clients who need a base with greater support than original base.

- HEMA content 5-10%.
- System removal time is between 10 and 15 minutes depending on condition of client's nails and application method
- Base and top coats do not need to match. Use the combination that best suits your client's needs
- Cure for 60 seconds in the Lecenté lamp

Lecenté Create rubber base coat

A flexible base coat offering additional strength for problem natural nails including: brittle; dry; thin; splitting and flaky natural nails. Ideal for clients with longer natural nails or clients who require more strength and support.

- Hema Free
- Rubber base coat can be applied in several coats or sculpted depending on your client's needs
- System removal time is between 10 and 15 minutes depending on condition of client's nails and application method
- Base and top coats do not need to match, use the combination that best suits your client's needs
- Cure for 60 seconds in the Lecenté lamp

Lecenté fusion builder gel

Suitable for every nail type. Can be used as a base coat and as a builder gel to create natural overlays and short extensions, also suitable for nail repairs. Available in 4 colours: Au Naturel, Naked, Birthday Suit and Naked (clear).

- HEMA/Di-HEMA, vegan and cruelty free
- No primer or bonder needed
- Great for heavy handed clients
- Flawless and effortless self-leveling properties
- Low heat formula reducing any experience of burning
- Begin by capping the free edge then apply a thin coat of Fusion builder gel by scrubbing onto the natural nail.
- Cure for 60 seconds in the Lecenté lamp

Colour coat/ Lecenté Create colour coat

Perfect for natural nails, on fingers or toes for instant, long lasting, vibrant colour. Brush on for even coverage and long wear. Cure under an LED or UV lamp according to manufacturer's instructions for perfectly manicured nails.

Using the Lecenté Create system. Brush on for smooth, even coverage then cured for long wear in the Lecenté Create lamp. Provides a long-lasting, fade resistant colour layer to nails. Requires only one or two coats for full colour coverage.

- Lasts for 14 days or more
- Strong yet flexible
- High pigment
- Unique finishes – glitters, micas, cremes, sheers etc

Lightly shake to blend. After applying and curing Lecenté Create base coat, 'float', a thin, even layer of Lecenté Create colour coat. Build up the colour until it is even in appearance. Cure for 30 or 60 seconds (cure times on back of bottle) in the Lecenté Create lamp. Follow with Lecenté Create top coat.

Ensure you leave a tiny free margin and seal the free edge and side walls for optimal performance.

Top coat/ Lecenté Create top coat

One coat and super shiny to seal colour and nail designs. The protective finish creates a chip resistant coating for a long lasting nail service.

Cure in an LED or UV lamp according to manufacturer's instructions.

Lecenté Create top coat

The final step in the Lecenté Create system. Super shiny formula that provides a protective coating for all nail types. Encases glitters and colours beautifully.

Also available in a Matte Finish. A velvety, super clear matte that maintains its finish.

- Glass like mirror shine
- Built in resin strengthener
- 'Tack Free' formula

Ensure full and thorough capping of all edges for optimal performance. Prior to removal, remove top coat to enable easy penetration of acetone. Cure for 30 seconds in the Lecenté Create lamp.

Lecenté Create soak off top coat (HEMA)

A soak off top coat that does not require any filing prior to removal. It can be built up to perfect the nail shape.

- HEMA content 20-30%
- System removal time is between 10 and 15 minutes depending on condition of client's nails and application method
- Base and top coats do not need to match – use the combination that best suits your client's needs
- 60 Second cure in the Lecenté Lamp

Lecenté Create rubber top coat

Slightly thicker in consistency than original Lecenté Create top coat. A soak off product which offers flexibility with the natural nail.

- HEMA free
- Apply in 2 coats for added stability
- Removes without pre-filing
- System removal time is between 10 and 15 minutes depending on condition of client's nails and application method
- Base and top coats do not need to match – use the combination that best suits your client's needs.
- 60 second cure in the Lecenté Lamp.

Cuticle oil

Cuticle oil is designed to be used at the end of your nail services to hydrate and moisturise the nail and skin to help repair any damage.

Lecenté LED nail lamp

The Lecenté LED lamp, when used according to recommended exposure times, produces a complete cure necessary to ensure proper adhesion, toughness, and wearability of all Lecenté light-curable nail systems.

- 36 evenly spaced bulbs to ensure full and proper cure
- Removable metal base plate for pedicures and can easily be cleaned with disinfectant or acetone to remove gel
- Metal base plate allows for all round curing including beneath the nail plate
- Acetone safe
- 90 second low heat function
- Cures in half the time of UV
- No bulb replacement
- Easy to use pre-set controls
- Uniformed drying
- No assembly required
- One part power lead
- Two-year warranty

Nail files

Nail files are usually labelled with two numbers which indicate the grit or strength of the file. When the two numbers are the same, each side of the file has the same grit. When the numbers are different, it indicates two different grits. For example, 180/180 grit file means both sides of the file are the same grit and there are 180 grits to every one square centimetre across the file. A 100/180 grit means that each side of the file has a different grit.

When the number is higher, the file is always softer and when the number is lower the file is more abrasive. For example, an 80/80 grit file is one of the sharpest and most abrasive files available.

Always ensure you prepare a new nail file before first use, the sides and edges are sharp and can easily cut through a client's cuticle and sidewalls. Remove sharp edges by using two files, filing flat side of the first file to edge of the second file.

Nail buffers

Nail buffers also identified by numbers, they are made from sponge which makes them more delicate and softer than a nail file. Buffers are used to refine the surface of a nail and to bring shine to artificial nails. Buffers usually start at 220/240 grit, a higher number indicates a softer, less abrasive buffer.

Most gels contain an oligomer, monomer, photo initiator and pigments.

The contents and amounts of the different ingredients vary from brand to brand and that is why it is important not to mix different brands of gel together before curing.

Each gel brand has different curing characteristics, so it is important to check that the UV and LED lamp you use for curing gel polish is compatible with the gel brand you are using.

Polymerisation is the process of a liquid becoming a solid.

The reaction that occurs in gel nail products is a polymerisation reaction. Photo initiator is present in the gel, when it is exposed to UV light it converts it into energy starting the polymerisation process. This causes the gel products to harden very quickly.

Sometimes an exothermic reaction happens which means that heat is produced. The heat produced is proportional to the amount of product applied. To avoid possible heat build-up on nail plate and discomfort for the client, all gel products should be applied thinly and built up in layers.

In order for gel nails to cure, there are three things that need to be present for the hardening of the gel to occur.

1. Energy from light

The electromagnetic spectrum is used to describe the energies and wavelengths of different forms of radiation. The light the human eye can see is known as visible light and consists of a mix of wavelengths from 400-800nm (nanometers). Ultraviolet or UV rays have a shorter wavelength than visible light and are therefore higher in energy. The range from 320-400nm is called UVA, 320-280nm UVB and 280-100nm UVC. The nail industry solely uses UVA lamps as it is the lowest in energy. The other increasingly popular lamp used is a light emitting diode or LED lamp. LED bulbs are made to produce specific, short ranges of wavelengths.

Both UV and LED bulbs are available in different power strengths. Power is the amount of energy consumed per unit of time and is measured in watts (W). For LED lamps the total power can be found by multiplying the number of bulbs by the wattage of each bulb. Lecenté LED products are developed to cure with Lecenté lamps, which have a total power of 30W. Designing products to cure under higher-powered lights allows for the fast cure time and reduces the chances of spontaneous curing under regular table lamps and/or sunlight. If using a lower powered lamp, the cure time may be longer than 30 seconds. The bulbs should also be oriented so that the light is directed towards the nails. This is done with a combination of bulb position and reflectors. Wattage alone cannot determine how good a lamp is.

2. The catalyst

The catalyst or initiator within a UV/LED gel system is the UV light. The catalyst (photo initiator) is present in the gel. Once the gel has been placed on the nail and then placed in the lamp, the polymerisation process starts.

Photo initiators are a crucial part of the polymerisation reaction. When exposed to UV or LED light photo initiators form free radicals. Free radicals are molecules with unpaired electrons, which makes them very reactive. They trigger polymerisation by reacting with the oligomers and monomers causing them to link together to form a polymer. The type of photo initiator used depends on the light source as they are activated by different wavelengths of light.

It is important to follow the recommended cure times and application thickness to ensure that no product is left uncured on the nail as this can lead to overexposure or heat spike problems. Using the correct cure times and lamp will ensure you have a tough, strong, and flexible overlay.

Some gels are bluish in colour as they contain colour stabilisers to prevent yellowing. Sunlight contains high amounts of UV light and is one of the major causes of yellowing and discolouration.

Room temperature can affect your gels. In warmer temperatures, the gels may thinner and more liquid in consistency, whilst in colder temperatures they may have a thicker consistency. You may need to adjust your application techniques to compensate.

The bulbs in a UV lamp emit both visible and invisible light. Over time the bulbs will lose their efficiency and will no longer emit the correct amount of UV needed to cure the gels properly. On average most UV bulbs will need to be changed between 3,000 and 5,000 hours of use (approximately 6 months), it is important to change the bulbs regularly to ensure the gel is fully cured as if they are not it can lead to product breakdown (lifting, breaking, and cracking).

3. The Inhibitor

The Inhibition layer is the sticky surface that is left behind once the gel has cured. This layer is left behind due to the effect of oxygen on the curing process. Oxygen will stunt the growth of the polymer chains (hardening process) and affect the surface of the gel nail. An oxygen molecule acts as a 'cap' at the end of a growing polymer chain (the top of the gel nail). Once the oxygen reacts with the end of the chain it can no longer polymerise. This leaves an uncured/polymerised layer on the surface of the nail. When you have finished creating your gel nail it is important to remove this layer using a lint free wipe and cleanser, ensuring that any uncured product does not touch the skin.

Note: Gels are cured by UV light so it's important to keep your pots of gel away from the UV lamp and any sunlight, however minimal, as this will cure your whole pot of gel, or any gel left on your brush, and you will be unable to use it. As gels are sticky you may find that fluff or dust are attracted to your brush, if this happens wipe and clean your brush on a lint free pad that has cleanser on it if needed. Always have the pad to the side of you and discard it when you have finished applying your product.

Module examination

Complete the module examination online to move to the next module.

Unit 1: Nail shapes

Nail shapes

There are 5 basic nail shapes: square, squoval, round, oval and stiletto.

There are many points to consider when deciding on shaping your client's nails. The main one is your client's preference. However, time should be spent with a new client educating them about the shapes available. You must advise clients as to which shape might be preferable for their occupation, lifestyle and family life, while considering the strength and natural shape of the nails, hands and fingers.



Illustration by Edwin Allan MA (Oxon)

Square

The nail is filed straight across at the free edge creating a square shape. This is a very popular shape but does not suit all hand shapes; it is best suited to longer fingers with narrow nails.

Squoval

The square oval, also known as the squoval, is a softer take on the square nail and it has remained popular because it looks good on most fingers. It's less prone to catching on clothing and seems to weather wear and tear a little better than severely squared nails. This feminine style looks great on long and short nails but is most flattering on longer fingers with narrow nails.

Round

Rounded at the free edge. This shape is good for those who have jobs where they use their hands a lot and require short nails which do not break easily, whilst looking neat and groomed. The downside to this shape is it can make hands look chubby and fingers short.

Oval

This nail shape is a slightly more traditional shape, often known as the almond shape. This shape of nail tends to be the most difficult to shape and getting all ten to look the same may require practise. The oval nail shape is easily damaged and prone to breaking making it unsuitable for some clients.

Stiletto

The nail tip is strongly pointed, with rounded edges, this shape is becoming increasingly popular. The stiletto nail shape makes hands look more delicate because of the length and shape. This shape is great for those with short fingers to add length and make fingers look more elegant.

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Consultation

Perform a consultation for every client to understand their needs and how you can best fulfil them.

Using a client consultation card is an ideal method for guiding the initial conversation and gathering essential information.

During a consultation you can ask questions to determine the client's needs, for example, ask what nail shape and length they have been wearing lately and how that has been working for them. You should discuss colour choices and make recommendations based on your professional training. Ask about their lifestyle, work, hobbies, and home life. Discuss and analyse how those factors affect their nails. Natural nails are very delicate, so it can be very difficult to get and maintain a high-fashion look with length.

A client that is attending an event the same evening may be in your chair because they want their nails shaped and polished perfectly. You should concentrate on the details, being sure to shape every nail perfectly, giving adequate time to choose the colour that complements what they will be wearing to the event. Add on services such as paraffin wax or a hand mask can be offered to give the skin a healthy glow.

Another client may be in your chair for a different reason. They may be experiencing painful cracks in the stress area of their nails; they need help and are willing to try anything. Suggesting a regular paraffin manicure and aftercare products may solve their problem, as might a brand-new full set of enhancements.

Clients who leave feeling that you understand the problem and have the expert nail knowledge to help, are more likely to recommend you to friends, colleagues and family.

Discuss your proposal with your client. Inform your client what you can do to make their nails fabulous. Give them some time frames and approximate costs.

Follow through: Have them fill out the client consultation card or ask the questions and fill it out for them. Document their visit and the treatment plan so that you can refer back to this at their next appointment.

Keep the client card out so that you can refer to it during the service and ensure you update the card immediately following each service.

Note: Always check the client's age as you may need a letter of consent from their guardian.

Preparation

Good preparation is vital before performing a nail treatment, you should ensure that all of the relevant products and equipment are to hand and ready to use. You should only leave your client's presence to fetch water or wash your hands. Your trolley or manicure table should have a suitable table top with knee holes, drawers, power points and a manicure lamp which is flexible.

Consultation

A record card should be completed for each client. Contra-indications are checked and the nail condition analysed and recorded.

Gel polish choice

This should be carried out at consultation. Make a note of the colour used on the record card for future reference.

Ventilation

Air should be circulated, and ideally extracted, to move the vapours that rise from nail polish remover and nail polish.

Lighting

A manicure lamp attached to your working area will assist with the treatment process and minimise eye strain.

Seating

The height of your seat and working area/manicure trolley should be adjusted to ensure both your own and your client's posture does not suffer during treatment.

Sterilisation

Ensure your tools are sterilised before each client treatment.

Nail preparation

Every gel polish nail service should begin with proper preparation. Nail prep is a systematic process that ensures nails are clean and free of debris and oils that can cause service breakdown.

1. Both the client and nail technician should wash their hands and sanitize with a suitable hand and nail sanitiser.
2. Remove any existing nail polish with a nail wipe saturated and polish remover.
3. Trim the nails if needed and shape as desired with a 240 grit nail file.
4. Using a cuticle tool, push back the eponychium to reveal the true cuticle (non-living tissue).
5. Gently remove any residue with a nail wipe saturated in a product designed to clean and dehydrate the natural nail.
6. Remove any hangnails and remaining non-living tissue with the cuticle nippers.
7. Using a white sanding block, gently remove surface shine from the entire nail plate. If the nail plate has been previously etched, only etch new nail growth, or if the nail plate is in poor condition avoid the problematic areas.
8. Remove all dust, dirt, and debris from the surface of the nails using a manicure brush. If any dust or debris is left on the nail this will show up in the finished application.
9. Cleanse and dehydrate the nail with a nail wipe saturated with a suitable nail cleanser to achieve a chalky finish.
10. Primer (optional step). If your client has problematic longevity, excessive chipping or need for increased adhesion, use a suitable primer. Drain all liquid from the brush and using a minimal amount, scrub into the nail plate, less is more. Only apply to the nail and avoid contact with skin. Allow to air dry.

Gel polish application

1. Shake base coat to thoroughly mix. Wipe excess base coat from the stem and brush when removing from the bottle.
2. Ensure you have a small amount of base coat on your brush. Thoroughly cap the free edge, making sure you pull back the skin under the free edge of short nails. If you get any product on the skin, wipe away with a birchwood stick. Pick up more product on your brush. Starting from a third of the way down the nail splay the brush out, work the product towards the proximal nail fold (PNF), sweeping down the nail to the free edge. Repeat on each side of the nail holding the skin at the side of the nails to ensure full coverage.
3. Cure in the nail lamp, following the time outlined by the manufacturer. 30/60 seconds depending on which Lecenté base coat you are using.
4. Shake the colour coat to thoroughly mix. Wipe excess colour from the stem and brush when removing from the bottle. With a small amount on your brush, cap the free edge of the nail as before. Pick up more product on your brush and starting on the little finger, begin a third of the way down the nail, working towards the cuticle, pulling back, and sweeping down the nail to the free edge. Repeat until nail is covered. Use a light touch, gliding the product over the nail to ensure full and even colour coverage.
5. Cure in the nail lamp according to manufacturer's instructions.
6. You may wish to apply a second and in some cases a third coat of colour, depending on the manufacturer's instructions and results you are aiming to achieve. Remember to always cap the free edge with each layer.
7. To apply top coat, start with a small amount of top coat on your brush. Begin by capping the free edge. Then ensure you have a liberal amount of top coat on your brush. Starting from a third of the way down the nail, splay the brush out and work the product towards the cuticle area, before sweeping back to the free edge. Hold the skin at the sides of nail to ensure full coverage, make sure to cap the free edge and sides. Pay close attention when applying to short nails not to touch the skin. If you get any product on the skin wipe away with a birchwood stick.
8. Cure in the nail lamp according to manufacturer's instructions.
9. Use a lint free wipe/pad and Lecenté Finishing Wipe to thoroughly cleanse over the nail plate and around the free edge to remove the inhibition layer. Use a new pad for each hand to help prevent dulling of the topcoat.
10. Apply a drop of nail and cuticle oil and massage into cuticles.

Things to remember

- Ensure the natural nail is thoroughly cleansed and dehydrated
- Cap the free edge first and on every subsequent layer
- Apply gel polish evenly to prevent lumps and bumps
- Take time when applying the product ensuring the whole nail is covered evenly
- Leave a tiny margin around the sidewalls and cuticle to prevent lifting and overexposure. Avoid getting product on the skin.
- When shaping the nail, the nail shape should mirror the cuticle shape. When filing the nail, think about the look you want to achieve for your client (discussed in client consultation). Your desired finish should be a beautiful thin gel overlay.
- Finish off the service with thorough aftercare

Gel polish removal

The most popular removal type of gel polish is to soak in acetone removal wraps. This is a simple and effective method of removal. It can increase dryness and cause irritation for some clients. In some cases irritation of the hyponychium can occur, encouraging inflammation and even nail separation.

Filing (or commonly called infilling) of gel polish is also a fast and effective method of removal to the well-practiced professional.

The file off method encourages a thin layer of product to remain, this will protect and grow out as the nail plate grows. It is imperative when using this removal method that a double base coat is applied. This will prevent over filing of the nail plate during the removal process. The file off method will take practice and patience.

Which method of removal

Soak off

- Client's nails are healthy and happy
- Client's nails are ridged but not dry
- Client's nails are somewhat shiny and smooth

File off

- Client's nails are very dry
- Client's nails are naturally very thin
- Client's nails have been previously over filed. Avoid soaking, but file with caution

Unit 4: Treatment step by step

Soak off step by step

1. Using a cuticle tool, push back the proximal nail fold.
2. Break the colour on the free edge and the sides using a 240 grit nail file, gently but firmly.
3. Gently but firmly buff over the nail with your file to remove the top coat.
4. Saturate a removal wrap cotton pad well with acetone. Apply a drop of cuticle oil to the underside of the free edge of the nail plate.
5. Wrap the nail with the removal wrap, rubbing the soaked pad into the nail before folding the foil over and on top of the nail.
6. Ensure the foil is folded back on top of the nail plate and the pad is in contact with the nail plate. This retains heat and makes for an easier removal. Set a timer for 15 minutes, time from when you wrapped the first nail.
7. Every 5 minutes give the nail foil a squeeze to reinforce the acetone onto the nail.
8. After 15 minutes start removal, beginning with the first nail you wrapped. Twist and pull the nail wrap off.
9. Remove any excess gel with a birchwood stick.
10. When all gel has been removed, use a clean lint free wipe with some acetone or nail cleanser and wipe over the nail.
11. If your client is not having a new set of gel polish applied, you will need to shape the natural nails as required by the client and remove any residue that may be left on the nails.
12. Apply nail oil to the natural nails and surrounding skin to condition them.

File off method

Using a cuticle tool, push back the proximal nail fold.

1. Gently but firmly shape free edge and the sides using a 180/240 grit nail file.
2. Evenly buff over the entire nail with your file to remove top coat and colour coat, revealing the base coat. Ensure any lifting is thoroughly removed.
3. When the base coat is evenly exposed, (leaving a layer of base coat remaining), cleanse the nail plate and begin performing your gel polish service.

Module examination

Complete the module examination online to move to the next module.

Aftercare

- Gel polish may take up to 24 hours to properly harden so no hot baths, saunas or steam rooms until after this time
- Use nail and cuticle oil daily to help keep nails and skin hydrated
- Avoid using products containing lanolin, petroleum and mineral oils as these may cause gel polish to lift
- Treat nails with care and always wear household gloves for washing up and cleaning tasks
- Don't pick, bite or attempt to remove the gel polish without seeking professional advice for safe removal
- To keep gel polish and nails in good condition clients should attend regular appointments with their nail technician
- Don't have nails too long for their lifestyle
- Advise clients return to the salon for a professional removal to avoid damage to their natural nails

Please note: many insurance companies insist on clients receiving written aftercare advice along with verbal advice

Gel polish may not be suitable for some types of nails, client's job, or lifestyle. Always perform a consultation prior to any service to assess and recommend the best possible treatment.

Contra-actions

Allergic reactions can be caused by certain cosmetic ingredients. The client or therapist could at some time develop an allergy to a product that has previously been used successfully. This could be for several reasons including new medication being taken or illness. Symptoms of an allergic reaction include

- Redness of the skin (erythema)
- Swelling
- Itching
- Raised blisters

In case of an allergic reaction

- Remove the product immediately using water
- If symptoms persist seek medical advice
- Record details onto the client record card

Frequently asked questions

Question: Why is it important to shake gel polish before use?

Answer: This ensures that the formula is thoroughly mixed with the pigment. A vigorous shake for at least 60 seconds before use is important for true colour, even coverage, adhesion and shine.

Question: How should I store gel polish?

Answer: Store in at room temperature out of direct sunlight.

Question: Can I perform an 'Infill' on gel polish?

Answer: It is not recommended to perform an infill on gel polish as the application of the gel is too thin.

Question: Can I apply traditional nail polish over gel polish?

Answer: You can still apply traditional nail polish over gel polish should your client wish to enjoy another colour temporarily. The nail polish must be removed with acetone free remover. To remove gel polish from an enhancement such as acrylic, buff off the colour, if you soak it off it will affect the acrylic structure

Troubleshooting

Gel polish is lifting and peeling

The most common areas prone to lifting are the cuticle zone and free edge areas. This area may become slightly cloudy but if a full colour was applied you cannot always see this. This cloudiness is an indicator that there has been a problem with the gel bonding to the nail plate. The gel polish must always be removed before any more product is applied.

When clients return, the 3 main problems that you may encounter are lifting of the product, peeling/chipping and breaking.

Lifting is usually found around the cuticle or free edge areas. Reasons for this may include:

- The shine was not thoroughly removed from the nail plate before product application. Ensure you remove all the shine from the nail plate. To check, apply nail prep and if the natural nail goes back to a chalky look, then shine has been removed.
- The gel was not applied correctly onto the nail plate, check you're not touching the skin with the product.
- Product has come into contact with the surrounding skin. Moisture in the skin acts as a barrier and will cause lifting. Ensure no product touches the skin by leaving a tiny free margin during product application.
- Product has been applied too thick. Thick nails are not stronger as they have no flexibility, so if they bang it, it will lift. A thinner application will ensure it will flex upon impact.
- Cuticle or dust was left on the nail plate before product application. Ensure all cuticle and dust/debris is removed and the nail is dehydrated.
- The client went over the recommended 2–3-week maintenance time.
- The gel may not be cured fully. Ensure you change your bulbs regularly and you're curing for the correct amount of time.
- The gel was contaminated with dirt and dust. Keep lids on all pots when not in use.
- The client may not be using nail oil regularly, which could cause the nail to dry out and become brittle. Cuticle helps keep the overlay and natural nail flexible and moisturised as well as the surrounding skin.

Colour wiping off

Check to make sure that the entire nail is covered with the top gel.

Finished nails look dull

- Check to make sure you have wiped all the sticky residue off the nails.
- Check the bulbs in the nail lamp are working properly.
- Only use the cleanser recommended for your system.
- Applying nail oil too soon can sometimes also cause the nails to become dull.

The colour has discoloured

Clients have been exposed to excessive UV light such as sunbeds. Strong UV light and associated tanning products can cause the gel to discolour and cause staining.

Lumps and bumps in the finished nails

- Can be due to dust being left on the nails prior to application of gel polish. Ensure that all dust is removed before application by wiping thoroughly with a prep and dehydrating solution,
- When gel is applied too thick it can run causing a bump. In this instance, wipe the sticky layer off and gently buff the bump until smooth, reapply colour and top coat thinly.

Gel polish has wrinkles

- Gel polish has not been cured fully. Check the client's hand placement in the lamp
- Product may have been applied too thick and therefore inhibiting a sufficient cure

Next steps

We advise you to practice the treatments on at least six models in order to become proficient. Research the price that you will be charging for the treatment within your business. This will depend on the price range of treatments in your area, the price your direct competitors are charging and your present pricing structure.

Module examination

Complete the module examination online to move to the next module.

Unit 1: Practical assessment

Practical assessment

You are now required to submit a series of videos for assessment by one of our educators. Complete each of the treatment steps below to ensure you have demonstrated a full treatment. Watch each video hint to show you what the educator needs to see in order to assess your competency.

Please submit short videos of each step like the examples shown, please do not submit one long video of you performing the complete treatment.

1. Show the prepared nails on the client's right hand ready for the application of base coat
2. Demonstrate the application of base coat on the client's right hand
3. Demonstrate the application of 2 coats of gel colour on the client's right hand
4. Demonstrate the application of top coat on the client's right hand
5. Show the finished result to indicate precise application, even colour and a capped free edge.

Upload the video examples online

Please select the text reply button to notify us of your submission.

We will provide feedback within two working days.

Please note: our business hours are Monday – Friday, 8.30am – 5pm.