

Draft Study Material

NAIL TECHNICIAN

Qualification Pack Code: BWS/Q0403

Sector: Beauty & Wellness

Class XII



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NCERT

PSS CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

(A constituent unit of NCERT, under Ministry of Education, Government of India)

Shyamla Hills, Bhopal- 462 002, Madhya Pradesh, India

www.psscive.ac.in

DRAFT STUDY MATERIAL

JOB ROLE: NAIL TECHNICIAN

QP CODE: BWS/Q0403

SECTOR: BEAUTY AND WELLNESS

CLASS XII

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PREFACE

Skill education is a dynamic and evolving field, and ensuring that every learner has access to quality learning resources is of paramount importance. The absence of finalised study material should not hinder the educational progress of students in the schools. To address this need, the PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education (PSSCIVE) presents this Draft Study Material, a provisional yet comprehensive resource, designed to support the teaching-learning process until the official study materials or textbooks are released by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

This draft study material provides a structured, accessible, and curriculum-aligned framework for both teachers and students during the interim period. The content has been carefully developed to ensure continuity in learning and to help students achieve the prescribed learning outcomes. The content of the draft study material covers essential concepts, practical competencies, and skill-based knowledge in accordance with the curriculum and established educational standards.

The primary objective of this material is to sustain the momentum of skill education and facilitate effective classroom transactions while the finalised textbooks are under preparation. It serves as a guiding resource that can be adapted and enriched to meet the diverse learning needs of students.

We express our sincere gratitude to the academicians, educators, subject matter experts, industry professionals, academic consultants, and all other contributors whose expertise and valuable insights have made the development of this draft study material possible.

Teachers are encouraged to use this draft study material as a guiding resource and to supplement them with additional learning materials, practical activities, and contextual examples that cater to the unique needs and learning styles of their students. We welcome constructive feedback and suggestions, particularly from teachers and practitioners, to further enhance the content and effectiveness of this study material.

We hope that this draft study material serves as a valuable resource in fostering knowledge, skills, and employability among learners, while supporting the successful implementation of skill education programmes across the country.

Deepak Paliwal
Joint Director

PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education

30 September 2026
Bhopal

ABOUT THE TEXTBOOK

The study material for Nail Technician course has been developed for students of Class XII who wants to pursue advanced training in professional nail technology. It covers essential theoretical knowledge and practical skills required for mastering nail care and enhancement services in a salon setting. The content is organised into six well-structured units, each focusing on a key area of nail technology. These units are as follows:

Unit 1 on **Advanced Nail Anatomy and Disorders** introduces advanced nail anatomy and common nail disorders, emphasising the importance of proper assessment before performing any nail enhancement. It helps students identify early signs of infection, trauma, or systemic health issues through nail analysis.

Unit 2 on **UV Gel Nail Enhancement Techniques** covers UV gel nail enhancements, including the composition, benefits, types of gel products, and proper curing techniques using UV/LED lamps. Step-by-step procedures ensure students understand professional application methods.

Unit 3 on **Acrylic Nail Enhancement Systems** deals with the acrylic nail enhancement techniques, covering the use of liquid and powder systems, nail preparation, shaping, and critical safety practices, including ventilation and hygiene.

Unit 4 on **Nail Refill and Maintenance Services** explains refill services, an essential part of maintaining long-lasting enhancements. Students learn advanced refill techniques to achieve seamless, professional results.

Unit 5 on **Client Care and Professional Ethics** describes client comfort and professional ethics, guiding on how to handle difficult clients, maintain hygiene standards, and uphold ethical service practices.

Unit 6 on **Basics of Salon Management** introduces the basics of salon management, including inventory control, time management, and building strong client relationships.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education (PSSCIVE) expresses its sincere gratitude to the Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSE&L), Ministry of Education, Government of India, for the financial support provided through the project approved by the Project Approval Board (PAB) under the Samagra Shiksha for the development of curricula and textbooks aligned with various job roles across diverse sectors. This support has been instrumental in strengthening skill education by enabling the creation of high-quality, industry-relevant learning resources for students.

PSSCIVE places on record its special appreciation to Ms Monica Bahl, Chief Executive Officer, Beauty and Wellness Sector Skill Council and her team for her invaluable support in the development of the Qualification Pack (QP) for the job role of Nail Technician.

PSSCIVE also gratefully acknowledges the valuable contributions of the subject experts for their technical inputs, and support in the development of this book.

PSSCIVE further acknowledges with sincere appreciation the dedicated efforts of Dr. Deepti Kavathekar, Consultant (Contractual); Dr. Sourabh Meshram, Consultant (Contractual); Dr. Perna Nashine, Assistant Professor (Contractual); Ms. Akansha Dubey, Senior Editor (Contractual); Mr. Jitendra Kumar, Graphic Designer (Contractual); and Mr. Mohit Jain, DTP Operator (Contractual). Their valuable contributions to this have played an important role in bringing this learning resource to its final form.

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Unit 1 **Advanced Nail Anatomy and Disorders**

Unit 1 on **Advanced Nail Anatomy and Disorders** covers the comprehensive and advanced knowledge of nail anatomy and nail disorders, establishing a strong scientific foundation for professional nail practice. It promotes a thorough understanding of the structure, function, and growth patterns of the natural nail, as well as the biological processes that influence nail health. The following sessions are covered in this unit:

[1] **Advanced Structure and Composition of Nails** deals with the structure and function of essential components, such as the nail plate, nail matrix, nail bed, cuticle, lunula, eponychium, and hyponychium, are examined in detail.

[2] **Nail Disorders, Diseases and Precautions** explains the identification and understanding of common nail disorders. Conditions such as fungal infections, bacterial infections, onycholysis, and paronychia are covered in terms of their causes, visible symptoms, contributing factors, and preventive measures.

[3] **Assessing Nail Health for Advanced Nail Services** describes the professional consultation and nail assessment skills. It also highlights effective client communication, thorough visual examination, and careful evaluation of nail and skin condition prior to performing advanced services.

Session 1: Advanced Structure and Composition of Nails

The nail structure is a complex structure that protects the fingertips and supports their function. It includes the nail plate, nail bed, nail matrix, proximal and lateral nail folds, and hyponychium. The nail plate is made of keratinised cells and grows from the nail matrix, which determines its shape and thickness. Blood vessels and nerves beneath the nail bed provide nourishment and sensitivity. Knowledge of nail anatomy is essential for identifying and managing nail disorders.

1. Introduction to the Detailed Structure of the Human Nail

The nail anatomy is a sophisticated structure integral to hand and foot function, aesthetics, and protection. It consists of several components such as the nail plate, nail bed, nail matrix, proximal and lateral nail folds, hyponychium, and eponychium. The nail plate, a hard, translucent layer of keratinised cells, forms the visible part of the nail. It originates from the nail matrix, a highly sensitive area beneath the proximal nail fold responsible for nail growth and shape. The nail bed, rich in blood vessels and nerves, supports the plate and contributes to its pinkish hue. The hyponychium, located under the nail plate's free edge, acts as a protective barrier,

while the proximal and lateral nail folds frame the nail, anchoring it to surrounding skin. The eponychium, or cuticle, seals the nail base, preventing infections.

Nail growth depends on the matrix's health, influenced by nutrition, trauma, or systemic conditions. For example, matrix damage can cause ridges or deformed nails, while poor blood flow may cause discolouration. Understanding these structures helps nail technicians and dermatologists identify abnormalities such as onycholysis (nail plate separation) or paronychia (nail fold infection) and provide effective care. Proper nail hygiene, avoiding trauma, and monitoring for changes are critical for maintaining nail health. Fig. 1.1 (a) and (b) illustrate the external and internal structures of the nail and their key anatomical parts.

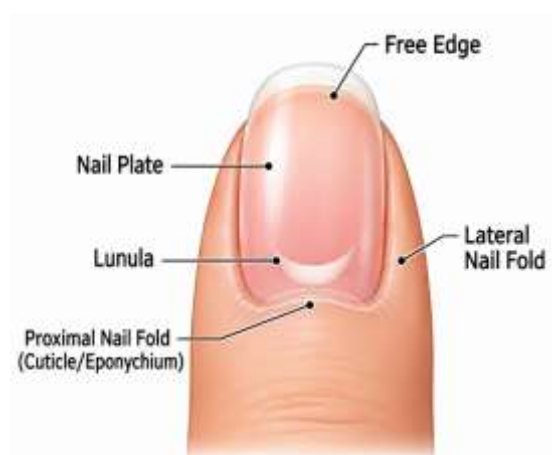


Fig. 1.1(a): Outer structure of the nail

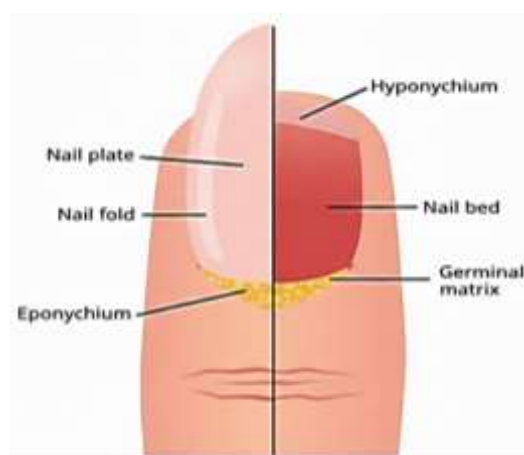


Fig. 1.1 (b): Inner structure of the nail

2. Nail Growth Timeline

A fingernail grows continuously from the nail matrix, with the newly formed nail plate gradually moving forward over the nail bed (Fig. 1.2). The approximate growth timeline is as follows:

1 Month

- The nail plate becomes more visibly established on the nail bed.
- It continues to grow and remains relatively susceptible to damage.

2–3 Months

- A substantial portion of the nail plate has grown forward.
- The nail becomes stronger and more resistant to damage.



Fig. 1.2: Nail growth timeline

- c) The nail plate continues to move towards the free edge.

4–6 Months

- a) The complete fingernail typically grows out to the free edge.
- b) The nail plate is fully formed and has undergone progressive keratinisation.

More than 6 Months

- a) Some individuals may require additional time for complete nail growth.
- b) Factors such as age, overall health, nutrition, circulation, and previous nail trauma may slow nail growth.

3. Nail Regrowth

Nail regrowth refers to the natural process by which a nail grows from the nail matrix and gradually replaces the portion that has been trimmed, damaged, or lost. (Fig. 1.3). Understanding nail regrowth is important for nail technicians because it helps in planning treatments, maintaining nail health, and setting realistic expectations for clients.

Fingernails grow at an average rate of approximately 3 mm per month (about 0.1 mm per day). However, the rate of growth varies among individuals and may be influenced by factors such as age, overall health, nutrition, seasonal changes, and previous nail trauma. A fingernail may take approximately 4–6 months to grow out completely, although the exact period varies from person to person.

Regular nail care does not significantly accelerate the natural growth rate, but maintaining good hygiene, protecting the nails from trauma, and following appropriate nail-care practices can help support healthy nail growth.

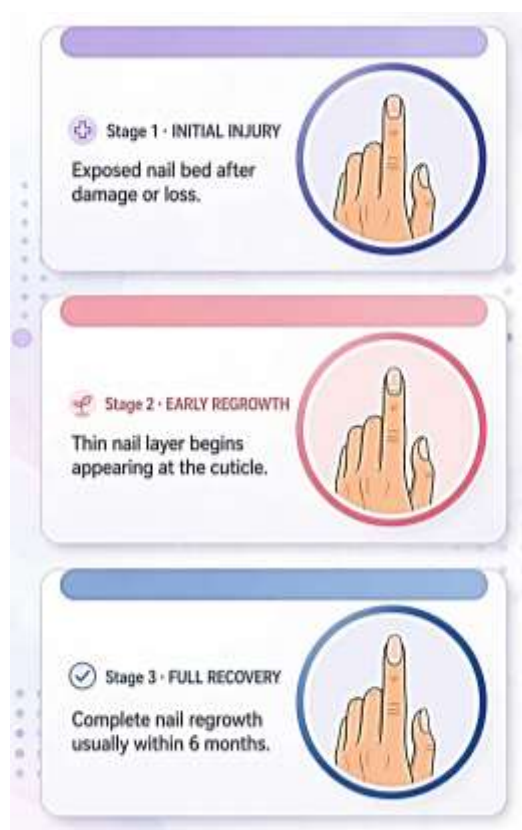


Fig. 1.3: Nail injury recovery

4. Factors that influence Nail Growth

Nail growth varies from person to person and can be influenced by several internal and external factors. These factors affect the rate, strength, thickness, and overall appearance of the nails. The major factors are described below:

i) Internal Factors

Several internal factors can influence the rate and quality of nail growth, which are as follows:

- a) **Age:** Nail growth may be faster in younger individuals and generally slows with age.
- b) **Health conditions:** Conditions such as thyroid disorders, anaemia, and poor circulation may affect or slow nail growth.
- c) **Nutrition:** Adequate protein, iron, zinc, and other essential nutrients support healthy nail formation. Biotin deficiency can also affect nail health.
- d) **Medications:** Certain medications, including some chemotherapy drugs, may slow or alter nail growth (Fig. 1.4).



Fig. 1.4: Internal factors that influence nail growth

ii) External Factors that affect Nail Growth

Nail growth is influenced by several external and physiological factors (Fig. 1.5). These factors can affect the rate of growth, strength, appearance, and regrowth of the nails. Understanding these factors helps nail technicians provide appropriate care and recognise changes that may require professional attention.

- a) **Nutrition and Hydration:** Adequate nutrition is essential for healthy nail growth. Nutrients such as protein, iron, zinc, and biotin contribute to normal nail structure and strength. Deficiencies in certain nutrients may be associated



Fig. 1.5: Factors influencing nail growth

with slow growth, brittleness, or changes in nail appearance. Adequate fluid intake also supports overall skin and nail health.

- b) **Trauma and Pressure:** Repeated injury or pressure can damage the nail matrix and interfere with normal nail growth. Nail biting, excessive pressure, tight footwear, aggressive filing, and improper manicure or pedicure techniques may contribute to nail damage and delayed regrowth.
- c) **Climate and Season:** Nail growth may vary with seasonal and environmental conditions. Growth is generally somewhat faster during warmer months and slower during colder periods. Changes in circulation, activity levels, and environmental exposure may contribute to these variations.
- d) **Age:** Nail growth varies with age. Growth tends to be relatively faster during childhood and early adulthood and generally becomes slower with advancing age. Older adults may also experience changes in nail thickness, texture, and appearance.
- e) **Hormonal Factors:** Hormonal changes can influence nail growth. For example, some people experience faster nail growth during pregnancy. Certain hormonal disorders may have the opposite effect and can be associated with slow growth or changes in nail texture.
- f) **Health Conditions:** Certain health conditions can affect nail growth and appearance. Conditions that affect blood circulation, metabolism, the skin, or the nail unit, including diabetes, psoriasis, thyroid disorders, and fungal infections, may interfere with normal nail development or regrowth.
- g) **Medications and Chemical Exposure:** Some medications, including certain chemotherapy medicines and retinoids, may affect nail growth or nail structure. Frequent exposure to detergents, acetone, harsh sanitising products, and other chemicals can dry the nails and surrounding skin, increasing the risk of brittleness and breakage.
- h) **Hygiene and Nail-Care Habits:** Good hygiene and appropriate nail-care practices help maintain healthy nails. Excessive cuticle cutting, aggressive filing, prolonged use of artificial nail enhancements, and inadequate moisturisation may weaken or damage the nail plate. Proper techniques and regular care can help minimise such problems.
- i) **Smoking:** Smoking can affect circulation and may reduce the delivery of oxygen and nutrients to peripheral tissues. This may adversely affect the health and appearance of the nails and surrounding tissues.
- j) **Occupational Exposure:** Certain occupations expose the nails and hands or feet to repeated moisture, chemicals, friction, or mechanical stress. For example, cleaners, healthcare workers, salon professionals, and manual

workers may experience increased nail dryness, breakage, or damage depending on their working conditions and protective practices.

5. Nail Technician Considerations During Nail Regrowth

During the nail regrowth process, appropriate care can help protect the natural nail and prevent further damage. Gentle nail-care techniques and minimal filing are recommended, as re-growing nails may be more vulnerable to stress and breakage. Light overlays or suitable structured gel applications may provide temporary support while the natural nail grows out, provided the nail is healthy and free from signs of infection or significant damage.

The nail should be regularly monitored for colour changes, unusual ridges, lifting, or separation from the nail bed, as these changes may indicate infection or damage to the nail matrix and may require professional assessment. Clients should also be advised to avoid picking or peeling the nails, prolonged exposure to moisture, and unnecessary contact with harsh chemicals during the regrowth process. Regular moisturisation, including the use of cuticle oil, can help maintain the condition of the nails and surrounding skin.

6. Reasons for Delayed Nail Regrowth

Nail regrowth is a slow and delicate process because nails are produced by the nail matrix, the tissue located beneath the base of the nail. Under normal conditions, a fingernail typically takes 3–6 months to grow completely. Factors that delay this process are as follows:

- i) **Severe Trauma to the Nail Matrix:** Injuries caused by accidents, crushing, deep cuts, or other forms of trauma can damage the nail matrix. When the matrix is injured, nail production may slow down or become irregular, resulting in delayed regrowth, ridges, or permanent nail deformities.
- ii) **Chronic Medical Conditions:** Medical conditions such as diabetes, thyroid disorders, and vascular diseases can reduce blood circulation and the supply of nutrients to the nails. This may slow nail growth and produce weaker, more brittle nails that are prone to breakage.
- iii) **Nutritional Deficiencies:** Deficiencies of essential nutrients, including protein, biotin, iron, and zinc, can impair healthy nail growth. As a result, nails may grow more slowly, become brittle, and develop ridges or discolouration.
- iv) **Long-Term Damage from Acrylic or Gel Enhancements:** Frequent application or improper removal of acrylic or gel nail enhancements can damage the natural nail and, in some cases, affect the nail matrix. This may delay natural nail regrowth and result in thin, weak, or misshapen nails.

Any factor that damages the nail matrix, reduces the supply of nutrients, or affects overall health can prolong the nail regrowth process beyond the normal 3–6 months, depending on the severity of the condition.

7. Professional Guidance for Clients

Nail technicians play an important role in promoting nail health by providing clients with proper aftercare advice. Professional guidance helps prevent further damage, supports healthy nail regrowth, and maintains the condition of both natural nails and nail enhancements. Clients should be encouraged to apply cuticle oil and hand moisturiser daily to keep the nails and surrounding skin moisturised and help prevent dryness, brittleness, and splitting.

A balanced diet containing adequate protein, vitamins, and minerals such as iron and zinc supports healthy nail growth and strength. Clients should also avoid biting, peeling, or picking their nails or nail enhancements, as these habits can damage the nail plate and matrix and increase the risk of infection. Protective gloves should be worn while cleaning, washing dishes, gardening, or handling detergents and other harsh chemicals to protect the nails from excessive moisture, chemical exposure, and physical damage.

Regular maintenance appointments are recommended, and clients should seek professional assistance for the safe removal of nail enhancements rather than attempting to force or peel them off at home. Following these recommendations helps maintain healthy nails, prevent further damage, and support normal nail regrowth after injury or nail enhancement procedures.

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Nail anatomy mapping

Materials Required:

1. Nail anatomy diagram
2. Coloured pens
3. Blank nail templates
4. Magnifying glass
5. Gloves

Procedure:

- Provide students with a blank nail template and a labelled nail anatomy diagram.
- Instruct them to wear gloves and use a magnifying glass to observe a partner's nail, identifying the nail plate, matrix area, nail folds, hyponychium, and eponychium.

- Using coloured pens, students label each part on the template, noting visible features like the lunula or cuticle condition. Discuss how these structures interact and their role in nail health.

Activity 2: Nail health observation

Materials Required:

1. Magnifying glass
2. Notepad
3. Pen
4. Gloves
5. Nail
6. Hygiene guide.

Procedure:

- Pair students and provide gloves, a magnifying glass, and a nail hygiene guide.
- Each student examines their partner's nails for signs of health (smooth plate, pink nail bed) or issues (ridges, discolouration).
- Record observations in the notepad, referencing the guide to hypothesise causes (e.g., matrix damage for ridges). Discuss findings and recommend hygiene practices to maintain nail integrity.

Check Your Progress

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. Which structure is primarily responsible for producing the nail plate?
 - a) Nail bed
 - b) Hyponychium
 - c) Nail matrix
 - d) Lateral nail fold
2. Which structure is located beneath the free edge of the nail plate and acts as a protective barrier?
 - a) Nail matrix
 - b) Hyponychium
 - c) Lunula
 - d) Nail bed
3. The white, crescent-shaped area visible at the base of some nails is called the _____.
 - a) Eponychium
 - b) Hyponychium
 - c) Lunula
 - d) Nail fold

4. Which statement about the nail plate is correct?
 - a) It produces the nail plate.
 - b) It is made of keratinised cells.
 - c) It is located beneath the free edge.
 - d) It supplies blood to the nail matrix.
5. Approximately how fast do fingernails grow on average?
 - a) 1 mm per month
 - b) 2 mm per month
 - c) 3 mm per month
 - d) 6 mm per month
6. A complete fingernail typically takes approximately how long to grow out?
 - a) 1–2 months
 - b) 2–3 months
 - c) 4–6 months
 - d) 8–12 months
7. Which of the following is an internal factor that can influence nail growth?
 - a) Season and temperature
 - b) Hand dominance
 - c) Age
 - d) Physical activity
8. Which of the following is an external factor that may influence nail growth?
 - a) Nutrition
 - b) Medication
 - c) Health condition
 - d) Season and temperature
9. Damage to the nail matrix may result in_____.
 - a) Ridges or deformed nails
 - b) Faster nail growth
 - c) Stronger nail plates
 - d) Increased nail flexibility
10. Which of the following may slow nail growth?
 - a) Adequate nutrition
 - b) Warm weather
 - c) Certain health conditions
 - d) Regular nail care

B. Subjective Questions

1. Explain the structure and functions of the major parts of the nail, including the nail plate, nail bed, nail matrix, nail folds, eponychium, and hyponychium.

2. Describe the average fingernail growth rate and explain the approximate nail growth timeline from 1 month to more than 6 months.
3. Explain the internal and external factors that can influence the rate and quality of nail growth, giving examples of each.
4. Describe the precautions a nail technician should take when caring for a nail during the regrowth process.
5. Explain the factors that can delay nail regrowth and describe the professional guidance a nail technician should provide to clients.

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- identify the major structures of the nail and describe their basic functions;
- explain the composition, growth process, and regrowth timeline of fingernails;
- identify internal and external factors that influence nail growth;
- describe appropriate considerations for protecting and monitoring nails during regrowth; and
- demonstrate professional nail-care and aftercare practices to support healthy nail growth and prevent further damage.

Session 2: Nail Disorders, Diseases and Precautions

Nail disorders can significantly affect the appearance and health of the nails and may result from infections, trauma, chemical exposure, nutritional deficiencies, or underlying health conditions. Understanding common nail disorders, their causes, preventive measures, and appropriate professional practices is essential for nail technicians.

Early recognition of visible changes helps nail technicians provide useful nail-care advice and refer clients to a qualified healthcare professional when necessary.

1. Common Nail Disorders

Common nail disorders are conditions that affect the appearance, texture, structure, or health of the nails. They may develop due to infections, trauma, chemical exposure, underlying health conditions, or other factors. Recognising visible signs at an early stage helps nail technicians take appropriate precautions and advise clients to seek professional medical assessment when required. The common nail disorders are as follows (Fig. 1.6):



Fig. 1.6: Common nail disorders

- a) **Onychomycosis:** A fungal infection that may cause thickened and discoloured nails.
- b) **Paronychia:** An infection or inflammation of the nail folds that may cause redness, swelling, and pain.
- c) **Onycholysis:** Separation or lifting of the nail plate from the nail bed, which may be associated with trauma, chemical exposure, or psoriasis.
- d) **Nail Psoriasis:** May cause pitting, ridging, or crumbling of the nails.
- e) **Subungual Haematoma:** A dark area beneath the nail that may result from trauma.
- f) **Melanoma:** May appear as irregular pigmentation and requires prompt medical assessment.

Nail disorders can affect both aesthetics and nail health and may sometimes reflect internal health issues or external factors. Therefore, prevention, early recognition, and appropriate referral are important aspects of professional nail care.

2. Factors affecting Nail Health and Appearance

Several factors can contribute to nail disorders and abnormalities. These include lifestyle habits, hygiene practices, physical trauma, chemical exposure, nutritional deficiencies, and underlying health conditions (Fig. 1.7).

Excessive moisture and poor hygiene may increase the risk of nail infections, while trauma or improper cuticle care may damage the nail folds and surrounding tissues. Chemical exposure may also affect the condition of the nails.

Nutritional deficiencies, including low levels of iron or biotin, may be associated with changes in nail strength and appearance. Systemic conditions such as thyroid

disease and diabetes may also manifest through changes in the nails and may require professional medical consultation.



Fig. 1.7: Factors affecting nail health and appearance

3. Prevention Tips

Proper nail care and good hygiene practices can help reduce the risk of nail disorders and protect the natural nail. Reusable tools should be properly cleaned, disinfected, and sterilised according to appropriate hygiene procedures.

Nail technicians should avoid aggressive cuticle trimming and use gentle techniques to minimise injury to the nail folds. Gloves should be worn during wet tasks to reduce prolonged exposure to moisture and chemicals. Clients should be encouraged to keep their nails clean and dry, avoid unnecessary exposure to harsh chemicals, and maintain a balanced, nutrient-rich diet. Hypoallergenic products may be used where appropriate to reduce the risk of product-related reactions. When nails show signs of an existing disorder, infection, significant damage, or abnormal lifting, nail enhancement services should be postponed until the condition has been appropriately assessed.

4. Role of Nail Technicians in Maintaining Nail Health

The role of a nail technician extends beyond beautification and includes maintaining client safety, protecting nail health, and providing appropriate education. Nail technicians should observe the nails before beginning a service and recognise visible signs such as unusual discolouration, changes in texture, lifting, or other abnormalities. When a condition appears unusual or requires medical assessment,

the client should be referred to a qualified healthcare professional, such as a dermatologist.

Nail technicians should use gentle filing and manicure techniques, avoid excessive buffing, maintain appropriate hygiene practices, and use products responsibly. Regular professional training helps nail technicians remain updated on hygiene and safety practices. They should also educate clients about suitable at-home nail care, including protecting the nails from excessive moisture, harsh chemicals, trauma, and damaging habits. Maintaining a clean working environment and following proper hygiene procedures help reduce the risk of complications and support healthy nail care.

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Identify nail disorders

Materials Required:

1. Printed photographs or flashcards of common nail abnormalities
2. Client case-scenario handouts
3. Pen and notepad
4. Referral form template

Procedure:

- Explain the importance of recognising visible nail abnormalities and the nail technician's role in client safety and referral.
- Show photographs or flashcards and ask students to identify the visible signs associated with each condition.
- Provide client case scenarios describing different nail problems and ask students to identify the visible signs and possible risk factors.
- Students decide whether the nail service should be continued or postponed and whether referral to a qualified healthcare professional is appropriate.
- Discuss the responses as a group, focusing on warning signs such as redness, swelling, nail lifting, significant discolouration, infection, or irregular pigmentation.

Activity 2: Perform safe salon practices – prevent and protect

Materials Required:

1. Manicure station setup with towels, bowls, and nail tools
2. Appropriate cleaning and disinfection supplies
3. Gloves
4. Artificial nail samples
5. Poster board or whiteboard
6. Markers
7. Hygiene and nail-care checklist

Procedure:

- Explain how proper hygiene, safe techniques, and client care can help reduce the risk of nail problems.
- Demonstrate appropriate cleaning and disinfection of reusable tools, correct glove use, and gentle cuticle-care techniques.
- Students practise setting up a clean and hygienic manicure station and demonstrate safe nail-care procedures.
- In groups, students prepare a poster showing the five most important ways to prevent nail problems.
- Students use the checklist to review their workstation and discuss how they can educate clients about safe nail care at home.

Check Your Progress**A. Multiple Choice Questions**

1. Which nail disorder is a fungal infection that may cause thickened and discoloured nails?
a) Paronychia
b) Onycholysis
c) Onychomycosis
d) Nail psoriasis
2. Which condition involves separation or lifting of the nail plate from the nail bed?
a) Onycholysis
b) Paronychia
c) Subungual haematoma
d) Melanoma
3. Which of the following may increase the risk of nail infections?
a) Keeping nails clean and dry
b) Excessive moisture and poor hygiene
c) Using gentle filing techniques
d) Wearing gloves during wet tasks
4. What should a nail technician do when a nail condition requires medical assessment?
a) Diagnose the condition
b) Continue the service
c) Refer the client to a qualified healthcare professional
d) Remove the nail
5. Which practice helps reduce the risk of injury to the nail folds?
a) Aggressive cuticle trimming
b) Excessive buffing

- c) Gentle cuticle-care techniques
- d) Frequent use of harsh chemicals

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. _____ is a fungal infection that may cause thickened and discoloured nails.
2. _____ is characterised by redness, swelling, and pain around the nail folds.
3. Excessive moisture and poor _____ may increase the risk of nail infections.
4. Nail technicians should avoid _____ cuticle trimming to minimise injury to the nail folds.
5. Clients should be educated about suitable _____ nail care to maintain healthy nails.

C. Subjective Questions

1. What are nail disorders? Name any four common nail disorders and describe their visible signs.
2. Explain the major causes and risk factors associated with nail disorders.
3. Describe the preventive measures that can help reduce the risk of nail disorders.
4. Explain the role of a nail technician in recognising nail abnormalities and referring clients for professional medical assessment.
5. Why is client education important in maintaining healthy nails? Explain the home-care practices that a nail technician should recommend.

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- identify common nail disorders and their visible signs;
- explain the major causes and risk factors associated with nail disorders;
- describe appropriate preventive measures for maintaining healthy nails; and
- demonstrate safe nail-care practices and provide appropriate home-care guidance to clients.

Session 3: Assessing Nail Health for Advanced Nail Services

Proper assessment of nail health is an essential first step before performing advanced nail services such as acrylic extensions, gel overlays, or nail art enhancements. A nail technician should assess the condition of the natural nails and surrounding skin to determine whether the planned service is suitable. A careful assessment helps protect the natural nail, reduce the risk of complications, and ensure safe and effective service.

1. Understanding Nail Health

The natural nail consists of several interconnected structures that contribute to its appearance, protection, growth, and overall health. The nail plate is the visible, hard part of the nail, while the nail bed supports it from beneath. The nail matrix produces new nail cells and plays an important role in nail growth. The lunula is the lighter, crescent-shaped area at the base of the nail plate, while the cuticle and surrounding nail folds protect the base and edges of the nail.

A healthy nail generally has a smooth surface, slight natural curve, and uniform colour. It should be free from significant ridges, unusual discolouration, swelling, inflammation, lifting, or marked changes in texture. The main nail structures and characteristics of a healthy nail are shown in Fig. 1.8. During assessment, the nail technician should observe the nail and surrounding skin for visible changes. Unusual changes may require further assessment before an advanced nail service, with referral to a qualified healthcare professional when necessary.

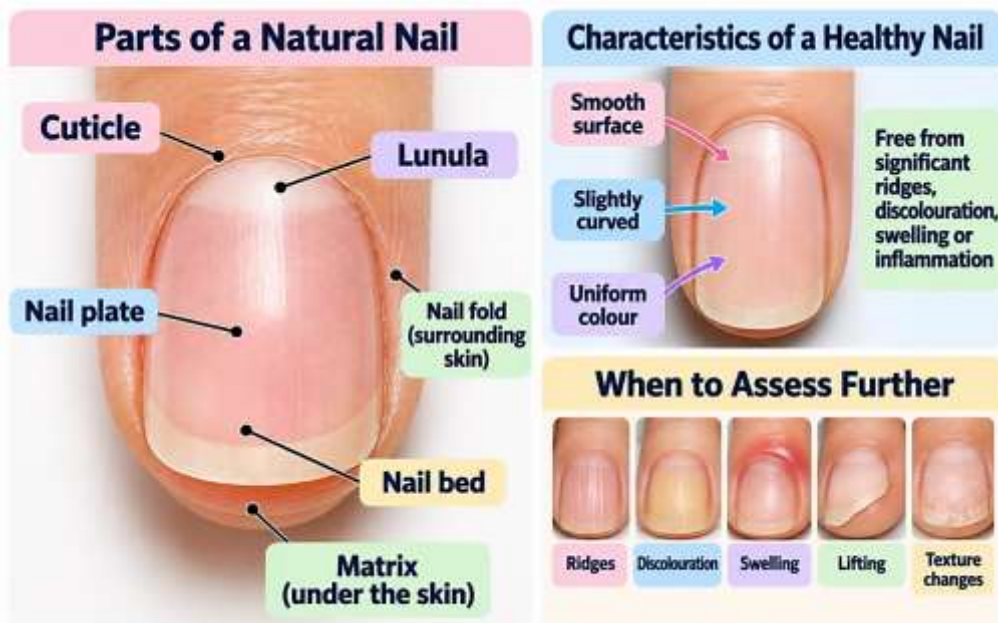


Fig. 1.8: Anatomy of a natural nail and indicators of nail health

2. Importance of Nail Assessment

Before performing a nail treatment or applying an enhancement, the nail technician should carry out a careful visual and tactile assessment of the client's nails and surrounding skin. This assessment helps identify visible signs of nail disorders, infections, injuries, or other conditions that may affect the safety or suitability of the service. Based on the findings, the nail technician may proceed with an appropriate service, modify the service, postpone it, or refer the client to a qualified healthcare professional.

During assessment, particular attention should be given to visible signs such as thickened, discoloured, brittle, or crumbly nails that may be associated with fungal infection; pitting, ridging, splitting, thickening, or lifting that may occur with psoriasis or eczema; separation of the nail plate from the nail bed; and redness, swelling, pain, or discharge around the nail folds. These signs should not be medically diagnosed by the nail technician. Instead, they should be recognised as possible indications that require appropriate action or referral.

A careful assessment helps protect the client, prevent the spread of infection, and ensure that conditions requiring medical attention are not covered or managed through cosmetic services.

3. Sanitation and Hygiene

Proper sanitation and hygiene are essential during every nail service, particularly when working with damaged, sensitive, or compromised nails. Appropriate infection-control practices help protect both the client and the nail technician and reduce the risk of cross-contamination. The key practices include the following:

- i) Use properly cleaned, disinfected, and appropriately sterilised reusable tools, or suitable disposable items where required (Fig. 1.9).
- ii) Practise proper hand hygiene before and after every service.



Fig. 1.9: Key sanitation and hygiene practices for safe nail services

- iii) Wear appropriate gloves when there is a risk of contact with broken skin, body fluids, or potentially infectious material.
- iv) Clean and disinfect the workstation, equipment, and frequently touched surfaces before and after each client.
- v) Dispose of waste safely and maintain an organised workstation.

Following appropriate sanitation and hygiene procedures helps reduce the transmission of fungal, bacterial, and viral infections and supports safe professional practice.

4. Client Consultation and Record Keeping

A thorough client consultation should be conducted before an advanced nail service. It allows the nail technician to understand the client's nail history, identify possible contraindications, consider lifestyle factors, and select an appropriate service. Accurate records also support continuity of care and help the nail technician monitor changes in nail health over time.

During the consultation, the nail technician should ask about previous nail infections, injuries, trauma, nail disorders, and previous use of gel, acrylic, or dip powder systems. The client should also be asked about known allergies or sensitivities to nail products, adhesives, chemicals, fragrances, or other ingredients. Lifestyle and daily habits, such as nail biting, frequent hand washing, exposure to water or chemicals, and manual work, should also be discussed because they may affect nail health and the durability of enhancements. Previous reactions to nail products should also be recorded.

Client records should include consultation details, nail assessment findings, allergies, products used, services performed, aftercare advice, and referrals where applicable. Proper record keeping supports personalised service planning, continuity of care, and professional practice.

5. Criteria for Proceeding with Nail Services and Referral

After completing the assessment and consultation, the nail technician should determine whether the planned service is appropriate. Minor cosmetic concerns such as dryness, brittleness, slight staining caused by nail polish, superficial ridges, or mild uneven texture may generally be managed through suitable nail-care practices when there are no signs of an underlying medical condition. However, signs such as redness, swelling, pain, pus, suspected infection, bleeding, unexplained nail separation, significant trauma, abnormal nail growth, or unusual dark streaks require caution. In such cases, the service should be postponed and the client should be referred to a qualified healthcare professional or dermatologist for appropriate assessment. Cosmetic procedures should not be used to cover or manage suspected infections or medical conditions. The nail technician's responsibility is to recognise visible signs, make safe service decisions, and refer when necessary, not to diagnose or treat medical conditions.

6. Benefits of Proper Nail Assessment

Proper nail assessment helps the nail technician select suitable techniques and products according to the client's individual nail condition. It also helps identify

weakened or damaged nails before treatment, reducing the possibility of further injury and supporting the protection of the natural nail.

Assessment, documentation, and timely referral also contribute to professional risk management. When nail technicians demonstrate careful assessment, appropriate hygiene, and safe decision-making, they can build client confidence and provide more consistent and professional services.

A proper nail assessment therefore provides a foundation for safe, personalised, and client-centred nail services. It enables the nail technician to make informed decisions about whether to proceed with a service or refer the client, while prioritising natural nail health and client safety.

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Nail health assessment and client consultation role-play

Materials Required:

1. Manicure table and chairs
2. Sample client consultation forms
3. Nail examination tools (nail file, cuticle pusher, nail brush)
4. Magnifying lamp
5. Disposable gloves
6. Hand sanitiser
7. Notebook and pen for recording observations
8. Reference sheet of common nail disorders (with pictures)

Procedure:

- Students work in pairs as a client and nail technician using consultation forms and required materials.
- The nail technician greets the client, sanitises hands, asks questions about nail history and health, and completes the consultation form.
- The client's nails are examined for signs like discolouration, ridges, splitting, inflammation, or lifting.
- The nail technician decides whether to continue the service or refer the client to a medical professional if needed.
- Students swap roles, repeat the activity, and receive feedback on communication, observation, and professionalism.

Activity 2: Identify nail disorders

Materials Required:

1. Nail disorder reference chart
2. Magnifying glass
3. Gloves
4. Notepad
5. Pen
6. Sample nail images

Procedure:

- Provide students with gloves, a magnifying glass, and a nail disorder reference chart.
- Distribute sample nail images showing various conditions.
- Instruct students to examine each image, identify the disorder using the chart, and note symptoms and possible causes in the notepad.
- Discuss findings and appropriate client advice, such as seeking medical consultation.

Activity 3: Nail care hygiene demonstration**Materials Required:**

1. Manicure tools (sterilised)
2. UV sterilizer
3. Gloves
4. Moisturiser
5. Nail brush
6. Hygiene guide

Procedure:

- Pair students and provide sterilised manicure tools, gloves, a UV storage cabinet, moisturiser, a nail brush, and a hygiene guide.
- One student demonstrates a hygienic manicure on their partner, focusing on gentle cuticle care, proper tool sterilisation, and applying moisturiser to prevent dry nail folds.
- The observer records the steps followed, referencing the hygiene guide to ensure compliance with precautions (e.g., avoiding over-cutting cuticles).
- Discuss how these practices prevent disorders like paronychia or onycholysis.
- Never perform advanced nail services on infected or damaged nails.

Check Your Progress**A. Multiple Choice Questions**

1. What should a nail technician do before performing an advanced nail service?
 - a) Apply the nail enhancement immediately
 - b) Assess the condition of the natural nails and surrounding skin
 - c) Buff the nails heavily
 - d) Remove the cuticle completely
2. Which structure produces new nail cells and plays an important role in nail growth?
 - a) Nail bed
 - b) Nail plate
 - c) Nail matrix
 - d) Lunula

3. Which of the following may indicate that a nail service should be postponed?
 - a) Smooth nail surface
 - b) Uniform nail colour
 - c) Redness, swelling, or pus
 - d) Slight natural curve
4. Which practice helps reduce the risk of cross-contamination during nail services?
 - a) Sharing unclean tools
 - b) Avoiding hand hygiene
 - c) Cleaning and disinfecting the workstation
 - d) Reusing disposable items
5. What should a nail technician do when a nail condition requires medical assessment?
 - a) Diagnose and treat the condition
 - b) Cover the condition with an enhancement
 - c) Continue the service as normal
 - d) Refer the client to a qualified healthcare professional

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. The _____ is the visible, hard part of the natural nail.
2. The _____ produces new nail cells and plays an important role in nail growth.
3. Proper hand _____ should be practiced before and after every nail service.
4. A thorough client _____ helps identify nail history, allergies, and possible contraindications.
5. Suspected infections or significant nail abnormalities should be referred to a qualified _____ professional.

C. Subjective Questions

1. Explain the characteristics of a healthy nail and describe the visible changes that may require further assessment.
2. Why is nail assessment important before performing an advanced nail service?
3. Describe the important sanitation and hygiene practices that should be followed during nail services.
4. Explain the importance of client consultation and record keeping before an advanced nail service.
5. Explain the criteria a nail technician should consider when deciding whether to proceed with a nail service or refer the client to a healthcare professional.

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- identify the main characteristics of healthy nails and recognise visible nail abnormalities;

- explain the importance of assessing nail health before performing advanced nail services; and
- demonstrate appropriate sanitation and hygiene practices during nail services.

Unit 2 | UV Gel Nail Enhancement Techniques

Unit 2 on **UV Gel Nail Enhancement Techniques** covers comprehensive knowledge and practical skills required to perform professional UV gel nail enhancement services. It includes different UV gel products, their composition, properties, benefits, and safe usage. It also highlights natural nail preparation, gel application and curing techniques, safe handling of products and equipment, hygiene and safety practices, common application errors, and appropriate aftercare for maintaining healthy, durable, and well-finished nail enhancements. This unit consists of the following sessions:

[1] **Introduction to UV Gel Nail Systems** deals with UV gel nail systems, including product types, tools, equipment, and their advantages over other enhancement systems. It also explains how UV gel works, its chemical properties, and essential safety precautions when working with gel products and UV lamps.

[2] **Step-by-step UV Gel Application Process** covers the complete UV gel application procedure, including nail preparation, base application, builder gel techniques, shaping, refining, and finishing. It emphasises correct product control, brush handling, and proper layering techniques to achieve strong and smooth enhancements.

[3] **UV/LED Gel Curing Techniques** describes proper curing techniques using UV lamps. It also covers correct curing times, lamp positioning, product compatibility, and safety measures to prevent under-curing or overexposure. Understanding curing technology ensures durability, shine, and client protection.

[4] **Nail Art Concepts, Tools, and Basic Design Techniques** deals with the fundamental nail art concepts, essential tools, and basic design techniques suitable for UV gel enhancements. It encourages creativity while maintaining professional standards, helping create simple yet attractive designs that enhance overall service quality.

Session 1: Introduction to UV Gel Nail Systems

UV gel nail systems are widely used in professional nail enhancement services to create durable, glossy, and natural-looking finishes. They involve the application of gel-based products that are cured under UV or LED light to form a strong and flexible finish. Different gel products, materials, tools, and equipment are used according to the requirements of the service. Proper preparation, application, curing,

maintenance, removal, and aftercare are essential for achieving safe and professional results.

1. Understanding UV Gel Nail Systems

UV gel nails are a professional nail enhancement system that creates durable, glossy, and natural-looking finishes. Gel products are applied to the natural nail or an extension and cured under a UV or LED lamp, where they polymerise and harden to form a strong, flexible finish.

UV gel services can be used for nail extensions, colour overlays, strengthening, and nail designs. Common products include base gels, builder gels, soft gels, hard gels, coloured gels, and gel polishes. Proper nail preparation, application, curing, shaping, finishing, maintenance, safe removal, and aftercare are essential for professional results.

2. Types of UV Gel Products

Different UV gel products are formulated for specific purposes in nail enhancement and manicure services (Fig. 2.1). The main types of UV gel products are as follows:

- i) Base Gel:** Base gel is applied as the initial gel layer. It provides a suitable foundation for subsequent gel applications and helps improve adhesion to the natural nail.
- ii) Builder Gel:** Builder gel is used to create structure, thickness, and strength in the nail enhancement. Depending on the product and application technique, it can also be used to create additional length.



Fig. 2.1: Types of UV gel products

iii) Soft Gel: Soft gel is a more flexible gel system commonly used for natural-nail overlays and certain types of nail extensions. It is generally designed to provide flexibility while maintaining a durable finish.

iv) Hard Gel: Hard gel is a durable gel system used to build and reinforce the nail structure. Depending on the system, it can be used for overlays and extensions and generally provides greater rigidity than soft gel.

v) Coloured Gel/Gel Polish: Coloured gel or gel polish is used to provide long-lasting colour and decorative finishes. It is typically applied in thin layers and cured according to the manufacturer's instructions.

vi) Top Gel: Top gel is applied as the final layer of the gel service. It helps protect the underlying layers, improves durability, and provides a smooth, glossy finish. Some top gels are also available in matte finishes.

3. Materials Used in UV Gel Nail Services

UV gel nail services involve a range of specially formulated products, each designed to perform a specific function during the nail enhancement process. The materials used may vary depending on the gel system, service type, and manufacturer's instructions. Common materials include base gel, builder gel, coloured gel or gel polish, and top gel.

Base gel provides a suitable foundation for subsequent gel layers and helps promote adhesion to the natural nail. Builder gel is used to create structure, thickness, strength, and, depending on the product, additional length. Coloured gel or gel polish provides colour and decorative effects, while top gel forms the final protective layer and provides a smooth, glossy or matte finish.

Other materials may include nail dehydrators, primers, gel cleansers, lint-free wipes, nail forms, nail tips, and other preparation or finishing products. The specific materials required depend on the product system and the type of service being performed. All products should be used according to the manufacturer's instructions.

4. Essential Tools and Equipment

The following tools and equipment are commonly used for UV gel nail services (Fig. 2.2):

i) UV or LED Lamp: A UV or LED lamp is an essential curing device used to cure gel-base products. It emits specific wavelengths of light that initiate polymerisation and allow the product to cure. Different gel products may require specific wavelengths, lamp types, and curing times. Therefore, the manufacturer's instructions should always be followed. Proper curing is essential for achieving the intended performance of the product and for reducing the risk associated with under-cured gel.

ii) Nail Files and Buffers: Nail files and buffers are used to shape the natural nails, refine gel enhancements, and smooth the nail surface. Files are available in different



Fig. 2.2: Essential gel nail tools and equipment

grits; coarser grits are generally used for shaping and refining enhancements, while finer grits are used for finishing and smoothing. Buffers are used gently to smooth the surface or remove shine when required during nail preparation. The appropriate grit should be selected for each task, and excessive filing should be avoided to minimise damage to the natural nail.

iii) Cuticle Pusher and Nippers: A cuticle pusher is used to gently push back the cuticle and expose the nail plate during preparation. Nippers are precision instruments that may be used to carefully remove loose, non-living tissue, such as hangnails or small pieces of detached cuticle tissue. Cuticle care should always be performed gently to avoid cuts, irritation, or damage to the surrounding skin and nail folds.

iv) Lint-Free Wipes: Lint-free wipes are used with suitable nail cleansers or alcohol-based products to clean and prepare the nail surface without leaving fibres behind. They may be used to remove dust, oils, surface residue, or the inhibition layer after curing, when required by the particular gel system. Using lint-free wipes helps maintain a clean and contamination-free nail surface throughout the service.

v) Gel Brushes: Gel brushes are specialised brushes designed for the controlled application and distribution of gel products. They are available in different shapes and sizes to suit applications such as builder gel, coloured gel, gel polish, and detailed nail art. The appropriate brush should be selected according to the product and service requirement. Proper brush handling helps achieve an even application and a smooth, professional finish.

vi) Nail Forms and Tips for Extensions: Nail forms and nail tips are used to create additional length and structure during gel nail extension services. Nail forms are positioned beneath the free edge of the natural nail and provide temporary support while the extension is sculpted with gel. Nail tips are pre-formed extensions that are attached to the natural nail and subsequently shaped and refined according to the desired length and style.

vii) Dappen Dishes: Dappen dishes are small containers, commonly made of glass or other suitable materials, used to hold small quantities of liquid products during nail services. Traditional UV gel systems generally do not require gel to be mixed with liquids. However, a dappen dish may be used for suitable liquids such as nail cleanser, alcohol for specific brush-cleaning procedures, or a slip solution when required by a particular gel system.

5. Safety and Hygiene Practices

Maintaining a clean and safe working environment is essential for protecting both the client and the nail technician. Work surfaces and reusable tools should be appropriately cleaned and disinfected according to established salon hygiene procedures. Reusable metal instruments should be cleaned, disinfected, and

sterilised using appropriate procedures and equipment, where required. Disposable items should be discarded safely after use.

Nail technicians should always:

- i. Perform hand hygiene before and after each service.
- ii. Wear gloves when appropriate.
- iii. Avoid direct skin contact with uncured gel.
- iv. Keep gel products away from the surrounding skin and nail folds.
- v. Ensure adequate ventilation during filing and product use.
- vi. Clean and disinfect the workstation before and after each service.
- vii. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for product application and curing time.
- viii. Use the recommended lamp and curing procedure for the specific gel system.
- ix. Dispose of waste safely and maintain an organised workstation.

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Perform UV Gel nail application and curing

Materials Required:

1. UV or LED lamp
2. Builder gel, base gel, top gel, and colored gel samples
3. Nail forms or tips
4. Gel brushes
5. Nail files and buffers (various grits)
6. Lint-free wipes
7. Nail cleanser or alcohol
8. Dappen dishes
9. Disposable gloves

Procedure:

- Sanitise hands and work area and wear disposable gloves.
- Prepare the nail surface by gently filing and buffing to remove shine. Clean nails with a cleanser.
- Apply nail primer or dehydrator as needed.
- Select and attach nail forms or tips if extending nail length.
- Using a gel brush, apply a thin layer of base gel to the natural nail or extension.
- Cure under the UV/LED lamp as per product instructions.
- Apply builder gel to sculpt or build the nail shape, curing each layer properly.
- Add coloured gel if desired, curing between coats.
- Finish with a layer of top gel for shine and durability; and then cure again.
- Wipe off any sticky residue with lint-free wipes and cleanser.
- Shape and buff the nails to the desired finish.
- Dispose of used materials properly and sanitise the workspace.

Activity 2: Safety and hygiene protocol simulation for UV Gel nail services

Materials Required:

1. Disposable gloves
2. Hand sanitiser
3. Surface disinfectant spray or wipes
4. Autoclave or disinfectant soak solution (simulated)
5. Nail files, buffers, cuticle pushers (both disposable and reusable tools)
6. Sample client records or checklist forms
7. UV/LED lamp

Procedure:

- Begin by explaining the importance of hygiene and safety in nail services.
- Demonstrate proper hand sanitising and glove-wearing techniques before starting a service.
- Show how to disinfect work surfaces before and after each client.
- Identify which tools are disposable and which require sterilization.
- Simulate cleaning reusable tools with disinfectant or autoclave procedures.
- Discuss proper disposal methods for single-use items.
- Simulate a client consultation to check for contraindications and nail health issues.
- Explain how to avoid skin contact with uncured gel and the importance of proper ventilation.
- Emphasise following manufacturer instructions for curing times and product handling to ensure client safety.
- Conclude with a Q&A session to reinforce best practices.

Check Your Progress

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. What is the purpose of curing UV gel under a UV or LED lamp?
 - a) To soften the gel
 - b) To remove the gel
 - c) To polymerise and harden the gel
 - d) To clean the nail
2. Which gel is used to create structure, thickness, and, depending on the product, additional length?
 - a) Base gel
 - b) Builder gel
 - c) Top gel
 - d) Coloured gel
3. Which tool is used to apply gel products with precision and control?
 - a) Nail file
 - b) Lint-free wipe

- c) Gel brush
 - d) Dappen dish
4. What is the primary purpose of nail forms and tips?
 - a) To clean the nail surface
 - b) To remove the cuticle
 - c) To create additional length and structure
 - d) To cure the gel
 5. Which practice helps reduce the risk associated with incompletely cured gel?
 - a) Using any available lamp
 - b) Following the manufacturer's curing instructions
 - c) Applying thicker layers of gel
 - d) Avoiding the use of a lamp

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. UV gel products are cured under a _____ or LED lamp.
2. _____ gel is used to create structure, thickness, and additional length.
3. _____ gel is applied as the final layer to protect the enhancement and provide a glossy finish.
4. _____ wipes are used to clean and prepare the nail surface without leaving fibres behind.
5. Uncured gel should not come into direct contact with the _____.

C. Subjective Questions

1. Explain the basic characteristics and uses of UV gel nail systems.
2. Describe the different types of UV gel products and their purposes.
3. Explain the uses of the main tools and equipment required for UV gel nail services.
4. Describe the purpose of a UV or LED lamp and explain why following the manufacturer's curing instructions is important.
5. Explain the important safety and hygiene practices that should be followed during UV gel nail services.

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- explain the basic concept and uses of UV gel nail systems;
- identify different types of UV gel products and their purposes;
- identify the materials, tools, and equipment used in UV gel nail services;
- describe the purpose of UV/led curing and the correct use of gel application tools; and
- demonstrate appropriate safety, hygiene, and product-handling practices during UV gel nail services.

Session 2: Step-by-step UV Gel Application Process

The UV gel application process is a professional technique for creating durable, glossy, and natural-looking nail enhancements. It involves careful nail preparation, correct product application, controlled shaping, and curing under a UV or LED lamp (Fig. 2.3). Each step should be performed carefully to promote proper adhesion, prevent lifting, protect the natural nail, and achieve a smooth, professional finish.

1. Nail Preparation

Proper nail preparation provides the foundation for a successful UV gel application. It helps improve gel adhesion, reduce lifting, and protect the natural nail. Before beginning, both the client's and nail technician's hands should be washed and sanitised. Any existing nail polish, gel polish, or enhancement should be removed using an appropriate product and technique, leaving the nail surface clean and free from residue. The nails should then be shaped according to the client's preference, such as square, round, oval, almond, or coffin. The free edge should be filed gently using an appropriate grit, such as a 180–240 grit file, to minimise splitting and maintain the strength of the natural nail.

Cuticle care should be performed gently. A cuticle softener or remover may be used according to the manufacturer's instructions, followed by gently pushing back the cuticle with a sanitised cuticle pusher or orangewood stick. Only non-living cuticle tissue should be removed when necessary; healthy surrounding skin should not be cut. The nail plate should be lightly buffed with a fine-grit buffer to remove surface shine and create a suitable surface for gel adhesion.

Excessive buffing should be avoided because it can thin and weaken the natural nail. Filing dust should then be removed with a clean nail brush or lint-free wipe. The nail plate should be cleansed with a suitable cleanser or isopropyl alcohol and dehydrated when required by the product system. The nail should be completely clean and dry before primer or gel is applied.



Fig. 2.3: Step-by-step UV gel application process

2. Base Gel Application

The base gel forms the bonding layer between the natural nail and subsequent gel products. It helps improve adhesion and contributes to the durability of the finished service. Apply a thin, even layer of base gel from the cuticle area towards the free edge, leaving a small gap around the cuticle and sidewalls. The product should not touch the surrounding skin, as contact can contribute to lifting and other service problems.

Lightly cap the free edge to help improve durability and reduce chipping. Cure the base gel under a compatible UV or LED lamp according to the manufacturer's instructions. The source content gives typical curing times of 30–60 seconds for LED lamps and 60–120 seconds for UV lamps; however, the manufacturer's specified curing time should take precedence. After curing, check that the base layer is thin, smooth, and even before proceeding.

3. Colour Gel Application

Colour gel should be applied in thin, even layers to achieve uniform coverage and support proper curing. Apply the first coat from the cuticle area towards the free edge, leaving a small gap around the cuticle and sidewalls. Cap the free edge lightly to improve durability. Cure the first coat according to the manufacturer's instructions. Apply a second thin coat for better colour coverage and cure it completely. A third thin coat may be applied when additional opacity or colour intensity is required.

Nail art elements such as glitter, chrome powders, decals, and foils may be added at the appropriate stage according to the product instructions. Each layer should be cured as required before applying the next product. Avoid applying thick coats because they may bubble, wrinkle, or cure unevenly. Gel should not come into contact with the surrounding skin. If uncured gel accidentally touches the skin, it should be removed before curing using an appropriate clean tool.

4. Top Coat Application and Finishing

The top coat forms the final protective layer of the UV gel service. It seals the colour, protects the enhancement from scratches and wear, and provides a glossy or matte finish. Apply a thin, even layer over the entire nail surface, ensuring complete coverage without touching the surrounding skin. Cap the free edge to improve resistance to chipping and lifting. Cure the top coat according to the manufacturer's instructions.

If the top coat leaves a dispersion or sticky layer, remove it with a lint-free wipe and the recommended cleanser or isopropyl alcohol. This step is not required when using a no-wipe top coat. Complete the service by applying cuticle oil to the cuticles and surrounding skin. Gently massage the oil into the cuticles and apply hand moisturiser if required.

5. Tips for Safe and Professional UV Gel Nail Services

Safe and professional UV gel nail services require appropriate product selection, proper nail preparation, correct curing, good application technique, and careful removal. Following the manufacturer's instructions and maintaining appropriate hygiene practices helps achieve a durable and professional result while protecting the natural nail and surrounding skin. The following guidelines should be followed during UV gel nail services:

- (i) **Select suitable products:** Choose products from reputable manufacturers and ensure that all components are compatible with the gel system being used. Avoid mixing products from different systems unless compatibility is confirmed by the manufacturers.
- (ii) **Use the appropriate curing lamp:** Use a UV or LED lamp that is compatible with the gel products. Follow the manufacturer's specified curing time and conditions for each product. Avoid relying solely on the appearance of the gel to determine whether it is fully cured.
- (iii) **Practise application techniques:** Practise on a training hand, nail trainer, or suitable practice tips to develop product control, brush handling, application accuracy, and consistent product thickness before performing services on clients.
- (iv) **Avoid contact with the skin:** Prevent uncured gel from contacting the surrounding skin and cuticles. If product accidentally comes into contact with the skin, remove it before curing according to the product manufacturer's guidance.
- (v) **Follow safe removal procedures:** Remove cured gel only according to the recommended removal method for the particular product system. Never peel, pick, or forcibly remove gel, as this can remove layers of the natural nail and cause damage.
- (vi) **Maintain hygiene and sanitation:** Keep the workstation, tools, and equipment clean and appropriately sanitised. Follow established salon hygiene and infection-control procedures before, during, and after each service.
- (vii) **Ensure adequate ventilation:** Maintain good ventilation in the work area to reduce exposure to vapours and airborne dust generated during product application and filing.
- (viii) **Use appropriate PPE:** Wear suitable personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves or a mask where appropriate, and use appropriate dust-control measures during filing and removal procedures.
- (ix) **Inspect the natural nails:** Examine the nails and surrounding skin before beginning the service. Avoid performing the treatment over visibly damaged, inflamed, infected, or otherwise abnormal nails and refer the client to an appropriate healthcare professional when necessary.

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Home spa UV gel challenge

Materials Required:

1. UV/LED nail lamp (48W or higher)
2. UV gel base coat, colour polish (2-3 shades for variety), and top coat
3. Nail file (180-240 grit), buffer block, cuticle pusher, and orange sticks
4. Cuticle softener/remover and cuticle oil
5. Isopropyl alcohol (91%+), lint-free wipes, and acetone for clean-up/removal
6. Nail clippers or scissors
7. Protective gloves and a well-ventilated space

Procedure:

- Gather students (2-4 people) and set up individual stations with materials. Begin with a 5-minute discussion on nail health and safety tips from the write-up.
- Each person shapes and buffs their nails, applies cuticle softener, pushes back cuticles, and cleans with alcohol.
- Apply and cure the base coat on one hand. Simulate a 'challenge' by timing it; the fastest clean application wins a small prize.
- Apply first colour coat, cure, then second. One participant must fix a 'bubble' by wiping and reapplying.
- Apply top coat, cure, and wipe residue. Moisturise and share results via photos.
- Discuss what went well or wrong, like lamp timing issues, and plan removal for next session. This builds skills in a relaxed, supportive environment.

Check Your Progress

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. What is the first step in the UV gel application process?
 - a) Apply the top coat
 - b) Apply colour gel
 - c) Nail preparation
 - d) Apply cuticle oil
2. Why should the gel be applied in thin, even layers?
 - a) To increase product usage
 - b) To promote even curing and a smooth finish
 - c) To make removal difficult
 - d) To avoid using a curing lamp

3. What should be done if uncured gel accidentally touches the surrounding skin?
 - a) Cure it immediately
 - b) Leave it until the end of the service
 - c) Remove it before curing
 - d) Apply another layer of gel
4. When is the sticky or dispersion layer removed?
 - a) Before applying the base gel
 - b) Before applying colour gel
 - c) After curing the top coat, if required
 - d) Before nail preparation
5. Which practice helps protect the natural nail during gel removal?
 - a) Peeling off the cured gel
 - b) Forcefully scraping the nail
 - c) Following the manufacturer's recommended removal procedure
 - d) Removing the gel without preparation

B. State whether the following Statements are True or False

1. Proper nail preparation helps improve gel adhesion and reduce lifting.
2. Excessive buffing of the natural nail helps strengthen it.
3. Each gel layer should be cured according to the manufacturer's instructions.
4. Gel should be allowed to touch the surrounding skin before curing.
5. Cured gel should never be peeled or forcefully removed.

C. Subjective Questions

1. Explain the steps involved in preparing the natural nail before UV gel application.
2. Describe the correct procedure for applying and curing the base gel.
3. Explain the steps involved in applying colour gel and the precautions to be taken during application.
4. Describe the procedure for applying the top coat and completing the finishing process.
5. Explain the important safety and aftercare practices for maintaining UV gel nails and protecting the natural nail.

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- describe the steps involved in preparing the natural nail for UV gel application;
- demonstrate the correct application and curing of base, colour, and top gel;
- demonstrate the application of UV gel in thin, even layers while avoiding contact with the surrounding skin;

- identify common application errors and apply appropriate corrective measures; and
- describe the process of safe removal, aftercare, hygiene, and maintenance practices for UV gel nails.

Session 3: UV/LED Gel Curing Techniques

Curing is a critical step in UV gel nail services. During curing, UV or LED light activates photoinitiators in the gel, causing it to polymerise and harden into a durable finish. Photoinitiators are chemical compounds that decompose and produce reactive species (such as free radicals or cations) when exposed to light. Proper curing helps the gel achieve the required strength, flexibility, durability, and smooth appearance. Correct lamp selection, product compatibility, curing time, and hand positioning are essential for effective and safe curing. Proper curing is essential for achieving a strong, durable, and professional-looking gel finish. It helps the enhancement withstand normal wear while maintaining its desired appearance and flexibility. Inadequate or incorrect curing may result in lifting, peeling, wrinkling, reduced durability, or a soft and uneven surface.

1. Understanding UV and LED Lamps

UV and LED lamps cure gel products through a process known as photopolymerisation (Fig. 2.4). The light activates photoinitiators within the gel, causing the product to polymerise and harden. The appropriate lamp depends on the formulation of the gel, so the lamp must be compatible with the product system. The following are the two commonly used types of curing lamps:



Fig. 2.4: UV and LED curing lamps used for gel nail services

- UV Lamps:** UV lamps emit a broad range of ultraviolet light and can be used with compatible traditional UV gel formulations. Their curing time is generally longer than that of compatible LED systems and varies according to the product and lamp specifications.

- ii) **LED Lamps:** LED lamps emit light within a more specific wavelength range and can cure compatible gel products more quickly. However, not every gel product can be cured effectively with every LED lamp. Some modern gel systems are formulated to work with both UV and LED lamps.

The manufacturer's instructions should always be followed when selecting a lamp and determining curing time. Using an incompatible lamp or incorrect curing conditions may result in inadequately cured product, reduced durability, lifting, or an increased risk of skin sensitisation.

2. Essential Steps for Proper Curing

Proper curing requires appropriate hand positioning, a compatible lamp, and the curing time specified for the particular gel product. The following are the essential steps:

- i) **Position the Hands Correctly:** Place the hand centrally inside the UV/LED lamp so that all nails receive adequate and uniform light exposure. Keep the fingers positioned appropriately to minimise shadows and ensure even curing. Avoid touching the bulbs, LEDs, or reflective surfaces inside the lamp.
- ii) **Follow the Manufacturer's Recommended Curing Time:** Curing time varies according to the gel formulation, lamp, layer thickness, and curing system. Therefore, the manufacturer's recommended curing time should always take priority over general curing times. Typical curing times may vary depending on the gel product, layer thickness, and curing system. Base gel, colour gel, and top gel should each be cured for the time specified by the manufacturer. Each layer should be adequately cured before the next layer is applied.
- iii) **Avoid Incomplete or Incorrect Curing** Incomplete curing may leave the product inadequately polymerised, which can affect durability and increase the risk of skin sensitisation from uncured product. Incorrect curing conditions, such as using an incompatible lamp, incorrect wavelength, inadequate exposure, or inappropriate product thickness, may also affect the final result. Always use the lamp and curing procedure recommended for the specific gel system.

3. Tips for Effective and Safe Curing

The curing lamp should be kept clean by regularly removing dust, gel residue, and other contaminants from its interior and accessible surfaces using a soft, lint-free cloth and following the manufacturer's cleaning instructions. A UV/LED lamp compatible with the gel system should always be used, as wattage alone does not determine curing effectiveness; wavelength, lamp design, exposure, and product formulation also influence curing. During curing, the hand should be placed centrally inside the lamp, with the fingers positioned so that each nail receives adequate light exposure without overlapping or creating shadows.

Product compatibility should also be checked, as different gel products may require specific wavelengths or curing systems, and the manufacturer's recommended curing procedure should always be followed. Unnecessary or prolonged UV exposure should be avoided; clients concerned about UV exposure may apply broad-spectrum sunscreen to the hands while avoiding the nail plate or wear suitable UV-protective fingerless gloves designed for nail services. Following these tips helps achieve a smooth, durable, and glossy finish (Fig. 2.5).



Fig. 2.5: Tips for effective and safe curing

4. Common Mistakes and Troubleshooting

Common mistakes during UV gel curing can affect the appearance, durability, and safety of the finished service. Incorrect curing time, improper hand positioning, incompatible products or lamps, and excessive product application may result in problems such as lifting, peeling, wrinkling, uneven curing, or a soft surface. Table 2.1 describes common curing problems, their possible causes, and appropriate corrective measures.

Table 2.1: Common UV gel curing problems, causes, and corrective measures

Common Problem	Possible Cause	Corrective Action
Gel lifting or peeling	Inadequate nail preparation, product touching the skin, or unsuitable application	Review nail preparation, keep product away from the skin, and apply appropriate thin layers
Bubbling in gel	Air trapped during application or contamination	Apply the product evenly and ensure the nail surface is clean
Sticky surface after curing	Normal dispersion layer or incomplete curing	If a dispersion layer is expected, remove it with the recommended cleanser. If the product remains soft, check lamp compatibility and curing procedure
Uneven surface	Uneven product application	Improve brush control and level the product before curing
Gel discolouration	Product or environmental factors, contamination, or improper storage	Follow manufacturer's storage and application instructions and prevent contamination

Mastering curing techniques helps achieve durable, professional-quality gel services while maintaining the health and integrity of the natural nails. Proper lamp selection, product compatibility, hand positioning, curing procedures, and equipment maintenance help prevent common problems and support safe, consistent results.

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Proper curing time and lamp usage practice

Materials Required:

1. UV lamp and LED lamp
2. UV gel base coat, builder gel, coloured gel, and top coat
3. Nail tips or mannequin hands
4. Timer or stopwatch
5. Gel brushes
6. Lint-free wipes and cleanser

Procedure:

- Prepare the mannequin nails by filing and buffing as per standard nail prep.
- Apply a thin layer of UV gel base coat on nails.
- Cure the nails under the UV lamp for the manufacturer-recommended time (e.g., 2 minutes).
- Repeat the process with LED lamp curing for the recommended time (e.g., 30-60 seconds).
- Compare and record observations of hardness and finish after each curing session
- Continue applying coloured gel and top coat, curing each layer as required.
- Discuss the differences between curing times and the effectiveness of UV vs LED lamps.
- Reflect on the importance of following curing times and lamp manufacturer guidelines.

Activity 2: Troubleshooting common curing problems

Materials Required:

1. UV lamp
2. Gel nail products (base, colour, top coat)
3. Mannequin hand or nail tips
4. Nail file and buffer
5. Lint-free wipes and cleanser
6. Sample case studies of curing

Procedure:

- Present students with simulated nails showing common curing problems (either real or described).
- Students examine and identify possible causes (e.g., under-curing, wrong lamp, thick gel layers).

- Apply corrective steps such as re-curing for the correct time, filing off uncured gel, or adjusting gel application thickness.
- Demonstrate proper curing techniques to prevent these problems.
- Discuss the importance of ventilation and safety precautions when curing gels.
- Conclude with a group discussion on best practices and safety measures during curing.

Check Your Progress

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. What happens during the curing of UV gel?
 - a) The gel evaporates
 - b) Photoinitiators are activated
 - c) The gel becomes thinner
 - d) The nail plate absorbs the gel
2. Which factor should be considered when selecting a curing lamp?
 - a) Lamp colour only
 - b) Lamp size only
 - c) Gel formulation and product compatibility
 - d) Brand name only
3. Why is correct hand positioning important during curing?
 - a) To reduce product quantity
 - b) To ensure adequate and uniform light exposure
 - c) To change the gel colour
 - d) To soften the nail plate
4. What may result from incomplete curing?
 - a) Increased durability
 - b) Improved flexibility
 - c) Reduced durability and increased risk of skin sensitisation
 - d) Faster nail growth
5. What can cause bubbling in gel?
 - a) Proper curing
 - b) Air trapped during application or contamination
 - c) Correct hand positioning
 - d) Clean nail surface

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. UV and LED lamps cure gel products through a process known as _____.
2. The light activates _____ within the gel during curing.

3. Curing time varies according to the gel formulation, lamp, layer thickness, and _____ system.
4. A _____ layer may remain on some gel products after curing.
5. The curing lamp should be kept clean and free from dust and gel _____.

C. Subjective Questions

1. Explain the importance of proper curing in UV gel nail services.
2. Differentiate between UV lamps and LED lamps used for gel curing.
3. Describe the essential steps for achieving proper and effective curing.
4. Explain the common causes of gel lifting, bubbling, and an uneven surface.
5. Describe the safety precautions that should be followed while using UV/LED curing lamps.

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- explain the curing process and its importance in UV gel nail services;
- differentiate between UV and LED curing lamps;
- describe the essential steps for proper and effective curing;
- identify common curing problems, their causes, and corrective measures; and
- demonstrate safe practices for lamp use, product compatibility, and UV exposure.

Session 4: Nail Art Concepts, Tools, and Basic Design Techniques

Nail art is a creative branch of beauty services that involves decorating fingernails and toenails using colours, patterns, textures, and decorative materials. It ranges from simple polish application to techniques such as freehand painting, dotting, striping, stamping, glitter, foils, decals, and embellishments. Nail art enhances the appearance of the nails and allows clients to express their personal style, preferences, and creativity.

1. Understanding Nail Art

Nail art plays an important role in beauty services by enhancing the appearance of well-groomed nails and allowing clients to express their personality, fashion preferences, cultural themes, and creativity. Personalised nail-art services can improve client satisfaction and expand the range of services offered by a salon. For nail technicians, nail art also develops artistic ability, precision, and technical skills.

(i) Nail Art Trends

Nail-art trends continue to change with fashion and social media. Some popular trends include:

- i) Minimalist designs and negative space
- ii) 3D embellishments
- iii) Seasonal and festive themes
- iv) Matte, chrome, and holographic finishes
- v) Modern French-tip designs

(ii) Designing According to Nail Shape

The shape of the nail influences how a design appears and should be considered when planning its layout and placement. Common nail shapes include square, round, almond, coffin, and stiletto (Fig. 2.6). Each shape has a different surface area, length, and contour, which can affect the balance and visual effect of a design.

For example, simple lines and French-tip designs can complement square and round nails, while elongated patterns and detailed designs may suit almond, coffin, and stiletto shapes. Selecting a design that complements the nail shape helps maintain proportion, create visual balance, and enhance the overall appearance of the finished nail art.



Fig. 2.6: Nail shapes and suitable nail-art designs

(iii) Basic Colour Theory

Colour selection helps create balanced and visually appealing nail designs. Warm colours such as red, orange, and yellow generally create energetic effects, while cool colours such as blue, green, and purple create cooler visual effects.

Complementary colours can be used to create contrast, while neutral shades such as white, beige, and soft pastels can provide a suitable background for brighter designs.

2. Types of Nail Art

Different nail-art techniques can be selected according to the client's preferences, nail shape, occasion, and desired effect. The types of nail art are as follows (Fig. 2.7):

- i) **Freehand Nail Art:** Designs are painted directly onto the nail using fine brushes or nail-art pens. This technique is suitable for floral patterns, characters, lettering, and abstract designs.
- ii) **Dotting:** Dotting involves creating uniform dots using dotting tools or similar pointed tools. Different dot sizes can be used to create polka dots, flowers, mandalas, and geometric patterns.
- iii) **Striping:** Striping uses fine brushes, striping tapes, or nail-art pens to create thin lines, curves, borders, geometric patterns, and French-tip designs.
- iv) **Stamping:** Stamping transfers pre-designed patterns from an engraved metal plate onto the nail using a stamper and scraper. It is useful for detailed floral, lace, geometric, animal-print, and seasonal designs.
- v) **Glitter and Foil:** Glitter adds sparkle and texture and can be used for full coverage, glitter tips, or ombré effects. Foils create metallic, reflective, or holographic effects.
- vi) **Decals:** Decals are ready-made designs that can be transferred or applied to the nail surface. They provide a quick way to create neat decorative designs.
- vii) **Rhinestones and Embellishments:** Rhinestones, pearls, beads, and studs add three-dimensional decorative effects and are commonly used for bridal, festive, party, and accent-nail designs.



Fig. 2.7: Types of nail art

Different techniques can also be combined to create customised designs according to the client's preferences and occasion.

3. Nail Art Tools and Products

The selection of tools depends on the technique and design being created. The description and uses of nail art tools and products are given in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Nail art tools, products, and their uses

Tool/Product	Description and Uses
Dotting Tools	Dotting tools have rounded metal tips of different sizes. They are used to create dots, circles, flowers, hearts, and geometric patterns. Reusable tools should be cleaned and sanitised after use and stored properly.
Stripers	Stripers are fine, long-bristled brushes used to create thin lines, curves, swirls, borders, French-tip lines, and geometric patterns. They should be cleaned immediately after use to maintain the shape of the bristles.
Nail Art Brushes	Nail-art brushes are available in different shapes and sizes for specific techniques: Flat brushes for colour application, blending, gradients, and ombré effects; Angled brushes for French smile lines, petals, and angled strokes; Detail brushes for fine artwork, lettering, and intricate details; Liner brushes for long thin lines, swirls, and outlines; and Fan brushes for blending, glitter, feathering, and textured effects.
Sponges	Sponges are used to blend colours and create soft transitions. They are particularly useful for ombré, gradient, glitter-fade, galaxy, and multi-colour effects. A clean sponge should be used for different colour combinations to minimise contamination.
Stamping Tools	Nail stamping uses three main tools: an engraved stamping plate, stamper, and scraper. Together, these tools transfer detailed and repeated patterns onto the nail surface.
Nail Polishes and Special-Effect Products	Regular nail polishes are suitable for simple nail-art designs and are available in a wide range of colours and finishes. Gel polishes provide a durable, high-gloss finish and require curing under a compatible UV/LED lamp. Special-effect top coats can create matte, shimmer, holographic, metallic, or other decorative finishes.

Figure 2.8 illustrates various tools and equipment used in UV professional nail art. These specialised tools are essential for achieving precision, control, and consistency during nail art procedures. They help nail technicians create intricate designs, apply UV products accurately, and achieve smooth, attractive, and durable finishes while maintaining professional standards.



Fig. 2.8: Nail art tools and products

4. Basic Nail Art Techniques and Professional Practices

The following practices help ensure a smooth, durable, safe, and professional nail-art service:

- i) **Nail Preparation:** Proper nail preparation is essential for creating a smooth and long-lasting nail-art service. The hands and nails should first be cleaned and sanitised. The nails are then trimmed and shaped according to the desired style, followed by light buffing when appropriate. A suitable base coat may then be applied to protect the natural nail and support product adhesion.
- ii) **Layering and Curing:** For gel-based nail art, products should be applied in thin, even layers and each layer should be cured according to the manufacturer's instructions. A suitable top coat is applied at the end to protect the design, enhance shine, and improve durability.
- iii) **Client Consultation:** A consultation should be carried out before beginning the service. The nail technician should discuss the client's preferred colours, design, theme, level of intricacy, and occasion. The final design can then be selected or customised according to the client's preferences, nail shape, outfit, and event.
- iv) **Hygiene and Safety:** Hygiene is essential throughout the nail-art service. Workstations should be kept clean, and reusable tools should be properly cleaned and disinfected according to salon procedures. Disposable items should be replaced between clients. Nail art should not be performed on broken, inflamed, or infected skin. Suitable products, adequate ventilation, and appropriate protective measures should be used to minimise contamination and product exposure.

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Creating a gradient nail art using the sponge technique

Materials Required:

1. Base coat and top coat
2. Two or three nail polish shades (contrasting or complementary)
3. Nail art sponge or cosmetic sponge
4. Nail polish remover
5. Tape or liquid latex for skin protection
6. Nail file and buffer
7. Cotton swabs and a clean-up brush

Procedure:

- Clean, shape, buff, and apply a base coat. Let it dry.
- Usually, the lightest shade among the selected colours. Allow it to dry.
- Protect the skin around the nail: Use tape or liquid latex to avoid staining.
- On a clean sponge, apply stripes of each nail polish colour side by side.
- Gently press the sponge onto the nail in a rolling motion. Repeat 2–3 times for a bold gradient.
- Use a clean-up brush dipped in remover to clean around the nail.
- Seal the design and enhance blending with a glossy top coat.

Activity 2: Designing a nail using dotting tools and stripers

Materials Required:

1. Base coat and top coat
2. Two nail polish colours (base and design colour)
3. Dotting tools (varied sizes)
4. Striping brush or striping tape
5. Nail polish remover
6. Cotton swabs and nail polish corrector pen
7. Tissues and sanitiser
8. Disposable gloves

Procedure:

- Ensure a clean workspace and proper hygiene.
- Clean, trim, file, and buff the nails. Apply base coat and let it dry.
- Let it dry completely.
- Dip into the design polish and create floral or dotted patterns.
- Add straight lines, borders, or geometric patterns for contrast.
- Allow the design to dry and clean up any mistakes with remover.
- Apply a top coat to protect the artwork and add shine.

Check Your Progress

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. Which nail-art technique involves transferring a pre-designed pattern from an engraved plate onto the nail?
 - a) Dotting
 - b) Stamping
 - c) Striping
 - d) Freehand painting
2. Which tool is mainly used to create dots, circles, flowers, and geometric patterns?
 - a) Fan brush
 - b) Sponge
 - c) Dotting tool
 - d) Scraper
3. Which nail shape may be suitable for elongated patterns and detailed nail-art designs?
 - a) Almond
 - b) Round
 - c) Square
 - d) All of the above
4. Which type of product is used to create matte, holographic, or metallic finishes?
 - a) Base coat
 - b) Special-effect top coat
 - c) Nail cleanser
 - d) Cuticle oil
5. Which practice is essential for maintaining hygiene during nail-art services?
 - a) Reusing disposable items
 - b) Applying products over infected skin
 - c) Cleaning and disinfecting reusable tools
 - d) Skipping nail preparation

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. _____ involves creating uniform dots using specialised tools.
2. A _____ is used to transfer pre-designed patterns from an engraved plate onto the nail.
3. _____ brushes are used to create long, thin lines, swirls, and outlines.
4. Gel polish requires curing under a compatible _____ lamp.
5. A clean and properly prepared nail surface helps create a smooth and _____ nail-art service.

C. Subjective Questions

1. What is nail art? Explain its importance in beauty services.
2. Describe any four common types of nail-art techniques.
3. Explain how nail shape should be considered when selecting a nail-art design.
4. Describe the uses of any four nail-art tools or products.
5. Explain the importance of nail preparation, layering and curing, client consultation, and hygiene during a nail-art service.

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- explain the concept, importance, and current trends in nail art;
- identify different nail-art techniques and select suitable designs according to nail shape and occasion;
- identify common nail-art tools, products, and their specific uses;
- describe basic nail-art techniques, including nail preparation, layering, and curing; and
- demonstrate appropriate client consultation, hygiene, and safety practices during nail-art services.

Unit 3

Acrylic Nail Enhancement Systems

Unit 3 on **Acrylic Nail Enhancement Systems** covers in-depth knowledge and practical skills required for professional acrylic nail enhancement services. It highlights the understanding of acrylic products, including liquids and powders, their properties, and correct usage. This unit consists of the following sessions:

[1] **Introduction to Acrylic Products** describes the types of acrylic products used in nail enhancements, including monomer liquids and polymer powders. It also covers their chemical properties, mixing ratios, application techniques, and best practices for achieving strong, smooth, and durable nails.

[2] **Preparation of Natural Nails for System** covers the essential steps of preparing natural nails before acrylic application. This includes sanitising, trimming, shaping, buffing, and removing excess oils to ensure proper adhesion and reduce lifting.

[3] **Acrylic Nail Application, Shaping and Safety Practices** deals with shaping acrylic nails to desired styles while maintaining structural integrity and aesthetics. It also focuses on safety and ventilation practices to protect both the nail technician and client from chemical fumes, dust, and contamination.

Session 1: Introduction to Acrylic Products

Acrylic nail enhancements are one of the most widely used and durable nail extension methods in the beauty industry. Acrylic nails are created by combining a liquid monomer with a powder polymer to form a paste, which is then applied to the natural nail or nail tip and shaped as desired. Once exposed to air, the mixture hardens to form a strong, long-lasting extension.

Acrylic nails are one of the most popular nail enhancement techniques, prized for their durability, versatility, and creative potential. Unlike traditional polish, acrylics are created by a chemical reaction between liquid monomer and powder polymer, resulting in a hard, protective layer that can be sculpted into extensions, overlays, or artistic designs. Understanding the properties, types, and proper handling of acrylic products is essential for safe and professional nail services.

1. Acrylic Products

An acrylic nail enhancement system consists of two primary components: liquid monomer and polymer powder. When these components are combined, they undergo a chemical reaction called polymerisation, forming a strong and durable acrylic enhancement without the need for UV or LED curing. The two primary components of acrylic nail enhancement are as follows:

- i) **Liquid Monomer:** Liquid monomer is a chemical solution that reacts with polymer powder to initiate the polymerisation process, forming a workable acrylic bead. The basic composition and safety considerations for its use are as follows:
 - a) **Composition:** Professional acrylic systems commonly use Ethyl Methacrylate (EMA), which is considered safe for nail enhancement services when used according to the manufacturer's instructions and appropriate salon safety practices.
 - b) **Safety Considerations:** Methyl Methacrylate (MMA) should never be used in professional nail services. MMA can adhere excessively to the natural nail, making removal difficult and increasing the risk of nail damage, allergic reactions, and injury. Its use in cosmetic nail products is restricted or prohibited in many countries.
- ii) **Polymer Powder:** Polymer powder is available in a variety of shades and formulations to meet different application needs:
 - a) **Clear Powder:** Used for overlays, encapsulation, and transparent nail art designs.
 - b) **Pink Powder:** Creates a natural-looking nail enhancement and is commonly used for full sets and nail bed extensions.
 - c) **White Powder:** Primarily used to create French manicure tips.

- d) **Coloured and Glitter Powders:** Used to produce decorative nail art, fashion designs, and special visual effects without requiring coloured polish.

2. Formation of the Acrylic Bead

During application, the nail brush is first dipped into the liquid monomer and then into the polymer powder to form a small, workable acrylic bead. This bead is placed on the natural nail or nail tip and carefully shaped using the brush. As the monomer and polymer react, the material gradually hardens through polymerisation when exposed to air, producing a strong, durable, and long-lasting nail enhancement.

The quality of the acrylic enhancement depends on the correct ratio of liquid monomer to polymer powder, proper bead consistency, and accurate application techniques. Using professional-grade EMA-based products and following recommended safety practices helps achieve durable enhancements while protecting the health of the natural nails.

3. Proper Liquid-to-Powder Ratio

Maintaining the correct liquid-to-powder ratio is essential for successful acrylic nail application. The consistency of the acrylic bead directly affects its workability, adhesion, strength, appearance, and overall durability. A well-balanced bead allows the nail technician sufficient time to shape the enhancement before it hardens.

- i) **Excess Liquid (Wet Bead):** A bead containing too much liquid becomes runny and spreads quickly, making it difficult to control and shape. This excess liquid can affect the setting, strength, durability, and overall application of the bead in the following ways:

Effects

- Slower setting and hardening time
- Reduced strength and durability
- Increased risk of lifting or product shrinkage
- Greater possibility of flooding the cuticle area

- ii) **Insufficient Liquid (Dry Bead):** A bead containing too little liquid appears dry, grainy, or crumbly and does not spread smoothly over the nail surface. As a result, an insufficient liquid ratio can affect the application, adhesion, and overall durability of the nail enhancement in the following ways:

Effects

- Poor adhesion to the natural nail
- Difficult application and uneven surface
- Increased risk of cracking, chipping, or breakage
- Reduced durability of the nail enhancement

Achieving the correct liquid-to-powder ratio is a fundamental skill in acrylic nail application. Proper bead consistency ensures easier application, stronger adhesion, a smoother finish, and long-lasting, professional-quality nail enhancements.

4. Types of Acrylic Products

Acrylic nail enhancement systems include a variety of products designed for different application techniques, finishes, and creative effects (Fig. 3.1). Understanding the characteristics and uses of these products helps nail technicians select the most appropriate materials for safe, durable, and professional nail services. Different acrylic nail products used for creating, decorating, and enhancing artificial nails are as follows:



Fig. 3.1: Types of acrylic products for nail art

- i) **Acrylic Powder:** Acrylic powder is a fine polymer powder that is mixed with acrylic liquid (monomer) to form an acrylic bead. It is used to create and strengthen artificial nail enhancements and to build the desired nail shape and structure.
- ii) **Acrylic Liquid (Monomer):** Acrylic liquid, also called monomer, is a liquid used with acrylic powder to create an acrylic bead. When the powder and liquid are mixed, they form a workable material that can be applied to the natural nail or nail extension.
- iii) **Acrylic Coloured Powders:** Acrylic coloured powders are available in different colours and shades. They are mixed with acrylic liquid to create coloured acrylic beads, which can be used for nail enhancements, French-style designs, colour effects, and decorative nail art.
- iv) **Acrylic Glitter Powders:** Acrylic glitter powders contain glitter particles that add shine and decorative effects to acrylic nails. They are available in different colours and glitter sizes and can be used to create sparkling nail designs and decorative finishes.
- v) **Special Effect Acrylics:** Special effect acrylics contain decorative materials such as flakes, sequins, shapes, or other particles. They are used to create unique visual effects and creative nail-art designs while building or decorating acrylic nails.

5. Types of Liquid Monomer

The type of liquid monomer used significantly affects the safety and performance of the acrylic enhancement system (Fig. 3.2). Different types of monomers are available based on their chemical composition, setting time, odour, and application requirements are as follows:

- i) **Ethyl Methacrylate (EMA):** EMA is the industry-standard monomer used in professional nail salons. When used according to the manufacturer's instructions and appropriate safety practices, it provides excellent adhesion, durability, and flexibility.
- ii) **Methyl Methacrylate (MMA):** MMA is not recommended for professional nail services. It forms an excessively hard bond that can damage the natural nail, increase the risk of allergic reactions, and make removal difficult. Its use in cosmetic nail products is restricted or prohibited in many countries.



Fig. 3.2: Acrylic powder and monomer

6. Product Safety, Handling, Hygiene and Storage

Acrylic nail products contain chemicals that must be handled carefully to ensure the safety of both the client and the nail technician. Proper safety, ventilation, hygiene, handling, and storage practices help prevent accidents, minimise exposure to chemical vapours and nail dust, and maintain the quality of acrylic nail products. To ensure safe and effective use of acrylic nail products, the following safety and handling practices should be followed:

- i) **Ensure Adequate Ventilation:** Liquid monomer releases vapours that may irritate the eyes, skin, or respiratory system when inhaled for prolonged periods. Therefore, acrylic nail services should always be performed in a well-ventilated area. A salon extraction system, tabletop dust extractor, or local ventilation unit can be used where available to improve air quality. Working in a closed or poorly ventilated area should be avoided, particularly during services involving prolonged use of liquid monomer.

- ii) **Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** PPE helps to reduce direct contact with acrylic products and exposure to nail dust. Disposable gloves should be worn when prolonged contact with acrylic products is expected or when handling clients with sensitive skin. An appropriate face mask should be used, particularly during filing procedures, to reduce the inhalation of nail dust. Additional respiratory protection may be required according to workplace safety guidelines. Hands should be washed or sanitised before and after every service to maintain proper hygiene.
- iii) **Handle Tools and Products Correctly:** Acrylic products and tools should be handled carefully to prevent spills, contamination, product wastage, and unnecessary exposure. A dappen dish should be used to dispense only the required amount of liquid monomer. Acrylic brushes should be kept clean by removing excess product after each use and cleaning them according to the manufacturer's recommendations. This helps prevent hardened acrylic product from building up on the brushes. Clean and sanitised tools and equipment should be used for every client.
- iv) **Hygiene and Safe Storage of Products:** Proper hygiene and safe storage are essential for maintaining the quality of acrylic nail products and preventing contamination. Product containers should be closed securely immediately after use to minimise evaporation, prevent contamination, and reduce unnecessary exposure to air.

Acrylic products should be stored in a cool, dry, and well-ventilated area, away from direct sunlight, excessive heat, ignition sources, and open flames. Monomer and polymer containers should never be left open, as this may lead to evaporation, contamination, or deterioration of product quality. Keep products in their original, clearly labelled containers and store them in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Any spilled product should be cleaned promptly using the appropriate procedure to maintain a safe and hygienic workstation.

7. Applications and Versatility of Acrylic Nail Systems

Acrylic nail systems are highly versatile and are widely used in professional nail services to create durable, customised, and aesthetically appealing nail enhancements. Their strength, adaptability, and compatibility with a variety of nail art techniques make them suitable for both everyday wear and creative designs (Fig. 3.3). The common application of acrylic nail systems are as follows:



Fig. 3.3: Acrylic nail designs

- i) **Acrylic Overlays:** Acrylic overlays are applied directly over the natural nail to add strength, durability, and protection without increasing the nail's length. They are ideal for clients with weak or brittle nails.
- ii) **Tip Extensions:** Acrylic can be applied over artificial nail tips to extend the length of the natural nail. The enhancement is then shaped and refined to achieve the client's preferred length and style.
- iii) **Sculpted Nail Enhancements:** Using nail forms, acrylic can be sculpted directly to create customised nail extensions in a variety of lengths and shapes without the use of pre-formed tips.
- iv) **Encapsulation:** Decorative elements such as glitter, dried flowers, foils, sequins, decals, or other nail art materials can be embedded within layers of clear acrylic to create a smooth, protected, and long-lasting decorative finish.

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Perfect bead practice

Materials Required:

1. Acrylic liquid (EMA monomer)
2. Acrylic powders (clear, pink, white)
3. Dappen dish
4. Acrylic nail brush
5. Practice nail trainer or nail tips
6. Absorbent paper towels

Procedure:

- Fill a dappen dish with monomer.
- Dip the brush into the monomer, then into the powder to form a bead.
- Observe and practice creating beads of various sizes.
- Identify too-wet, too-dry, and perfect beads.
- Apply the bead on practice nails and observe texture and drying speed.
- Discuss how the ratio affects durability and finish.

Activity 2: Safe acrylic station setup

Materials Required:

1. Acrylic powder and liquid samples (labelled and unlabeled)
2. Dappen dishes
3. Lint-free wipes
4. Gloves and face masks
5. Empty salon setup (table, chairs, bins)
6. Safety checklist handout

Procedure:

- Set up a complete acrylic nail station with the variety of acrylic products (some safe, some unsafe, e.g., labelled MMA), including proper storage, ventilation tools, and disposal system.

- Trainer checks each setup using a checklist and provides feedback.
- Discuss the importance of safety compliance in professional practice.

Check Your Progress

A. Multiple Choice Questions

- What is formed when acrylic liquid and powder are combined correctly?
 - Gel bead
 - Polish drop
 - Acrylic bead
 - Plastic layer
- What is the main purpose of the liquid monomer in acrylic nails?
 - To add shine
 - To glue tips
 - To activate polymerisation with powder
 - To clean the nail
- Which type of monomer is considered safe and standard for professional acrylic services?
 - MMA (Methyl Methacrylate)
 - EMA (Ethyl Methacrylate)
 - Acetone
 - Formaldehyde
- What is the consequence of using too much liquid in the acrylic bead?
 - It cures faster
 - It becomes too hard
 - It takes longer to dry and becomes weak
 - It creates a shiny layer
- What happens if the liquid-to-powder ratio is too dry?
 - The nail lifts and cracks
 - The nail shines more
 - It smoothens the nail surface
 - It creates a glossy finish
- Why should acrylic products be used in a well-ventilated area?
 - To cool the nails
 - To improve drying speed
 - To avoid inhaling harmful fumes
 - To sterilise tools
- Which of the following tools is used to hold the acrylic liquid during application?
 - Mixing bowl
 - Dappen dish

- c) Acrylic tray
 - d) Nail soak bowl
8. Which powder colour is typically used for French-style tips in acrylic nails?
 - a) Clear
 - b) Pink
 - c) Glitter
 - d) White
 9. What must be done before applying the acrylic bead to a nail surface?
 - a) Apply nail polish
 - b) Clean and buff the nail surface
 - c) Soak the nails in water
 - d) Apply top coat
 10. What is the term for the chemical process that hardens acrylic when exposed to air?
 - a) Dehydration
 - b) Exfoliation
 - c) Polymerisation
 - d) Hydration

B. Subjective Questions

1. Describe the step-by-step process of preparing the acrylic bead using the correct liquid-to-powder ratio.
2. List the safety precautions a nail technician must take while working with acrylic liquid and powder.
3. Explain the consequences of using MMA in acrylic services and why it is not recommended.
4. Compare and contrast the characteristics and uses of clear, pink, and white acrylic powders.
5. Design a safe and hygienic workstation setup for performing acrylic nail enhancements using liquid and powder products.

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- explain the chemical process of polymerisation between liquid monomer and powder polymer in acrylic nail application;
- identify different types of acrylic powders and monomers, including their characteristics and appropriate uses in nail enhancements;
- demonstrate the correct ratio and mixing technique of liquid monomer to powder polymer to achieve strong, durable acrylic nails; and
- differentiate between safe and unsafe monomer types.

Session 2: Preparation of Natural Nails for System

Proper natural nail preparation is the foundation of every successful nail enhancement service. The longevity, durability, and overall appearance of acrylic enhancements depend heavily on how well the nail plate has been cleansed, refined, and primed. Inadequate preparation often results in common service breakdowns such as lifting, cracking, poor adhesion, and discomfort for the client. Meticulous prep not only enhances performance but also supports natural nail health throughout the wear and maintenance cycle.

1. Natural Nail Preparation

Natural nail preparation is a crucial first step in ensuring the success and long life of any nail enhancement (Fig. 3.4). This process typically involves cleansing the nails to remove any oils, dirt, or product residue, followed by gently pushing back and removing excess cuticle to expose the full nail plate. The nail surface is then lightly buffed to remove shine and create a slightly roughened texture, which helps improve adhesion. Any ridges or imperfections are smoothed out, and the nail is checked for any signs of damage, infection, or lifting that may need to be addressed before application. Thorough preparation not only enhances the durability and appearance of the finished enhancement but also helps prevent lifting, infection, and premature breakage. The various steps are involved in the nail preparation are as follows:



- i) **Sanitation and Safety Protocols:** Before any physical work begins, both the nail technician and the client must sanitise their hands. This step reduces the risk of cross-contamination and ensures a professional and hygienic service environment. The workspace should also be disinfected, and all implements must be thoroughly sanitised or sterilised according to regional regulations.
- ii) **Removing Surface Debris and Previous Product:** Use a non-acetone remover to take off any old polish, oils, or topical residue. Non-acetone removers are preferred at this stage because they do not excessively dehydrate the nail plate,

Fig. 3.4: Nail preparation process to be followed for product application

allowing the nail technician to control moisture levels more effectively during the prep process.

- iii) **Nail Shaping and Length Adjustment:** Using a 180-grit file, shape the free edge to the client's desired style, such as square, round, oval, or squoval. This grit level is ideal for natural nails as it shapes efficiently without causing unnecessary stress or micro-tears in the keratin layers. If length adjustment is necessary, trim the nails first and then refine with the file for smoothness and symmetry.
- iv) **Cuticle Care:** Apply a cuticle remover or softener to gently break down excess non-living tissue. Using a cuticle pusher or orange stick, push back the cuticles with controlled, gentle strokes. The aim is to lift dead tissue from the nail plate without scraping aggressively.
- v) **Removing Surface Shine:** Lightly buff the nail plate with a fine-grit buffer (typically 220–240 grit). The goal is not to thin the nail but to remove the natural hydrophobic shine. Creating a slightly textured surface enhances mechanical adhesion and allows the acrylic to bond securely. Over-buffing can weaken the nail, so a light, even touch is essential.
- vi) **Cleansing and Dehydration:** After buffing, thoroughly remove dust using a lint-free wipe. A nail dehydrator or isopropyl alcohol (70–90%) is then applied to eliminate natural oils and temporary surface moisture. This step prepares the keratin layers for optimal primer performance.
- vii) **Primer Application:** Apply either acid-based or acid-free primer, depending on product line and client needs:
 - (a) Acid-based primers provide strong adhesion for clients prone to lifting, but must be used sparingly.
 - (b) Acid-free primers (also called bonding agents) are gentler and suitable for most clients.
 - (c) Primer should be applied in a thin, controlled layer and allowed to air-dry until it appears chalky or tacky, depending on the formulation.

2. Sculpting Acrylic Nails

Once the natural nail is properly prepped, the sculpting phase can begin. Sculpting acrylic involves building an extension using nail forms rather than attaching a pre-made tip. This method provides superior customisation, strength, and structural integrity and is widely used in professional and competitive nail artistry. The following steps are involved in sculpting acrylic nails:

- i) **Fitting the Nail Form:** Select a form that matches the client's natural nail shape and width. Proper form placement is essential for creating a strong and aesthetically balanced enhancement. Slide the form underneath the free edge, aligning it with the natural nail's c-curve. Ensure that the form fits snugly, with no gaps at the sidewalls or hyponychium. Secure the form tabs to maintain

stability and alignment during sculpting. A well-fitted form prevents product seepage and helps the nail technician create consistent lengths and shapes.

- ii) **Creating the Acrylic Bead:** Select a clean, properly sized acrylic brush. Dip the brush into the monomer liquid, allowing it to fully absorb, and then wipe off excess liquid to control the bead size. Touch the brush to the acrylic powder to create a bead with a smooth, pearl-like finish. The ratio of liquid to powder is critical. A correctly mixed bead should be workable without being runny or crumbly.
- iii) **Building the Extension:** Start with the extension edge by placing the first bead at the junction between the form and natural nail. Gently press and guide the bead outward along the form to create the length and initial shape. Once the extension is outlined, place additional beads. Apply the second bead to the centre of the nail to create the apex, which is the highest point that provides strength and durability. Apply the third bead near the cuticle using a small amount of acrylic and blend it seamlessly without flooding the cuticle area. Use light, controlled strokes to mould the acrylic while it is in its pliable phase. Focus on creating a strong apex, smooth sidewalls, and a tapered cuticle area for a natural, well-balanced structure.
- iv) **Curing and Testing Hardness:** Allow the acrylic to polymerise fully. The nail should make a crisp 'click' sound when lightly tapped, indicating complete curing. Avoid filing too soon, as premature filing can cause lifting or product breakdown.
- v) **Refining the Shape:** Once the acrylic has hardened, use a 150–180 grit file to refine the overall structure, sidewalls, and free edge. Follow with a smoother buffer to eliminate fine scratches and create a polished surface. Ensure that all edges are even and the apex is proportionate to the length of the enhancement.
- vi) **Finishing Touches:** After removing the dust, apply a high-quality top coat, gel polish, or finishing glaze to seal and protect the acrylic. This final layer enhances shine, durability, and the overall appearance of the enhancement.
- vii) **Professional Considerations:** When performing acrylic nail enhancements, it is essential to uphold professional standards that ensure client safety, product effectiveness, and overall service quality. Always prioritise sanitation and correct product usage. Be mindful of proper ventilation when working with monomers. Maintain consistent filing techniques to prevent damage to the natural nail.

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Flawless nail prep simulation

Materials Required:

1. Nail file (180 grit)
2. Buffer

3. Cuticle remover & pusher
4. Nail dehydrator or alcohol
5. Primer (acid-free)
6. Mannequin hand or live model
7. Lint-free wipes

Procedure:

- Sanitise hands and prepare the workstation.
- Preparation of nails through procedure.
- Monitor technique and pressure used on cuticles and nail plate.
- Inspect nails under light for smoothness and cleanliness.
- Discuss common prep mistakes that lead to lifting.

Activity 2: Freehand sculpting on nail forms

Materials Required:

1. Nail forms
2. Acrylic liquid (monomer) and powder
3. Acrylic brush
4. Dappen dish
5. Paper towels
6. Practice hand or nail trainer
7. Nail file and buffer

Procedure:

- Fit nail forms correctly to practice nails.
- Create beads and apply them starting from the free edge.
- Build the nail structure, focusing on shape and apex.
- Allow to harden; then file and buff to refine shape.
- Assess structure, smoothness, and symmetry.

Check Your Progress

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. What is the primary reason for lightly buffing the natural nail before applying acrylic?
 - a) To polish the nail surface
 - b) To remove the cuticles
 - c) To create a rough surface for better adhesion
 - d) To shorten the nail length

2. Which grit file is generally recommended for shaping natural nails during preparation?
 - a) 80 grit
 - b) 100 grit

- c) 180 grit
 - d) 240 grit
3. What is the purpose of applying a nail primer before acrylic application?
 - a) To soften the cuticles
 - b) To prevent lifting by improving adhesion
 - c) To speed up drying
 - d) To add shine
 4. What tool is used to gently push back the cuticles during nail prep?
 - a) Nail file
 - b) Cuticle pusher or orange stick
 - c) Buffer
 - d) Acrylic brush
 5. During acrylic sculpting, where should the apex be placed on the nail extension?
 - a) Near the cuticle
 - b) At the centre of the nail for strength
 - c) At the free edge
 - d) On the sidewalls
 6. Which of the following best describes a properly fitted nail form?
 - a) Loose with gaps under the free edge
 - b) Snug and aligned with the natural nail curve
 - c) Larger than the nail plate
 - d) Only covering half of the free edge
 7. What is the correct sequence when creating an acrylic bead?
 - a) Dip the brush in powder, then monomer
 - b) Dip the brush in the monomer, then powder
 - c) Mix powder and monomer before dipping the brush
 - d) Use powder only
 8. Why is it important to clean the nail surface with a dehydrator or alcohol before acrylic application?
 - a) To add moisture
 - b) To remove oils and dust for better bonding
 - c) To colour the nail
 - d) To soften the nail

B. Subjective Questions

1. Explain the importance of natural nail preparation in the success of acrylic nail enhancements. Describe the various steps involved in this process.

2. Discuss the role of primers in acrylic nail application. Differentiate between acid-based and acid-free primers, highlighting when each should be used.
3. Describe the process of sculpting acrylic nails using nail forms. Explain how the extension is built using the three-bead technique.

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- demonstrate proper preparation techniques for the natural nail;
- explain the importance of each step in the nail prep process;
- demonstrate the sculpting of acrylic nails using nail forms; and
- identify appropriate tools and products used in the preparation and sculpting process.

Session 3: Acrylic Nail Application, Shaping and Safety Practices

Acrylic nail enhancements are a popular choice for durable and versatile nail art. However, achieving professional results requires not only mastering shaping techniques but also adhering strictly to safety and ventilation protocols. This session covers both aspects to ensure client satisfaction and nail technician well-being.

1. Acrylic Nail Shaping

Once acrylic nails have been sculpted and fully cured, shaping is critical to achieve the desired look and functionality. Proper shaping of nails enhances the aesthetic appeal and comfort of the nail while maintaining strength and durability. Nail technicians use various grit files, usually between 150 and 240 grit, to shape the free edge and sidewalls of the acrylic extension (Fig. 3.5).



Fig. 3.5: Acrylic nail filing and shaping process

The most common nail shapes include square, round, oval, almond, and coffin (or ballerina). The shaping process involves filing in one direction to avoid weakening or damaging the acrylic. Uneven pressure or aggressive filing can lead to cracks or premature lifting. The following steps are involved in shaping acrylic nails:

- i) **Selecting the Desired Shape:** Determine the nail shape based on client preference and nail bed structure, such as square, round, oval, squoval, coffin, or stiletto.

- ii) **Initial Filing:** Once the acrylic has fully cured, use a 150–180 grit file to refine the overall structure, sidewalls, and free edge, correcting any imperfections and establishing the chosen shape.
- iii) **Balancing the Sidewalls:** Ensure both sidewalls are even and symmetrical, running in straight, parallel lines from the cuticle to the free edge.
- iv) **Shaping the Free Edge:** File the free edge to match the selected shape, keeping the edges smooth and free from unevenness or sharp corners.
- v) **Checking the Apex:** Confirm that the apex, the highest point of the nail, is proportionate to the length of the enhancement, providing adequate strength and a natural curve.
- vi) **Buffing and Smoothing:** Use a smoother buffer to eliminate fine scratches left by the file and create a polished, even surface.
- vii) **Final Inspection:** Examine the nail from multiple angles to ensure symmetry, proportion, and a smooth finish before moving to the finishing touches.

2. Safety Practices in Acrylic Application

Acrylic nails involve chemical products that require careful handling. Liquid monomers emit strong fumes that can irritate the eyes, nose, and respiratory system. Therefore, maintaining proper safety protocols is essential. Nail technicians should always wear gloves to protect their skin from contact with chemicals. Frequent handwashing and using barrier creams can also minimise irritation. It is important to avoid skin contact with uncured acrylic products to prevent allergic reactions or sensitisation. Proper disposal of waste materials like used wipes, paper towels, and disposable files is critical to maintaining a hygienic work environment. Tools should be sanitised after every use, and single-use items must be discarded appropriately.

3. Ventilation Practices

Effective ventilation in the salon is vital to reduce exposure to harmful fumes released by acrylic products. This can be achieved through local exhaust systems, such as air filtration units positioned near the workstation, or by ensuring that the room is well-ventilated with windows or Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems. Good ventilation reduces the risk of respiratory problems and creates a more comfortable workspace for both clients and nail technicians. Nail technicians should also avoid working in small, enclosed spaces without air circulation.

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Perform correct nail shape technique

Materials Required:

1. Fully cured acrylic nail tips on practice hands or nail forms
2. Nail files (150 and 240 grit)
3. Buffers
4. Dust brush

5. Trash bin

Procedure:

- Choose a nail shape (square, round, oval, almond, coffin) to practice.
- Use the 150-grit file to shape the free edge and sidewalls in one direction with gentle pressure.
- Smooth the nail surface and edges with a 240-grit file and buffer.
- Remove dust with a brush and check for evenness and symmetry.
- Discuss common shaping errors and how to avoid damaging acrylic nails.

Activity 2: Setup a safe and breathable workstation

Materials Required:

1. Acrylic nail products (liquid monomer, powder)
2. Gloves and masks
3. Air filtration unit or fan
4. Workstation setup with a chair and table
5. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)
6. Disposable wipes and sanitiser

Procedure:

- Set up a nail technician workstation, ensuring all safety equipment is present.
- Demonstrate correct glove usage and discuss Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Position air filtration or ventilation devices near the workspace.
- Review MSDS to understand product hazards and handling.
- Simulate proper disposal of used materials and cleaning of tools.

Check Your Progress

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. What grit file is typically recommended for shaping acrylic nails without causing damage?
 - a) 80 grit
 - b) 150-240 grit
 - c) 400 grit
 - d) 1000 grit
2. Why should filing acrylic nails be done in one direction rather than back and forth?
 - a) To file faster
 - b) To avoid weakening or cracking the acrylic
 - c) To add shine
 - d) To remove colour

3. Which nail shape features a tapered edge with a rounded tip?
 - a) Square
 - b) Coffin
 - c) Oval
 - d) Ballerina
4. What is the primary reason nail technicians wear gloves when applying acrylic nails?
 - a) To improve grip
 - b) To avoid chemical contact and skin irritation
 - c) To keep hands warm
 - d) To speed up curing
5. How can proper ventilation benefit a nail technician during acrylic application?
 - a) Reduce exposure to harmful fumes
 - b) Cool down the nails faster
 - c) Improve polish drying time
 - d) Increase humidity
6. What should be done with disposable wipes and files after an acrylic service?
 - a) Reuse after washing
 - b) Dispose of properly as waste
 - c) Store for future use
 - d) Give to the client
7. Why is it important to use Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) in the salon?
 - a) To know the latest nail trends
 - b) To understand chemical hazards and safe handling
 - c) To find product prices
 - d) To learn filing techniques
8. What is the risk of filing acrylic nails too aggressively?
 - a) The nail polish lasts longer
 - b) The acrylic can crack or thin, weakening the nail
 - c) Nails dry faster
 - d) Nails grow faster
9. Which practice helps minimise inhalation of acrylic fumes?
 - a) Wearing gloves
 - b) Working in a poorly ventilated room
 - c) Using an air filtration system or working near a window
 - d) Filing nails quickly
10. After shaping acrylic nails, what is the next step before applying polish or top coat?
 - a) Applying primer
 - b) Buffing the surface smooth

- c) Soaking nails in water
- d) Removing all acrylic

B. Subjective Questions

1. Explain the importance of shaping acrylic nails properly and describe the effects of incorrect filing techniques.
2. Discuss the safety measures a nail technician should follow when working with acrylic products.
3. Describe how to set up a well-ventilated workstation to minimise exposure to acrylic fumes.
4. Describe the process of shaping acrylic nails.

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- describe common nail shapes;
- demonstrate correct shaping techniques to prevent nail damage and lifting;
- demonstrate appropriate safety practices during acrylic application; and
- explain the importance of effective ventilation systems in reducing exposure to acrylic fumes.

Unit 4 Nail Refill and Maintenance Services

Unit 4 on ***Nail Refill and Maintenance Services*** covers comprehensive knowledge and practical skills required for performing professional nail refill services. It highlights the importance of regular refills in maintaining nail health, enhancing the longevity of enhancements, and keeping nails aesthetically appealing. The unit is divided into the following sessions:

[1] **Refilling Services in Maintaining Nails** explains the role of refilling in preserving nail enhancements, preventing lifting or breakage, and promoting overall nail health. It also highlights how regular maintenance supports durability, appearance, and client confidence in long-term nail services.

[2] **Professional Nail Refill Procedures** deals with the systematic refill procedure, including nail inspection, removal of old product at the growth area, surface preparation, product application, shaping, and finishing. It also deals with precision, hygiene, and maintaining the original shape and design of the enhancement.

[3] **Advanced Refilling and Rebalancing Techniques** covers advanced refill techniques that ensure seamless blending, smooth surfaces, and natural-looking results. It also deals with handling challenging nail conditions, refining techniques

for speed and accuracy, and achieving professional-grade finishes that enhance client satisfaction.

Session 1: Refilling Services in Maintaining Nails

Refill services are essential maintenance procedures for acrylic or gel nail enhancements. Over time, natural nail growth creates a gap between the cuticle and the enhancement's edge, which can cause lifting, breakage, or an unpolished appearance. Performing regular refills helps maintain the durability, strength, and aesthetics of the nails while extending the life of the enhancement.

Refilling is the process of replenishing the growth gap between the natural nail and the enhancement product, which appears as the natural nail grows out over time. Maintaining beautiful and durable nail enhancements requires regular upkeep, and one of the most crucial maintenance services is the refill.

1. Refilling

As natural nails grow, a gap forms between the cuticle area and the acrylic or gel overlay. This gap can cause lifting if left unattended, leading to potential damage, infections, or product failure. Regular refills help prevent lifting by reinforcing the nail's structure and restoring a seamless appearance.

Refills also help maintain nail strength. Without refilling, the nails may become weak or brittle as the product near the cuticle becomes thin or damaged. By refilling, the nail technician strengthens this area, promoting healthier nail growth underneath. Furthermore, refills prolong the lifespan of the nail enhancement, reducing the need for complete removal and reapplication. This saves time and expense for both clients and nail technicians while maintaining a polished, fresh look.

The refill process begins with a thorough assessment of the nails to check for damage, lifting, or infections. The nail technician carefully files and buffs the old product near the cuticle to remove any lifted or weak areas without damaging the nail enhancement's structure. The natural nail is prepped by cleaning, dehydrating, and applying primer to ensure proper adhesion.

The new acrylic or gel product is then applied to the grown-out area, blending seamlessly with the existing enhancement. After curing, the nails are shaped and buffed to achieve a smooth, natural finish. The process concludes with applying polish or a top coat for a refreshed look.

Proper refill techniques reduce the risk of nail damage and maintain healthy growth. Regular refills, typically every 2-3 weeks, keep nails strong, beautiful, and well-maintained, ensuring client satisfaction and prolonging the life of the nail enhancements.

2. Types of Nail Enhancement Refills

Nail enhancement refills, also known as infill services, are maintenance procedures performed to address the visible gap that develops between the enhancement and the natural nail as the nail grows. The appropriate refill method depends on the type of enhancement, the condition of the existing product, the client's needs, and the manufacturer's recommended procedure. The main types of refills (Fig. 4.1) include the following:

i) Acrylic Refill: An acrylic refill is performed on existing acrylic enhancements when the natural nail has grown out. The nail technician prepares and cleans the regrowth area, removes any lifted or damaged product, and applies fresh acrylic to the exposed area. The new product is then blended with the existing enhancement and shaped to create a smooth and uniform surface.

ii) Gel Refill: A gel refill involves preparing the natural nail and existing gel enhancement before applying fresh gel to the regrowth area. Any lifted or damaged product is removed, and the new gel is blended with the existing enhancement. The gel is then cured under a compatible UV or LED lamp according to the manufacturer's instructions.

iii) Dip Powder Refill: A dip powder refill involves preparing the grown-out area and removing any lifted or damaged product. A suitable base product is applied, followed by dip powder according to the product system's instructions. The enhancement is then shaped, refined, and finished with the appropriate top coat. In some systems, a partial removal and reapplication may be required rather than simply filling the regrowth area.

iv) Infill or Maintenance Refill: An infill is a maintenance service in which the regrowth area is addressed and the existing enhancement is reshaped and reinforced as necessary. The nail technician checks the entire enhancement for lifting, cracks, thinning, or other damage and makes the required corrections. This helps maintain the appearance, strength, and balance of the enhancement between full services.



Fig. 4.1: Types of acrylic refill

A nail technician should assess the existing enhancement before performing a refill. If there is significant lifting, damage, suspected infection, or deterioration of the natural nail, the enhancement may need to be removed rather than refilled. Proper preparation, hygiene, product compatibility, application technique, and safe removal procedures are essential for maintaining healthy natural nails and achieving satisfactory results.

3. Refill vs. Rebalance

Refill and rebalance are two distinct but often complementary strategies used to maintain performance and efficiency (Fig. 4.2). Refill refers to replenishing a depleted resource or account. For example, in budgeting or investing, a refill might involve adding funds to an account that has diminished due to withdrawals or usage. The goal is simple to restore the original or desired level to continue operations or maintain stability. It is a reactive strategy that responds to depletion. On the other hand, rebalance involves adjusting allocations to return to a desired structure or ratio. While a refill restores quantity, a rebalance restores structure. Both are essential in long-term sustainability. Refill ensures there is enough to work with, while rebalance ensures it is being used wisely.



Fig. 4.2: Acrylic maintenance procedures

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Perform perfect acrylic refill

Materials Required:

1. Acrylic nail enhancements on practice hand or client
2. Nail files (180-240 grit)
3. Acrylic liquid and powder

4. Primer and dehydrator
5. Brushes and a dampen dish
6. Lint-free wipes
7. UV lamp

Procedure:

- Examine the nail growth area and assess for lifting or damage.
- File and buff the grown-out section carefully without damaging existing acrylic.
- Cleanse the nails with a dehydrator and apply primer.
- Mix acrylic and apply to the growth gap, blending smoothly into the old product.
- Shape, cure and finish with buffing.
- Clean and polish the nails for a fresh look.

Check Your Progress

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. What is the main purpose of performing a refill on nail enhancements?
 - a) To change the nail colour
 - b) To fill the gap caused by natural nail growth and prevent lifting
 - c) To shorten the nail length
 - d) To remove the entire nail enhancement
2. Which type of refill is most commonly used for acrylic nail enhancements?
 - a) Gel refill
 - b) Dip powder refill
 - c) Acrylic refill
 - d) No refill required
3. What could happen if refills are not done regularly on nail enhancements?
 - a) Nails will grow faster
 - b) The enhancement may lift, crack, or cause infection
 - c) Nails will become stronger
 - d) The polish will last longer
4. What is a critical step before applying new acrylic during a refill?
 - a) Applying top coat
 - b) Filing and prepping the growth area
 - c) Painting nails with polish
 - d) Heating nails with a dryer
5. How often should nail refills typically be performed?
 - a) Every 1–2 days
 - b) Every 2–3 weeks

- c) Every 6 months
 - d) Once a year
6. Which of the following is NOT a common type of refill?
 - a) Acrylic refill
 - b) Gel refill
 - c) Dip powder refill
 - d) French manicure refill
 7. During a gel refill, what equipment is essential for curing the product?
 - a) UV or LED lamp
 - b) Hairdryer
 - c) Microwave oven
 - d) Electric drill
 8. Why is it important to blend the new product with the existing enhancement during a refill?
 - a) To make the nail longer
 - b) To ensure a smooth, natural look and prevent weak spots
 - c) To change the nail colour
 - d) To remove the old product
 9. What should a nail technician do if they notice lifting or damage during the refill assessment?
 - a) Ignore it and proceed
 - b) Remove the entire enhancement before refilling
 - c) File and prep the area carefully to fix or reinforce it
 - d) Paint over it directly
 10. What is the purpose of using a dehydrator and primer before applying the refill product?
 - a) To make nails shiny
 - b) To ensure proper adhesion and prevent lifting
 - c) To soften the nails
 - d) To change the nail shape

B. Subjective Questions

1. Explain why regular refills are important for maintaining nail health and the longevity of enhancements.
2. Describe the step-by-step process of performing an acrylic refill on natural nails.
3. Discuss the differences between acrylic, gel, and dip powder refills and when each type is used.
4. How should a nail technician handle lifting or damage found during a refill assessment to prevent infections or further problems?

5. Explain the importance of proper nail preparation, including the use of dehydrators and primers, before applying refill products.

What have you learned

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- explain the importance of regular refills;
- differentiate between various types of refill services and their appropriate application;
- demonstrate proper refill techniques that reinforce structural integrity; and
- identify signs that indicate when a refill is needed versus when a full removal or rebalance may be more appropriate.

Session 2: Professional Nail Refill Procedures

Refilling nail enhancements is a core maintenance procedure in professional nail technology. As the natural nail grows, a visible gap develops between the cuticle area and the existing enhancement. If this growth is not managed appropriately, it may result in lifting, cracking, weakened structure, or microbial contamination. A properly executed refill restores the appearance, strength, and balance of the enhancement while maintaining the health of the natural nail.

1. Step-by-Step Refill Process

An acrylic refill is performed to maintain the strength, appearance, and integrity of the enhancement as the natural nail grows out. Regular refills prevent lifting, breakage, and imbalance, ensuring the enhancement continues to look natural and perform well. The following steps are involved in the refill process:

- i) **Assessment:** The refill process begins with a thorough assessment of the client's nails to determine whether a refill can be performed safely and effectively. The nail technician carefully examines each nail for areas of lifting or separation; cracks, chips, or fractures in the enhancement; discolouration or signs of bacterial staining; proper thickness, apex, and structural balance; the overall condition of the natural nail and enhancement; and the suitability of the nails for a refill procedure. If the nail technician identifies significant lifting, extensive damage, or any signs of infection or other nail disorders, a standard refill may not be appropriate. In such cases, the existing enhancement should be safely removed, and a new application should only be performed after the nails are confirmed to be healthy and suitable for enhancement services.
- ii) **Sanitisation and Initial Preparation:** Maintaining proper hygiene and sanitation is essential at every stage of the refill service to ensure client safety and prevent cross-contamination. The client and the nail technician should sanitise their hands before beginning the service. The nail technician should

wear gloves and ensure that all tools, equipment, and work surfaces have been properly cleaned and disinfected. Any existing nail polish, gel polish, or colour coating should be removed using an acetone-based remover or an appropriate e-file bit, depending on the product applied. Removing the surface colour provides a clear view of the nail enhancement, allowing the nail technician to inspect for lifting, cracks, damage, or other issues that need to be corrected during the refill process.

- iii) **Filing, De-bulking, and Buffing:** This stage prepares the existing nail enhancement for the application of fresh product by restoring the correct structure and creating a smooth, secure surface for adhesion.
- iv) **De-bulking the Enhancement:** Using a hand file or an e-file, the nail technician carefully reduces the excess thickness of the existing enhancement. Sufficient product is removed to create space for rebuilding the apex and restoring the correct balance and structure of the nail, while taking care not to over-file or damage the natural nail underneath.
- v) **Removing Lifting:** Any lifted, loose, or separated product is carefully filed away until only well-adhered enhancement remains. All loose material must be removed to prevent further lifting, product failure, and moisture entrapment, which may lead to bacterial growth.
- vi) **Smoothing the Transition:** Once the loose or lifted product has been removed, the next step is to smooth the transition between the remaining enhancement and the natural nail growth. This ensures a seamless, even surface that provides the ideal base for reapplication. A 180–240 grit file is used to blend the remaining enhancement seamlessly with the natural nail growth. The surface is refined to eliminate visible ridges and create a smooth transition for the new product. Light buffing may be performed, if required, to remove scratches and ensure an even surface. Care is taken to avoid excessive filing of the natural nail, preserving its strength and integrity.
- vii) **Nail Preparation:** Once filing is complete, the nail plate is prepared for optimal adhesion. This preparation involves removing dust with a clean, soft brush, followed by the application of a nail dehydrator to eliminate surface oils and moisture. Primer is then applied as required by the product system, such as an acid-based or acid-free primer for acrylic systems or bonding agents for gel or dip systems. Proper preparation ensures strong adhesion and reduces the likelihood of premature lifting.

2. Application of Product for Nail Enhancement

Nail enhancement is a popular cosmetic procedure used to improve the appearance, strength, shape, and length of natural nails. It involves the application of artificial materials such as acrylic, gel, or other nail products over the natural nail. Nail enhancement can help create a neat, attractive, and durable nail appearance while

allowing different shapes, lengths, and designs. The method of application varies depending on the type of enhancement. The various methods used for refill are given below.

- i) **Acrylic Refill:** A bead of acrylic is placed in the growth area near the cuticle and blended into the existing product. The apex is rebuilt to restore strength and balance. The cuticle area is refined to remain thin and natural-looking.
- ii) **Gel Refill:** A thin coat of base gel is applied, followed by builder gel in the growth area. Each layer is cured under a UV or LED lamp. The apex is reconstructed to maintain proper structure and durability.
- iii) **Dip Powder Refill:** A bonding agent or base liquid is applied, followed by dipping the nail into the powder. Excess powder is removed, and additional layers are applied as needed. An activator is used to cure the product before shaping.
- iv) **Shaping and Refining:** Once the enhancement has fully cured, the nails are refined to create a smooth, balanced, and natural-looking finish.
 - a) Use a 150–180 grit file to shape the free edge and refine the overall structure.
 - b) Adjust the sidewalls, apex, and surface contours to ensure proper symmetry, strength, and thickness.
 - c) Smooth the surface with a fine buffer to remove any ridges, scratches, or file marks.

The aim is to create a well-balanced enhancement that appears natural while maintaining optimal durability and structural integrity.

- v) **Top Coat and Finishing Touches:** The final stage of the service protects the enhancement and enhances its appearance.
 - a) Apply a top coat to seal the enhancement and provide a glossy, protective finish.
 - b) Cure gel top coats under a UV or LED lamp according to the manufacturer's instructions.
 - c) Remove the dispersion (sticky) layer, if required.
 - d) Apply cuticle oil to nourish and moisturise the cuticles and surrounding skin.

This finishing process leaves the nails looking smooth, clean, and professionally polished.

3. Client Aftercare Advice

Providing clear aftercare instructions helps clients maintain their nail enhancements and protect the health of their natural nails. Advise clients to:

- Avoid prolonged exposure to water and harsh cleaning chemicals.
- Wear protective gloves when carrying out household cleaning or gardening.
- Apply cuticle oil daily to keep the nails and surrounding skin hydrated and maintain flexibility.
- Schedule maintenance (refill) appointments every 2–3 weeks to preserve the strength and appearance of the enhancement.
- Avoid picking, peeling, or using the nails as tools, as this can damage both the enhancement and the natural nail.

Following these aftercare recommendations will help maximise the longevity of the nail enhancements while supporting healthy natural nail growth.

4. Steps to Perform a Refill on Grown-Out UV Gel Nails

A UV gel refill (also known as a fill-in or rebalance) is performed when the natural nail grows, creating a visible gap between the cuticle area and the existing gel enhancement. The refill restores the nail's appearance, rebalances its structure, strengthens the enhancement, and extends its service life. The following steps are involved in performing a UV gel refill:

- Clean and Prepare:** Begin by washing and sanitising both the client's and nail technician's hands. Remove any existing gel polish, top coat, or surface colour using a hand file or an appropriate e-file bit, ensuring the nail surface is clean and free from dust and debris.
- Remove Lifted Gel:** Inspect each nail for lifting, cracks, or damaged gel, then carefully file away only the lifted or loose product. Well-adhered gel should be left intact to maintain the strength of the enhancement, and the edges between the remaining gel and the natural nail should be blended to create a smooth transition.
- Shape the Nails:** Trim the nails if necessary, then file the free edge to the desired shape, such as square, squoval, round, oval, almond, or coffin, ensuring all nails are uniform in length and shape.
- Perform Cuticle Care:** Apply a cuticle softener or remover if required, then gently push back the cuticles using a cuticle pusher. Only non-living tissue



Fig. 4.3: Steps to perform a refill on grown-out UV gel nails

should be removed from the nail plate and surrounding area, leaving the cuticle area clean and smooth for proper product adhesion.

- v) **Buff the Natural Nail:** Lightly buff the newly grown natural nail to remove surface shine, avoiding excessive filing that could weaken the nail. The goal is to create a lightly textured surface that promotes proper gel adhesion.
- vi) **Clean and Prepare the Nail Plate:** Remove all filing dust using a soft brush, then cleanse the nail plate with a nail cleanser or isopropyl alcohol to eliminate dust, oils, and moisture. A nail dehydrator and primer should be applied if recommended by the manufacturer's system.
- vii) **Apply the Base Coat:** Apply a thin, even layer of gel base coat, sealing the free edge where recommended, then cure under the appropriate UV or LED lamp according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- viii) **Rebuild the Apex:** Apply builder gel to fill the grown-out area near the cuticle, reconstructing the apex to restore the nail's strength, balance, and proper architecture. The product should be kept away from the cuticle and sidewalls, then cured according to the manufacturer's recommended time.
- ix) **Refine the Enhancement:** Remove the inhibition layer if required by the gel system, then file and refine the surface to create a smooth, balanced shape. The sidewalls, apex, and free edge should be perfected, followed by light buffing to remove filing marks and achieve a smooth finish.
- x) **Apply Colour and Top Coat:** Apply gel polish in thin, even coats, curing each coat as directed, then apply a gel top coat to seal and protect the enhancement, curing the final coat according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- xi) **Finish and Hydrate:** Remove the inhibition layer if required, then apply cuticle oil and gently massage it into the cuticles and surrounding skin. Wipe the nails clean and inspect the finished enhancement for shape, smoothness, and overall appearance, and provide the client with appropriate aftercare advice to help maintain the refill until the next appointment.

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Smooth gel refill technique

Materials Required:

1. Gel nails on mannequin or client
2. Nail files and buffers
3. Nail cleanser and dehydrator
4. Gel base coat and builder gel
5. UV/LED curing lamp

6. Gel brushes
7. Lint-free wipes
8. Cuticle oil

Procedure:

- Examine nail growth and lifting areas.
- File and buff the grown-out gel to remove shine and lift.
- Clean the nail surface with cleanser and apply dehydrator.
- Apply gel base coat to the growth area and cure under the lamp.
- Layer builder gel to fill and blend the growth gap, curing between layers.
- Shape and smooth the nail surface.
- Apply top coat and cure, then remove sticky layer.
- Apply cuticle oil to finish.

Check Your Progress

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. What is the first step in the refill process?
 - a) Applying top coat
 - b) Assessing the nails for growth and damage
 - c) Filing the nail tips
 - d) Applying primer
2. Why is it important to file and buff the grown-out area before applying a new product?
 - a) To lengthen the nails
 - b) To remove the lifting product and create a smooth base
 - c) To add colour
 - d) To cure the product faster
3. What does a nail dehydrator do during the refill process?
 - a) Adds moisture to the nails
 - b) Removes oils and moisture for better adhesion
 - c) Softens the cuticles
 - d) Protects the nails from UV light
4. During an acrylic refill, how is the acrylic product prepared before application?
 - a) Mixing liquid and powder to form a bead
 - b) Applying liquid only
 - c) Applying powder only
 - d) Curing under a lamp
5. What tool is used to cure gel products during the refill process?
 - a) UV or LED lamp
 - b) Hairdryer

- c) Electric drill
 - d) Microwave oven
6. What is the purpose of applying cuticle oil after the refill service?
 - a) To harden the nail surface
 - b) To moisturise and nourish the cuticles
 - c) To remove excess product
 - d) To dry the nails faster
 7. Which grit range is recommended for filing and buffing during the refill process?
 - a) 80–100 grit
 - b) 100–120 grit
 - c) 180–240 grit
 - d) 400–600 grit
 8. Why should the nail technician avoid filing too aggressively during the refill?
 - a) To avoid damaging the natural nail and surrounding skin
 - b) To speed up the process
 - c) To change the nail colour
 - d) To make nails longer
 9. What should be done if severe lifting or damage is found during the refill assessment?
 - a) Proceed with the refill as usual
 - b) Remove the entire enhancement before refilling
 - c) Ignore and continue
 - d) Only file the tips
 10. When applying the top coat on gel nails, what should be done if a sticky layer remains after curing?
 - a) Leave it as is
 - b) Wipe it off with lint-free wipes and isopropyl alcohol
 - c) Apply more gel
 - d) File it off

B. Subjective Questions

1. Describe the importance of assessing nails before starting the refill process.
2. Explain the step-by-step procedure for performing an acrylic refill.
3. Discuss the role of nail dehydrators and primers in ensuring a successful refill application.
4. How do you handle lifted or damaged nail enhancements found during a refill session?
5. Why is cuticle oil applied after completing a refill, and what benefits does it provide to nail health?

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- explain the importance of client assessment and sanitisation protocols prior to performing a nail refill;
- describe the step-by-step process of filing, de-bulking, and preparing the nail for reapplication of product;
- differentiate the application techniques used for acrylic, gel, and dip powder refills; and
- demonstrate correct shaping, refining, and finishing techniques to achieve a smooth, balanced enhancement.

Session 3: Advanced Refilling and Rebalancing Techniques

Refilling nail enhancements is more than a routine maintenance service. It provides an opportunity for nail technicians to demonstrate technical expertise, artistic skill, and a commitment to exceptional client care. Mastering advanced refill techniques enables nail technicians to create seamless, durable, and aesthetically pleasing enhancements while fostering client satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

1. Advanced Techniques for Refill Perfection

A thorough nail assessment is the foundation of every successful refill service. Before beginning, the nail technician should evaluate:

- The condition of the natural nails, including strength, flexibility, and any signs of damage or trauma
- The existing enhancement for lifting, cracking, excessive thickness, wear, or discolouration
- The client's lifestyle, occupation, and daily activities that may affect the durability of the enhancement

This assessment enables the nail technician to customise the refill service to meet the client's individual needs. For example, clients with thin, peeling, or flexible nails may benefit from:

- Gentle filing techniques
- Specialised primers or bonding agents
- Reinforcing base layers or strengthening builder gels

A personalised approach improves adhesion, enhances durability, and helps protect the natural nail.

2. Seamless Product Blending

A professional refill should leave no visible line between the existing enhancement and the newly applied product. Achieving a seamless blend requires careful preparation and controlled product application. Some of the best practices are as follows:

- Using a coarse-grit file to safely remove excess bulk from the existing enhancement
- Refining the transition with finer-grit files (180–240 grit)
- Completely removing all lifted product before applying new product
- Avoiding excessive filing of the natural nail to preserve nail health

Precise product application is equally important. Nail technicians should use appropriate brushes and controlled techniques to:

- Prevent flooding of the cuticle area
- Maintain an even surface
- Minimise filing after curing
- Preserve the natural appearance of the enhancement

Seamless blending enhances both the appearance and structural integrity of the finished nail.

3. Layering for Structure and Strength

Proper layering techniques create durable enhancements with balanced structure and a refined finish. Correct product placement reduces the risk of lifting, cracking, and breakage while maintaining the natural architecture of the nail. The following techniques should be applied when layering acrylic:

- Maintain the correct liquid-to-powder ratio to achieve a workable consistency and optimal adhesion.
- Apply acrylic in thin, even layers to minimise air bubbles and improve product control.
- Build the apex in the correct position to reinforce the stress area and provide structural balance.
- Blend each bead smoothly to reduce visible ridges and minimise filing.
- Allow the acrylic to polymerise completely before refining the enhancement.

4. Gel Layering Techniques

Building a durable and well-structured gel enhancement requires careful, controlled application of the product in stages. Proper layering ensures even curing, strong adhesion, and a smooth, balanced finish while reducing the risk of lifting or premature wear. The following techniques should be applied when layering gel:

- Apply builder gel in several thin, even coats rather than one thick layer.
- Cure each layer fully under the appropriate UV or LED lamp according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Rebuild the apex to restore proper balance and strength.
- Allow the gel to self-level before curing to create a smooth surface.
- Fully encapsulate and seal the enhancement for maximum durability and wear.

Correct layering techniques increase longevity while producing a smooth, natural-looking enhancement.

5. Customisation for Professional Results

Customisation is essential to delivering professional refill services that meet each client's functional and aesthetic needs. Every refill should blend seamlessly with the existing enhancement while maintaining consistent shape, strength, and appearance. Nail technicians should ensure:

- Consistent nail shape (square, squoval, round, oval, almond, coffin, or other requested styles)
- Uniform nail length and symmetry
- Accurate colour matching for acrylic, gel, or dip powder systems
- Correct apex placement and structural balance
- A smooth transition between the existing enhancement and newly applied product

Additional customisation options may include:

- Strengthening overlays for added durability
- Camouflage or cover products to correct colour variations or conceal imperfections
- Subtle nail art, glitter, or decorative accents
- Builder gels, rubber base gels, or fibre-reinforced systems to improve flexibility and strength

Tailoring each refill to the client's nail condition, lifestyle, and personal preferences results in durable, attractive enhancements and a more personalised service experience.

6. Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Customisation

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the nail art industry by making design creation faster, more personalised, and highly innovative. AI-powered tools can generate unique nail art designs based on a client's preferences, favourite colours, occasions, fashion trends, or even uploaded images. Nail technicians can use AI to generate and preview designs on virtual nails before application, help clients visualise the final look and make confident choices, personalise recommendations,

use AI powered nail printers, do smart colour matching and study recent trends in the beauty industry. AI also assists salons in recommending trending styles, managing appointments, and improving customer experiences through smart booking systems.

In addition to enhancing creativity, AI supports personalised nail care by analysing a client's nail condition, lifestyle, and beauty preferences to recommend suitable treatments and products. AI-powered consultation tools can identify concerns such as brittle nails, dryness, or discolouration from uploaded images and suggest appropriate care routines or professional services. By maintaining digital client records, AI can track previous treatments, allergies, preferred products, and favourite nail styles, enabling nail technicians to provide consistent, customised services during every visit. While AI improves efficiency, personalisation, and decision-making, the artistic skills, precision, and professional expertise of a qualified nail technician remain essential for delivering safe, beautiful, and individualised nail care.

7. Effective Consultation and Communication

A brief consultation at the beginning of each appointment allows clients to discuss any concerns, preferences, or desired changes. During the consultation, the nail technician should:

- Listen actively to the client's concerns
- Ask relevant questions about previous wear or problems
- Offer professional recommendations
- Discuss issues such as sensitivity, breakage, nail habits, or lifestyle factors

Open communication builds trust, manages expectations, and helps ensure the final result meets the client's needs.

8. Comfort and Professional Standards

Maintaining a clean, safe, and professional environment reinforces client confidence and contributes to a positive salon experience. Professional standards include:

- Keeping the workstation clean, organised, and fully sanitised
- Using quality products and well-maintained equipment
- Applying gentle, controlled filing techniques to minimise discomfort
- Monitoring heat during curing and pressure during filing
- Avoiding excessive thinning of the natural nail

Attention to client comfort throughout the appointment enhances satisfaction and encourages repeat visits.

9. Aftercare Guidance

Providing practical aftercare guidance helps clients maintain their nail enhancements between appointments while protecting the natural nails. Aftercare includes the following:

- Applying cuticle oil daily to maintain moisture and flexibility
- Wearing protective gloves during household cleaning or when handling harsh chemicals
- Avoiding picking, peeling, or using nails as tools
- Scheduling maintenance appointments every 2–3 weeks
- Contacting the salon promptly if lifting or damage occurs

10. Adding Value to the Service

Small, thoughtful touches can significantly enhance the overall client experience and encourage long-term loyalty. Examples of value-added services include:

- Complimentary hand or arm massages
- Nourishing cuticle oil or hand treatments
- Refreshments or warm towels
- Loyalty rewards or referral programmes
- Personalised recommendations for home nail care products

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Perform seamless acrylic refill for flawless nails

Materials Required:

1. Acrylic nails on the client's or practice hand
2. Nail files (various grits: 100, 180, 240)
3. Acrylic liquid and powder
4. Brushes and a dappen dish
5. Nail dehydrator and primer
6. Lint-free wipes
7. Cuticle oil

Procedure:

- Assess nails for growth, lifting, and damage.
- Remove bulk with a 100-grit file; smooth rough areas with 180-grit.
- Buff with 240 grit for a smooth finish.
- Clean nails and apply dehydrator and primer.
- Mix acrylic bead; apply thin layers carefully to blend with the old product.
- Shape and refine nails with files.
- Apply cuticle oil to finish.

Activity 2: Customise gel refill with client consultation

Materials Required:

1. Gel nails on mannequin or client
2. Nail files and buffers
3. Nail cleanser, dehydrator, primer
4. Gel base coat, builder gel, top coat
5. UV/LED lamp
6. Gel brushes
7. Lint-free wipes
8. Cuticle oil
9. Consultation checklist

Procedure:

- Begin with a client consultation to discuss nail health, preferences, and concerns.
- Assess nails for growth and lifting.
- File and buff the growth area.
- Cleanse nails; apply dehydrator and primer.
- Apply gel base coat and cure under lamp.
- Layer builder gel for structure and shape; cure each layer.
- Apply top coat and cure; remove dispersion layer.
- Provide aftercare advice tailored to client needs.
- Finish with cuticle oil and schedule a follow-up appointment.

Check Your Progress

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. What is the first step in advanced refill techniques for perfection?
 - a) Applying top coat
 - b) Assessing the client's nail health and enhancement condition
 - c) Shaping the nails
 - d) Applying cuticle oil
2. Why is seamless blending important during a refill?
 - a) To save product
 - b) To create a smooth transition without ridges or bumps
 - c) To speed up the filing process
 - d) To change the nail colour
3. Which file grit is best used for smoothing the nail surface during refill?
 - a) 80 grit
 - b) 100 grit
 - c) 180–240 grit
 - d) 400 grit

4. What is a benefit of applying thinner layers of gel during the refill process?
 - a) Increases drying time
 - b) Prevents bubbling and cracking
 - c) Makes nails softer
 - d) Changes nail shape
5. How does client consultation contribute to refill services?
 - a) Helps the nail technician decide nail length only
 - b) Builds trust and customises the service according to the client's needs
 - c) Takes too much time and should be avoided
 - d) Only used to schedule the next appointment
6. What should a nail technician do if the client expresses sensitivity or pain during filing?
 - a) Ignore it and continue filing aggressively
 - b) Use gentler filing techniques and communicate throughout
 - c) Stop the service immediately
 - d) Apply more product to numb the area
7. Why is cuticle oil applied after the refill process?
 - a) To harden the nail product
 - b) To moisturise and nourish the cuticles and surrounding skin
 - c) To speed up curing
 - d) To remove excess gel
8. What is the advantage of using specialised primers during refill for fragile nails?
 - a) Makes nails brittle
 - b) Improves adhesion and strengthens weak nails
 - c) Changes nail colour
 - d) Speeds up filing
9. Which of the following is a good practice to ensure client retention after refill services?
 - a) Rushing through the service
 - b) Providing personalised aftercare advice and follow-up
 - c) Ignoring client concerns
 - d) Charging extra for all services
10. What is the purpose of curing gel layers under a UV or LED lamp during refills?
 - a) To dry the nails faster
 - b) To harden the gel product for strength and durability
 - c) To remove sticky residue
 - d) To shape the nails

B. Subjective Questions

1. Explain why a thorough client consultation is essential before starting the refill process.
2. Describe the advanced filing and layering techniques used to achieve a seamless refill finish.
3. How can a nail technician customise the refill service to accommodate a client with fragile nails?
4. Discuss the role of client communication and aftercare advice in ensuring client satisfaction and retention.
5. What steps can a nail technician take to make the refill service comfortable for clients who experience sensitivity during filing?

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- describe the factors affecting nail refill techniques, including nail condition, previous enhancements, and lifestyle;
- explain product blending and layering techniques for seamless and balanced enhancements;
- demonstrate precise acrylic or gel application using appropriate tools and brush control; and
- identify effective client communication and consultation practices for personalised services.

Unit 5

Client Care and Professional Ethics

Unit 5 on **Client Care and Professional Ethics** provides essential knowledge and skills for maintaining client comfort, professionalism, and ethical standards in beauty services. It emphasises strategies for handling difficult clients, ensuring a positive and respectful client experience. The following sessions are covered in this unit:

[1] **Client Consultation and Handling Challenging Situations** explains strategies for managing challenging client interactions, including effective communication, active listening, conflict resolution, and maintaining professionalism. It covers client needs, managing expectations, and de-escalating stressful situations to ensure a positive service experience.

[2] **Hygiene, Ethics and Professional Practices** deals with the hygiene protocols, sanitation practices, and ethical behaviour during service delivery. Topics include proper sterilisation of tools, workstation cleanliness, client consultation, informed consent, and adherence to professional codes of conduct to ensure safe and ethical services.

[3] **Client Record Keeping and Appointment Management** covers maintaining accurate client records, managing appointments efficiently, and tracking service history. It also highlights the importance of organisation, confidentiality, and timely communication to enhance client satisfaction and streamline salon operations.

Session 1: Client Consultation and Handling Challenging Situations

Client comfort and professional ethics are essential to a successful nail technician's career. A welcoming environment, proper hygiene, gentle techniques, and clear communication help clients feel safe and valued. Nail technicians should maintain comfortable conditions and remain attentive to client needs throughout the service. Professional ethics require honesty, integrity, confidentiality, and strict adherence to sanitation standards. Clear information about services, pricing, expected results, and aftercare helps build trust and credibility. Together, these practices promote client satisfaction, strengthen professional relationships, and support long-term career success.

1. Handling Difficult Clients

Difficult clients are a reality in every service-based profession. Whether they exhibit impatience, unrealistic expectations, indecisiveness, or rude behaviour, effective strategies can turn a challenging situation into a positive experience for both client and nail technician. The goal is to maintain professionalism while ensuring the client feels respected and understood.

2. Active Listening

Active listening is the foundation of conflict resolution. It involves giving the client full attention and allowing them to express their concerns without interruption. Proper active listening includes:

- Maintaining eye contact
- Nodding or acknowledging their statements
- Avoiding defensive reactions
- Clarifying details by asking gentle follow-up questions

3. Maintaining Professionalism and Emotional Control

Difficult interactions can quickly escalate if emotions run high. Nail technicians must remain calm, polite, and composed even when faced with criticism or frustration. Professional communication involves:

- Using a respectful and neutral tone
- Avoiding arguments or blame
- Not taking negative remarks personally

- Offering straightforward explanations without becoming defensive

4. Acknowledging Concerns and Offering Solutions

Clients are more likely to respond positively when their concerns are acknowledged and addressed with empathy. Depending on the situation, the nail technician can:

- Suggest adjustments to the service
- Offer alternative solutions
- Explain available options clearly
- Provide a follow-up appointment if necessary

5. Setting Boundaries and Managing Expectations

Some client requests may be unrealistic, unsuitable, or unsafe. In these situations, nail technicians should establish clear and respectful boundaries by:

- Politely decline services that compromise health or quality
- Explain why certain requests are unsuitable
- Provide safe alternatives
- Use firm yet courteous language

6. Consultation Techniques for Personalised Service

A thorough consultation is essential for achieving desirable results. The consultation not only provides insight into the client's expectations but also helps the nail technician tailor the service to individual needs.

7. Gathering Essential Information

An effective consultation should include open-ended questions about the client's needs, preferences, lifestyle, and relevant health information. Important areas to discuss include:

- Lifestyle and daily activities
- Preferred nail shapes and lengths
- Past experiences with nail enhancements
- Nail health concerns or medical conditions
- Allergies, sensitivities, or skin issues

8. Clear Communication and Use of Visual Aids

Clear communication between the nail technician and the client is essential for understanding the client's requirements and achieving the desired result. The nail technician should use simple, clear language when discussing nail shape, length, colour, finish, and enhancement options. Asking appropriate questions and

confirming the client's preferences before beginning the service helps minimise misunderstandings.

Visual aids are particularly useful because they allow clients to see and compare different options before selecting the product (Fig.5.1). Common visual aids include:

- (i) **Nail shape charts:** Help clients understand and select different nail shapes, such as round, oval, square, squoval, almond, and stiletto.
- (ii) **Colour swatches:** Allow clients to compare shades, tones, finishes, and decorative colour options.
- (iii) **Examples of enhancement styles:** Demonstrate different types of nail enhancements, lengths, shapes, finishes, and nail-art designs.
- (iv) **Photographs of previous work:** Provide practical examples of the nail technician's work and help clients communicate the type of result they would like.



Fig. 5.1: Client consultation process for nail technician

The nail technician should explain that the final result may vary depending on the condition, length, and shape of the natural nails, as well as the selected product and application technique. Using visual aids alongside clear verbal communication helps clients express their preferences more accurately and enables the nail technician to confirm that the proposed service is suitable and achievable.



Figure 5.2: Use of visual aids for nail service consultation

9. Discussing Limitations and Contraindications

During a nail-service consultation, the nail technician should assess the client's requirements and explain any factors that may affect the suitability, safety, or expected outcome of the service. Clients should receive clear information about possible limitations and contraindications before the treatment begins. The nail technician should discuss the following:

- (i) **Service limitations due to nail condition:** Explain that the condition, strength, length, shape, or previous damage of the natural nails may limit the choice of products, techniques, nail length, or enhancement style.
- (ii) **Contraindications:** Identify conditions that may make a service unsuitable or require postponement, such as suspected nail or skin infections, open wounds, inflammation, unexplained changes in the nail, or known allergies or sensitivities to products used during the treatment.
- (iii) **Product and technique-related risks:** Explain potential risks associated with particular products or procedures, including skin irritation, allergic reactions, nail damage from improper preparation or removal, and lifting or breakage when enhancements are not maintained appropriately.
- (iv) **Maintenance requirements:** Inform clients about the recommended maintenance schedule and explain that enhancements require regular infills, refills, or removal and reapplication, depending on the product system and rate of natural nail growth.
- (v) **Aftercare requirements:** Provide clear instructions on caring for the nails after the service, including avoiding unnecessary trauma, protecting the nails from excessive exposure to water or chemicals, and following the recommended aftercare routine.
- (vi) **When to refer:** If the nail technician observes a condition that appears infectious, significantly inflamed, injured, or otherwise outside the scope of routine nail care, the service should be postponed and the client should be advised to seek assessment from an appropriate healthcare professional.

10. Encouraging Client Participation

Clients should be encouraged to openly communicate their expectations, preferences, and concerns. Active participation helps to:

- Strengthens rapport
- Prevents misunderstandings
- Helps the nail technician tailor the service precisely
- Enhances the overall experience

Before beginning the service, summarising the consultation ensures mutual understanding and agreement.

11. The Impact of Strong Client Interaction Skills

Strong client interaction skills complement technical expertise and contribute significantly to professional success. Effective communication and empathetic client management can lead to the following:

- Improve communication and trust
- Lead to personalised, high-quality results
- Encourage repeat visits
- Generate positive word-of-mouth referrals
- Strengthen the nail technician's professional reputation

A nail technician who excels in both technical expertise and client interaction builds lasting relationships and creates a positive, memorable experience for every client.

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Perform calm and professional conflict resolution

Materials Required:

1. Role-play scenario script
2. Feedback checklist
3. Notepad and pen

Procedure:

- Pair up in two; one acts as a difficult client, the other as the nail technician.
- The 'client' expresses dissatisfaction with a recent nail service (e.g., wrong colour, discomfort).
- The 'nail technician' practices active listening, acknowledges concerns, and offers solutions.
- After the role-play, students discuss what strategies worked well and areas for improvement.
- Use the feedback checklist to evaluate tone, empathy, and problem-solving.

Activity 2: Create a comfortable salon environment

Materials Required:

1. Chart paper
2. Pen
3. Colour markers

Procedure:

- Explain the factors that contribute to client comfort.
- Divide students into groups of 4–5 students.
- Ask each group to design an ideal salon environment.

- Include hygiene, seating, temperature, and communication.
- Present the ideas to the class.

Activity 3: Practice professional conduct

Materials Required:

1. Notebook
2. Pen
3. Ethics scenario cards

Procedure:

- Explain honesty, confidentiality, hygiene, and professional responsibility.
- Divide students into groups of 4–5 students.
- Give each group an ethical situation.
- Ask them to identify the correct professional action.
- Discuss the responses with the class.

Check Your Progress

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. What is the first step when dealing with a difficult client who expresses dissatisfaction?
 - a) Interrupt to explain your side
 - b) Listen actively without interrupting
 - c) Ignore the complaint
 - d) Ask the client to leave
2. How can a nail technician de-escalate tension with an upset client?
 - a) Use a calm and respectful tone
 - b) Raise their voice to assert authority
 - c) Avoid eye contact
 - d) Offer a discount immediately
3. Which of the following is a key element of a successful client consultation?
 - a) Telling the client what service they need without discussion
 - b) Asking open-ended questions to understand client preferences
 - c) Ignoring client concerns about allergies
 - d) Rushing through the consultation
4. Why is summarising the consultation discussion before starting the service important?
 - a) To fill time
 - b) To confirm mutual understanding and set clear expectations
 - c) To confuse the client
 - d) To sell extra products

5. What should a nail technician do if a client has unrealistic expectations?
 - a) Promise the impossible to satisfy the client
 - b) Politely explain limitations and offer suitable alternatives
 - c) Ignore the expectations and proceed
 - d) Cancel the appointment
6. Which tool can help a nail technician explain nail design options during consultation?
 - a) Nail file
 - b) Colour charts or photos
 - c) Cuticle pusher
 - d) UV lamp
7. Why is it important to maintain a welcoming environment for clients?
 - a) To encourage longer appointments
 - b) To help clients feel comfortable and valued
 - c) To sell more products
 - d) To speed up service
8. What should a nail technician do if they cannot perform a requested service due to a lack of expertise?
 - a) Attempt the service anyway
 - b) Refer the client to a specialist
 - c) Lie about experience
 - d) Ignore the request

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. Proper hygiene, gentle techniques, and clear communication help clients feel safe and _____.
2. Active listening involves giving the client full attention and allowing them to express their concerns without _____.
3. Nail technicians should remain calm, polite, and _____ when dealing with criticism or frustration.
4. Visual aids such as nail shape charts and colour _____ can help clients communicate their preferences.
5. Before beginning the service, summarising the consultation ensures mutual understanding and _____.

C. Subjective Questions

1. Describe how active listening can help in handling a difficult client during a nail service.
2. Explain the importance of asking open-ended questions during a client consultation.
3. Discuss strategies a nail technician can use to manage unrealistic client expectations.

4. How can a nail technician create a comfortable and professional environment that encourages client satisfaction?
5. Outline the steps you would take to conduct a personalised consultation before starting a nail enhancement service.

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- demonstrate professionalism when managing difficult client interactions to maintain a calm and respectful service environment;
- identify appropriate conflict-resolution techniques to address client concerns and provide suitable solutions;
- describe personalised consultation techniques using open-ended questions and visual aids to meet individual client needs and preferences; and
- explain service limitations, contraindications, and product considerations to manage expectations and ensure client safety.

Session 2: Hygiene, Ethics and Professional Practices

Maintaining high standards of hygiene and ethical conduct is essential in the beauty and nail care industry. These practices protect clients and nail technicians from health risks, promote a safe working environment, and build trust and professional credibility. Consistent hygiene and ethical practices also help maintain the salon's reputation.

1. Hygiene Standards

Hygiene is essential for safe and effective nail services. As nail technicians work closely with clients and use tools that contact the skin and nails, proper hygiene helps prevent cross-contamination and the spread of bacteria, fungi, and viruses.

2. Personal hygiene for nail technicians

Nail technicians should maintain high standards of personal cleanliness and professional appearance. They must (Fig. 5.3):

- Wash their hands thoroughly before and after every client.
- Keep nails short, clean, and free from enhancements.
- Wear disposable gloves when appropriate, particularly when there is potential contact with bodily fluids.
- Wear clean, tidy uniforms and maintain good personal grooming.

Good personal hygiene demonstrates professionalism and reassures clients that their safety is a priority.



Figure 5.3: Personal hygiene practices for nail service

3. Sanitisation, Disinfection, and Sterilisation

Understanding the difference between cleaning processes is essential for maintaining safe working practices:

- **Sanitisation:** Removal of visible dirt and debris from tools and surfaces.
- **Disinfection:** Use of appropriate chemical agents to destroy most harmful microorganisms.
- **Sterilisation:** Complete elimination of microbial life using methods such as autoclaving.

Reusable tools, such as metal cuticle pushers and nippers, should be appropriately cleaned and sterilised between clients. Single-use items such as files, buffers, and wooden sticks should be disposed of after each client. Workstations, lamps, chairs, and other frequently touched surfaces should also be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

4. Environmental Cleanliness

A clean and organised workspace supports safety and professionalism. Nail technicians should ensure that floors and work surfaces are cleaned regularly, waste is disposed of safely, and towels and linens are washed and replaced frequently. Adequate ventilation should also be maintained to reduce the accumulation of dust and fumes.

5. Ethical Standards

Ethical behaviour is an important part of professional practice. It guides how nail technicians interact with clients, provide services, manage responsibilities, and protect the reputation of the profession.

6. Honesty and Transparency

Clear and truthful communication helps build client trust. Ethical nail technicians should explain services, products, pricing, expected results, and relevant limitations honestly. They should avoid misleading claims or promising unrealistic outcomes.

7. Respect and Confidentiality

Clients may share personal information and preferences during consultations. Nail technicians should protect this information, respect individual differences, and avoid judgmental or inappropriate comments. Respectful behaviour helps clients feel comfortable, valued, and safe.

8. Professional Responsibility and Boundaries

Nail technicians should work within their training, qualifications, and legal requirements. They should avoid unsafe practices, refuse services that could cause harm, and recognise possible contraindications or signs of infection. When necessary, clients should be referred to an appropriate medical professional.

9. Continuous Learning and Compliance

The beauty industry continues to develop, making ongoing learning important. Nail technicians should attend relevant training, stay informed about new products and techniques, and keep up to date with current health, safety, sanitation, licensing, and regulatory requirements.

10. Effective Communication and Conflict Resolution

Professional communication helps nail technicians manage concerns and maintain positive client relationships. They should listen carefully to feedback, respond respectfully, offer suitable solutions, and remain calm and courteous when dealing with difficult situations.

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Ensuring a safe and clean work environment

Materials Required:

1. Disposable gloves
2. Autoclave or disinfectant solution
3. Sterilisation pouches
4. Cleaning cloths and surface disinfectant
5. Nail tools (files, buffers, cuticle pushers)

Procedure:

- Demonstrate proper handwashing and glove use before client contact.

- Show how to clean and disinfect the workstation surface before and after the service.
- Practice sterilising reusable tools using an autoclave or disinfectant soak.
- Dispose of single-use tools properly and explain why this is important.

Activity 2: Navigating ethical dilemmas in nail services

Materials Required:

1. Role-play scripts describing ethical dilemmas (e.g., a client requests a service nail technician is not trained for, or a client confidentiality breach scenario)
2. Notepad and pen.

Procedure:

- Divide into pairs or small groups; assign each group an ethical dilemma.
- Role-play the scenario focusing on honest communication, respect, and professional boundaries.
- Discuss as a group how to resolve the issue ethically and what the best practices are.
- Summarise key ethical principles demonstrated and how they protect clients and nail technicians.

Check Your Progress

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. What is the main purpose of maintaining proper hygiene during nail services?
 - a) To increase service time
 - b) To prevent cross-contamination and infections
 - c) To promote new products
 - d) To reduce client interaction
2. Which process completely eliminates microbial life?
 - a) Sanitisation
 - b) Cleaning
 - c) Disinfection
 - d) Sterilisation
3. What should a nail technician do when a client has a possible infection?
 - a) Continue the service
 - b) Ignore the condition
 - c) Refer the client to an appropriate medical professional
 - d) Apply more products
4. Which practice demonstrates honesty and transparency?
 - a) Promising unrealistic results
 - b) Hiding service limitations

- c) Clearly explaining services, pricing, and expected results
 - d) Avoiding client questions
5. Why is continuous learning important for nail technicians?
- a) To avoid communicating with clients
 - b) To stay updated with products, techniques, and safety standards
 - c) To reduce hygiene practices
 - d) To increase appointment time

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. Proper hygiene helps prevent cross-_____ and the spread of infections.
2. _____ is the complete elimination of microbial life.
3. Nail technicians should protect client information and maintain _____.
4. Nail technicians should work within their training, qualifications, and _____ requirements.
5. Professional communication helps nail technicians manage client _____ effectively.

C. Subjective Questions

1. Explain the importance of personal hygiene for a nail technician.
2. Differentiate between sanitisation, disinfection, and sterilisation.
3. Explain how honesty and transparency help build client trust.
4. Describe the professional responsibilities of a nail technician when a client has a possible infection or contraindication.
5. Why are continuous learning and effective communication important for a successful nail technician?

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- explain hygiene and ethical practices in nail care;
- identify personal hygiene and sanitation practices;
- classify sanitisation, disinfection, and sterilisation;
- demonstrate professional client interaction;
- analyse safety and ethical situations; and
- describe actions for effective communication and conflict resolution.

Session 3: Client Record Keeping and Appointment Management

Effective record keeping and appointment management help nail technicians stay organised, understand client preferences, and provide timely, personalised services. Accurate records support consistent service quality, while efficient scheduling improves workflow, client satisfaction, and daily salon operations.

1. Importance of Record Keeping

Record keeping involves maintaining accurate information about clients, services, products, and financial transactions. Important records include the following:

- (i) **Client information:** Names, contact details, allergies, relevant medical conditions, and preferences.
- (ii) **Service history:** Previous treatments, nail enhancements, products used, and adverse reactions.
- (iii) **Product and inventory tracking:** Products used, stock levels, and purchases.
- (iv) **Financial records:** Payments, tips, discounts, and invoices.

2. Benefits of Accurate Records

Accurate records help nail technicians provide personalised services by referring to previous treatments and client preferences. They also support safety by identifying allergies, product sensitivities, and previous reactions. Maintaining service history ensures continuity of care and helps nail technicians plan suitable follow-up treatments.

Records can also provide factual information when handling complaints or service disputes. For example, details of products and techniques used can help a nail technician investigate a reported reaction and determine appropriate action.

3. Appointment Management

Appointment management involves scheduling, confirming, rescheduling, and organising client bookings. Effective scheduling reduces waiting times, prevents overbooking, and ensures sufficient time for complex services such as nail art, extensions, and corrective treatments. A well-organised schedule supports a smooth workflow and improves service quality.

4. Tools and Techniques

The following tools and techniques can be used to maintain accurate records and manage client appointments effectively, ensuring smooth salon operations and a professional client experience:

- i) **Manual Appointment Book:** A manual appointment book is suitable for small salons and independent nail technicians. It can be used to record bookings, cancellations, rescheduled appointments, and daily or weekly schedules.
- ii) **Digital Appointment Scheduling Software:** Digital systems help salons manage bookings efficiently. They can record appointments, cancellations, and no-shows; send reminders; store client information and service history; support online booking; and provide reports on business activity.

- iii) **Flexibility and Effective Client Communication:** Clear and timely communication is essential for effective appointment management. Nail Technicians should respond courteously to enquiries, explain service duration, communicate policies for late arrivals and cancellations, and confirm appointments in advance.
- iv) **Best Practices for Record Keeping and Appointment Management:** Records should be updated after every appointment and stored securely to protect client confidentiality. Digital systems should use appropriate security measures and reliable backups. Appointment schedules should allow sufficient time for each service, based on its complexity. Clear confirmation of the service, time, and preparation requirements helps prevent misunderstandings.
- v) **Benefits of Effective Record and Appointment Management:** Effective management provides several benefits:
 - (a) Enhanced Client Experience: Personalised and timely services build trust and loyalty.
 - (b) Operational Efficiency: Organised records and schedules improve workflow and reduces errors.
 - (c) Professional Image: Accurate records and punctual services strengthen salon credibility.
 - (d) Business Growth: Information about client preferences, service trends, and inventory supports informed business decisions.

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Development and maintenance of client records

Materials Required:

1. Client record forms or digital record-keeping software
2. Sample client profiles
3. Pens/computers/tablets

Procedure:

- Provide sample client profiles including allergies, preferences, and service history.
- Practice filling out or updating client records after a simulated appointment.
- Emphasise confidentiality by discussing proper storage and access protocols.
- Review records for accuracy and completeness.

Activity 2: Booking efficient salon appointment

Materials Required:

1. Appointment books or scheduling software/apps
2. Sample client requests and cancellation scenarios

3. Phone or computer for simulated reminders

Procedure:

- Assign students to schedule appointments based on provided client requests, considering service duration and nail technician availability.
- Handle scenarios such as cancellations, rescheduling, and no-shows professionally.
- Practice sending appointment reminders via call, SMS, or email.
- Discuss strategies to optimise booking efficiency and client communication.

Check Your Progress

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. What is the main purpose of keeping accurate client records?
 - a) To increase appointment time
 - b) To provide personalised and safe services
 - c) To reduce communication
 - d) To avoid scheduling appointments
2. Which information should be included in a client's service history?
 - a) Salon decoration preferences
 - b) Previous treatments and products used
 - c) Nail technician's personal details
 - d) Salon opening hours
3. What is one benefit of effective appointment management?
 - a) Increased waiting times
 - b) Preventing overbooking and scheduling conflicts
 - c) Reducing client communication
 - d) Avoiding complex services
4. Which tool can send automated appointment reminders?
 - a) Manual appointment book
 - b) Nail file
 - c) Digital appointment scheduling software
 - d) Colour chart
5. Why should client records be stored securely?
 - a) To protect client confidentiality
 - b) To increase service prices
 - c) To reduce appointments
 - d) To promote products

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. Accurate records help nail technicians provide _____ services based on client preferences.
2. Appointment management helps prevent _____ and scheduling conflicts.
3. A manual appointment book can record bookings, cancellations, and _____ appointments.
4. Digital systems can send automated appointment _____ to clients.
5. Client records should be stored securely to protect _____.

C. Subjective Questions

1. Explain the importance of accurate record keeping in nail services.
2. Describe how appointment management can improve salon efficiency and client satisfaction.
3. Differentiate between a manual appointment book and digital appointment scheduling software.
4. Explain the best practices for maintaining secure and accurate client records.
5. Discuss how effective record keeping and appointment management can contribute to salon business growth.

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- demonstrate and maintain accurate and detailed client records, including personal information, service history, and product usage, to support personalised and safe nail services;
- manage appointment scheduling effectively to optimise workflow, minimise wait times, and enhance client satisfaction;
- demonstrate best practices in safeguarding client confidentiality and data protection in record keeping; and
- identify digital tools and backup systems to ensure secure storage and prevent loss of client and business information.

Unit 6

Basics of Salon Management

Unit 6 on ***Basics of Salon Management*** covers foundational knowledge and practical skills essential for managing a professional nail or beauty salon efficiently. It deals with the proper development, organization and maintenance of inventory, managing time effectively during services, and building strong client relationships. The sessions covered under this unit are as follows:

[1] **Inventory of Tools, Products, and Supplies** describes methods for tracking, organising, and maintaining salon tools, products, and supplies. It deals with proper storage, stock rotation, and regular audits to ensure products are safe, available, and of high quality for uninterrupted service delivery.

[2] **Time Management in Nail Services** describes the strategies for managing time efficiently during appointments. This includes planning service sequences, balancing multiple clients, minimising delays, and maintaining service quality. Effective time management helps maximise productivity while ensuring a professional and relaxed client experience.

[3] **Client Relationship and Service Management** deals with the techniques for developing and maintaining positive client relationships. Topics include active listening, understanding client preferences, handling feedback, and building trust. Strong client relationship management fosters loyalty, repeat visits, and a positive reputation for the salon.

Session 1: Inventory of Tools, Products, and Supplies

A nail technician should maintain an accurate inventory of tools, products, and supplies to ensure smooth, hygienic, and efficient service delivery. Regular stock checks help prevent shortages, reduce wastage, maintain product quality, and support effective salon operations.

1. Importance of Inventory Management

Inventory management ensures that the tools, products, and supplies required for nail services are available when needed and maintained in suitable condition. Effective inventory management helps prevent shortages and overstocking, reduce wastage, control costs, maintain hygiene standards, and support consistent service quality. Common items include nail files, buffers, cuticle pushers, clippers, brushes, electric drills, nail polishes, gels, acrylic products, primers, removers, sanitisers, and disposable supplies. Accurate stock records help ensure these items are available for daily services and are used efficiently.

2. Types of Inventory

Inventory in a nail salon can be broadly classified into three main categories, as outlined below (Fig. 6.1):

- (i) **Tools Inventory:** Tools inventory includes reusable equipment such as nail clippers, cuticle pushers, files, buffers, brushes, electric drills, and sterilisation equipment. Tools should be counted, inspected, cleaned, disinfected or sterilised as appropriate, and stored correctly. Damaged, worn-out, or malfunctioning tools should be repaired or replaced

promptly to maintain service quality and client safety. Proper maintenance also helps extend the useful life of equipment.



Figure 6.1: Types of nail salon inventory

- (ii) **Products Inventory:** Products inventory includes nail polishes, gel polishes, builder gels, acrylic powders and liquids, primers, base coats, top coats, removers, lotions, and treatment products. Quantities, batch numbers, purchase dates, and expiry dates should be monitored regularly. Products should be stored according to manufacturer instructions and checked for changes in condition before use. The First In, First Out (FIFO) method can be used where appropriate to ensure older suitable stock is used before newer stock.
- (iii) **Supplies Inventory:** Supplies inventory consists of consumable and disposable items such as cotton pads, lint-free wipes, gloves, tissues, disposable files, masks, towels, and other single-use materials. These supplies should be monitored according to usage patterns and replenished regularly. Maintaining adequate stock levels prevents interruptions during services and supports hygienic working practices.

3. Inventory Tracking and Stock Control

An inventory tracking system helps a nail technician or salon monitor stock levels, record product usage, and identify items requiring reordering. Small salons may use manual stock registers or spreadsheets, while larger salons may use digital inventory management software.

Inventory records may include the item or product name, quantity available, purchase date, supplier details, batch number, expiry date, reorder level, and usage or wastage. Regular stock checks help identify shortages, excess stock, expired products, and unnecessary wastage, allowing essential items to be reordered when required.

4. Storage, Maintenance, and Hygiene

Proper storage and maintenance are essential for protecting the quality and safety of tools, products, and supplies. Reusable tools should be appropriately cleaned, disinfected or sterilised and stored in a clean, dry, designated area. Products should be stored according to manufacturer instructions, with containers properly closed and protected from unsuitable temperature, light, or moisture where applicable. Disposable supplies should be stored hygienically and protected from contamination. Regular inspection helps identify damaged tools, contaminated materials, or products that are no longer suitable for use.

5. Cost Control and Inventory Efficiency

Effective inventory control contributes to cost management by reducing unnecessary purchasing, product wastage, overstocking, and losses from expired products. Product consumption should be monitored for different nail services to support purchasing decisions. Orders should be based on actual usage, available storage space, product shelf life, and expected demand. This approach helps control expenses while ensuring essential materials remain available.

6. Best Practices for Inventory Management

Good inventory management involves conducting regular stock counts and updating records, setting minimum stock or reorder levels for frequently used items, checking expiry dates, and using suitable stock rotation methods. Damaged, expired, or wasted products should be recorded, while appropriate storage conditions should be maintained. Reusable tools should be cleaned, disinfected, or sterilised as required, and disposable supplies should be stored in a clean and protected area. Products should be purchased according to actual usage and expected demand, with supplier and purchase records maintained where necessary. Regular inventory reviews can also identify unnecessary or slow-moving stock and improve overall inventory efficiency.

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Conducting a salon inventory audit

Materials Required:

1. Inventory checklist or software
2. Pen and paper or tablet/computer
3. Sample inventory items (tools and products)

Procedure:

- Review the current list of tools, products, and supplies.
- Physically count each item and check the condition or expiration dates.
- Record findings in the inventory checklist or software.

- Identify missing, damaged, or expired items for replacement.
- Discuss how to organise storage to improve inventory management.

Activity 2: Managing reorders and stock levels

Materials Required:

1. Inventory report from audit
2. Supplier contact list
3. Order forms or online ordering access

Procedure:

- Analyse inventory audit results to identify low-stock items.
- Prioritise products and tools that need reordering.
- Contact suppliers or place orders using order forms or digital platforms.
- Record orders and expected delivery dates.
- Develop a schedule for regular inventory checks to maintain optimal stock.

Check Your Progress

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. What is the main purpose of inventory management in a nail salon?
 - a) To increase product wastage
 - b) To ensure required items are available when needed
 - c) To avoid checking stock
 - d) To reduce service quality
2. Which of the following is part of products inventory?
 - a) Nail clippers
 - b) Sterilisation equipment
 - c) Gel polish and acrylic products
 - d) Towels
3. What does the FIFO method help ensure?
 - a) Newer stock is always used first
 - b) Older suitable stock is used before newer stock
 - c) Products are stored without labels
 - d) Expired products are reused
4. Which information is useful for inventory tracking?
 - a) Product name, quantity, and expiry date
 - b) Client's personal preferences only
 - c) Salon decoration details
 - d) Nail technician's working hours

5. How can effective inventory control reduce salon costs?
 - a) By increasing overstocking
 - b) By reducing wastage and unnecessary purchasing
 - c) By ignoring expiry dates
 - d) By purchasing all products in large quantities

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. Regular stock checks help prevent shortages and reduce _____.
2. Nail clippers, cuticle pushers, and electric drills are examples of _____ inventory.
3. Cotton pads, gloves, and disposable files are examples of _____ inventory.
4. The _____ method helps use older suitable stock before newer stock.
5. Products should be stored according to the _____ instructions.

C. Subjective Questions

1. Explain the importance of inventory management in a nail salon.
2. Describe the three main types of inventory used in a nail salon.
3. Explain how inventory tracking and regular stock checks help maintain efficient salon operations.
4. Discuss the importance of proper storage, maintenance, and hygiene of salon tools and products.
5. Explain how effective inventory management helps control costs and reduce product wastage.

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- explain the importance of inventory management in nail salons;
- identify tools, products, and supplies used in nail services;
- classify inventory into tools, products, and supplies;
- demonstrate proper stock tracking, storage, and maintenance practices; and
- describe effective inventory control and stock management practices.

Session 2: Time Management in Nail Services

Effective time management in a salon involves balancing efficiency with quality care. For nail technicians, this means completing services within appropriate timeframes while maintaining hygiene, accuracy, and client satisfaction. Poor time management can result in delays, rushed services, errors, and dissatisfied clients, which can affect the salon's reputation and revenue.

1. Importance of Time Management

In a busy salon, nail technicians manage clients with different needs and service requirements. Poor time management can increase waiting times, cause rushed

services, lead to mistakes, and increase nail technician stress. Effective time management supports a smooth workflow, proper preparation, consistent service quality, and a positive client experience.

2. Planning and Prioritising

Effective planning helps nail technicians organise appointments, prepare products and tools, and complete services in a logical sequence. Prioritising tasks reduces delays and allows sufficient time for each client without compromising hygiene or quality.

3. Allocating Realistic Time Slots

Time should be allocated according to the type and complexity of each service. A basic polish application or change may take approximately 30–40 minutes, while a gel polish service may require 45–60 minutes. Full acrylic or gel extensions with intricate nail art may take 90–120 minutes or longer. Allowing realistic time prevents rushing and supports safe, quality service.

4. Prioritising Tasks

A nail service should follow a logical sequence, beginning with client consultation and workstation preparation, followed by nail and cuticle preparation, product application, refining and curing where required. The service should end with a final inspection, clean-up, and aftercare advice. Following a consistent sequence improves efficiency and reduces unnecessary delays.

5. Scheduling According to Client Needs

Appointment duration should reflect the client's individual requirements. Additional services such as nail art, repairs, strengthening treatments, massage, or removal of existing enhancements should be considered when scheduling. Accurate planning helps nail technicians avoid rushing while maintaining service quality.

6. Techniques for Managing Time

Nail technicians can improve time management by using timers to monitor different stages of a service and appointment software to manage bookings and reminders. Complex services can be divided into stages with progress checks, allowing adjustments before delays occur. Clear communication about service duration also helps clients understand and manage their expectations.

7. Handling Interruptions

Interruptions may occur because of client questions, equipment problems, or unexpected requests. Short buffer periods between appointments can provide time to manage minor delays. Keeping tools and products organised and easily accessible

also reduces wasted time. Nail technicians should remain calm and professional when unexpected situations arise.

8. Benefits of Time Management

Effective time management improves client trust, productivity, and service consistency while reducing stress and unnecessary delays. It also supports salon profitability by making better use of working hours. Consistently delivering quality services on time strengthens the salon's professional reputation and encourages repeat visits and referrals.

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Creating an efficient service schedule

Materials Required:

1. Appointment book or digital scheduling tool
2. List of common nail services with average duration
3. Timer or stopwatch

Procedure:

- Review the list of services and their typical time requirements.
- Create a daily appointment schedule, allocating appropriate time slots for each client.
- Use a timer to simulate service timing for one or two services.
- Adjust the schedule based on timing results to ensure realistic appointment lengths.
- Discuss strategies to handle overbooking or delays.

Activity 2: Practice time management during nail services

Materials Required:

1. Nail technician kit (files, buffers, brushes, gels, etc.)
2. Timer or clock
3. Sample client scenario card with specific service requests

Procedure:

- Read the client scenario and plan the service steps with estimated times.
- Perform the nail service simulation, using a timer to track each step.
- Identify any steps that took longer than planned and discuss reasons.
- Practice techniques to speed up slower steps without compromising quality.
- Reflect on ways to minimise interruptions and maintain focus.

Check Your Progress

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. What is the main purpose of effective time management in a salon?
 - a) To rush services
 - b) To balance efficiency with quality care
 - c) To reduce hygiene standards
 - d) To increase waiting times
2. How long may a basic polish application or change take approximately?
 - a) 10–15 minutes
 - b) 30–40 minutes
 - c) 60–75 minutes
 - d) 90–120 minutes
3. Which of the following should be considered when scheduling an appointment?
 - a) Only the nail technician's preference
 - b) The client's individual service requirements
 - c) Salon decoration
 - d) The weather
4. What can nail technicians use to monitor different stages of a service?
 - a) Timers
 - b) Colour charts only
 - c) Towels
 - d) Nail files
5. Why are short buffer periods useful between appointments?
 - a) To increase waiting times
 - b) To manage minor delays and interruptions
 - c) To reduce service quality
 - d) To avoid preparing the workstation

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. Effective time management helps maintain hygiene, accuracy, and client _____.
2. Realistic time slots help prevent _____ and rushed services.
3. A gel polish service may take approximately _____ to 60 minutes.
4. Keeping tools and products organised reduces _____ time.
5. Effective time management can improve salon _____ by making better use of working hours.

C. Subjective Questions

1. Explain the importance of effective time management for a nail technician.

2. Describe how planning and prioritising tasks can improve the quality of nail services.
3. Explain why realistic time slots should be allocated according to the type and complexity of a nail service. Give examples.
4. Describe any three techniques that nail technicians can use to manage their time effectively.
5. Explain how effective time management benefits both the client and the salon.

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- explain the importance of time management in salon services;
- identify factors affecting nail service timings;
- classify nail services according to time requirements;
- demonstrate a logical sequence for nail services; and
- describe ways to improve time management.

Session 3: Client Relationship and Service Management

Client Relationship and Service Management focuses on understanding client needs, providing quality services, resolving concerns effectively, and maintaining satisfaction and loyalty. In this Client Relationship Management (CRM) includes the strategies used to build and maintain positive, long-term client relationships. By understanding individual preferences and expectations and providing personalised service, salons can encourage repeat visits and support sustainable business growth.

1. Importance of Client Relationship Management

In the competitive beauty and wellness industry, technical skills alone are not sufficient for long-term success. Clients are more likely to return when they feel respected, valued, and well cared for. Positive relationships also encourage word-of-mouth referrals, helping salons attract new clients and strengthen their reputation.

2. Key Elements of CRM

Effective communication is central to CRM. Nail technicians should actively listen, observe client responses, and ask relevant questions to understand preferences, sensitivities, health considerations, and lifestyle needs. This information helps nail technicians provide appropriate advice and personalise services.

Accurate and updated client records also support personalised service. Information such as service history, product choices, colour preferences, and previous concerns helps nail technicians maintain consistency and provide suitable recommendations during future appointments.

3. Building Trust and Loyalty

Trust is developed through reliability, consistency, professionalism, and quality service. Being punctual, delivering expected results, and responding positively to concerns strengthens client confidence. When problems occur, addressing them promptly and respectfully demonstrates a commitment to client satisfaction.

Loyalty can be encouraged through suitable initiatives such as loyalty programmes, referral rewards, birthday offers, and personalised follow-up messages. These gestures can help clients feel appreciated and encourage continued engagement.

4. Handling Difficult Clients

Managing difficult clients requires patience, empathy, and professionalism. Nail technicians should listen carefully to concerns, remain calm, avoid defensive responses, and focus on practical solutions. Addressing dissatisfaction respectfully can help resolve problems while maintaining a positive professional relationship.

5. Technology in CRM

Technology can improve client communication and salon efficiency. Digital booking systems simplify appointments and reduce scheduling errors, while CRM software can store client histories, preferences, loyalty information, and appointment reminders. Personalised messages based on previous services can also maintain client engagement and encourage future bookings. Effective CRM combines personalised service, communication, professionalism, and appropriate technology. These practices improve client satisfaction and retention while supporting a positive reputation and sustainable salon growth.

6. AI-Powered Customer Relationship Management

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in CRM helps salons personalise client experiences by analysing preferences, service history, and booking patterns. It can automate appointment reminders, suggest suitable services, manage customer queries through chatbots, and support personalised marketing. AI also helps identify client trends, improve communication, save time, and strengthen customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Practical Exercise

Activity 1: Conducting effective client consultations

Materials Required:

1. Client consultation form
2. Pen or tablet for digital notes
3. Sample client profiles

Procedure:

- Review the client's history and preferences before the appointment.
- Conduct a detailed consultation, asking questions about the client's needs, past experiences, and expectations.
- Take notes on allergies, preferred styles, and any concerns.
- Provide tailored service recommendations based on the consultation.
- Summarise the discussion and confirm the service plan with the client.

Activity 2: Handling challenging client interactions**Materials Required:**

1. Role-play scenarios with difficult client situations
2. Feedback forms

Procedure:

- Read the assigned difficult client scenario.
- Role-play the interaction, practicing active listening and calm communication.
- Use problem-solving techniques to address client concerns and resolve conflicts.
- Receive feedback from peers or instructors on handling the situation professionally.
- Reflect on lessons learned and discuss strategies for future encounters.

Check Your Progress**A. Multiple Choice Questions**

1. What is the main purpose of Client Relationship Management (CRM) in a salon?
 - a) To increase service time
 - b) To build and maintain positive, long-term client relationships
 - c) To reduce client communication
 - d) To avoid personalised services
2. Which of the following helps a nail technician understand a client's preferences?
 - a) Active listening and relevant questions
 - b) Ignoring client feedback
 - c) Avoiding client records
 - d) Offering the same service to every client
3. Which of the following can help build client trust and loyalty?
 - a) Being unreliable
 - b) Ignoring concerns
 - c) Providing consistent and professional service
 - d) Avoiding follow-up communication

4. How should a nail technician handle a difficult client?
 - a) Respond defensively
 - b) Ignore the complaint
 - c) Remain calm, listen carefully, and focus on practical solutions
 - d) End the conversation immediately
5. How can AI support CRM in a salon?
 - a) By replacing all salon staff
 - b) By analysing preferences and automating appointment reminders
 - c) By reducing client information
 - d) By preventing personalised communication

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. CRM focuses on understanding client needs, providing quality services, and maintaining client _____.
2. Accurate client records help nail technicians provide _____ services during future appointments.
3. Trust is developed through reliability, consistency, professionalism, and quality _____.
4. Managing difficult clients requires patience, empathy, and _____.
5. AI can analyse client preferences, service history, and booking _____ to personalise experiences.

C. Subjective Questions

1. Explain the importance of Client Relationship Management (CRM) in a nail salon.
2. Describe how effective communication and accurate client records can help provide personalised services.
3. Explain any four ways a nail technician can build client trust and loyalty.
4. How should a nail technician handle a difficult or dissatisfied client? Explain the steps involved.
5. Explain how technology and AI can support Client Relationship Management in a salon.

What have you learned?

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- explain the importance of client relationship management in salons;
- identify key elements of effective client relationship management;
- classify methods used to build client trust and loyalty;
- demonstrate professional ways to handle difficult clients;
- explain the role of technology and AI in client relationship management; and
- describe actions that improve client satisfaction and retention.

Answer Key

Unit 1: Advanced Nail Anatomy and Disorders

Session 1: Advanced Structure and Composition of Nails

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. c
2. b
3. c
4. b
5. c
6. c
7. c
8. d
9. a
10. c

Session 2: Nail Disorders, Diseases and Precautions

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. c
2. a
3. b
4. c
5. c

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. Onychomycosis
2. Paronychia
3. Hygiene
4. Aggressive
5. At-home

Session 3: Assessing Nail Health for Advanced Nail Services

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. b
2. c
3. c
4. c
5. d

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. Nail plate
2. Nail matrix

3. Hygiene
4. Consultation
5. Healthcare

Unit 2: UV Gel Nail Enhancement Techniques

Session 1: Introduction to UV Gel Nail Systems

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. c
2. b
3. c
4. c
5. b

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. UV
2. Builder
3. Top
4. Lint-free
5. Skin

Session 2: Step-by-step UV Gel Application Process

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. c
2. b
3. c
4. c
5. c

B. State whether the following Statements are True or False

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. True

Session 3: UV/LED Gel Curing Techniques

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. b
2. c
3. b
4. c
5. b

Session 4: Nail Art Concepts, Tools, and Basic Design Techniques

C. A. Multiple Choice

1. b)
2. c)
3. d)
4. b)
5. c)

D. B. Fill in the Blanks

1. Dotting
2. Stamping plate
3. Striping
4. UV/LED
5. Professional

Unit 3: Acrylic Nail Enhancement Systems

Session 1: Introduction to Acrylic Products

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. c
2. c
3. b
4. c
5. a
6. c
7. b
8. d
9. b
10. c

Session 2: Preparation of Natural Nails for System

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. c
2. c
3. b
4. b
5. b
6. b
7. b
8. b
9. c
10. a

Session 3: Acrylic Nail Application, Shaping and Safety Practices

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. b
2. b
3. c
4. b
5. a
6. b
7. b
8. b
9. c
10. b

Unit 4: Nail Refill and Maintenance Services

Session 1: Refilling Services in Maintaining Nails

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. b
2. c
3. b
4. b
5. b
6. d
7. a
8. b
9. c
10. b

Session 2: Professional Nail Refill Procedures

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. b
2. b
3. b
4. a
5. a
6. b
7. c
8. a
9. b
10. b

Session 3: Advanced Refilling and Rebalancing Techniques

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. a
2. b
3. c
4. b
5. b
6. b
7. b
8. b
9. b
10. b

Unit 5: Client Care And Professional Ethics

Session 1: Client Consultation and Handling Challenging Situations

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. b
2. a
3. b
4. b
5. b
6. b
7. b
8. b

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. Valued
2. Interruption
3. Composed
4. Swatches
5. Agreement

Session 2: Hygiene, Ethics and Professional Practices

A. Multiple Choice

1. b
2. d
3. c
4. c
5. b

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. Contamination
2. Sterilisation

3. Confidentiality
4. Regulatory
5. Expectations

Session 3: Client Record Keeping and Appointment Management

A. Multiple Choice

1. b
2. b
3. b
4. c
5. a

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. Personalised
2. Overbooking
3. Rescheduled
4. Reminders
5. Confidentiality

Unit 6: Basics of Salon Management

Session 1: Inventory of Tools, Products, and Supplies

A. Multiple Choice

1. b
2. c
3. b
4. a
5. b

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. Wastage
2. Equipment
3. Consumable
4. FIFO
5. Manufacturer's

Session 2: Time Management in Nail Services

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. b
2. a
3. b
4. a
5. b

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. Satisfaction
2. Delays
3. 45
4. Preparation
5. Productivity

Session 3: Client Relationship and Service Management**A. Multiple Choice Questions**

1. b
2. a
3. c
4. c
5. b

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. Loyalty
2. Personalised
3. Service
4. Communication
5. Patterns

Glossary

Acrylic Liquid (Monomer): The liquid component is mixed with acrylic powder to form the enhancement.

Acrylic Powder (Polymer): The powder is mixed with monomer to create acrylic nails.

Appointment System: A method (manual or digital) for booking and tracking client visits.

Base Gel: Applied before other gel layers to ensure proper adhesion.

Bead: The small mixture of powder and liquid acrylic used for sculpting the nail.

Blending: The process of smoothing out the old and new product for a seamless finish.

Builder Gel: A type of gel used to build nail structure and length.

Client Consultation: A discussion to assess client needs, allergies, and preferences before starting service.

Client Record: A document containing service history, allergies, preferences, and contact information.

Client Retention: Strategies to keep clients returning, such as quality service and follow-up.

Curing: The process of hardening UV gel under a UV/LED lamp.

Cuticle: The layer of skin that overlaps the nail plate at the base; it protects the nail matrix.

Diagnosis: The process of identifying nail conditions through visual and tactile assessment.

Disinfection: Using chemical agents to kill bacteria and pathogens on tools and surfaces.

Gel Polish: Colored gel that provides a long-lasting polish-like finish.

Hard Gel: A durable gel that requires filing for removal; used for extensions.

Inventory Management: Keeping track of products, tools, and supplies to ensure smooth salon operations.

Lifting: A condition where the enhancement separates from the natural nail; must be addressed during refill.

Lunula: The crescent-shaped whitish area at the base of the nail plate.

Nail Matrix: The tissue under the base of the nail where new nail cells are generated.

Nail Plate: The visible, hard part of the nail that sits on top of the nail bed.

Nail Shaping: The technique of filing and shaping the nail to the desired form.

Onycholysis: Separation of the nail plate from the nail bed, often due to trauma or chemicals.

Onychomycosis: Fungal infection of the nail causing discolouration, thickening, and crumbling.

Paronychia: Inflammation or infection around the nail fold, often caused by injury or poor cuticle care.

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment): Items like gloves and masks are used to protect both the client and nail technician.

Priming: Preparing the natural nail with primer to improve product adhesion.

Professional Ethics: Conduct standards like honesty, confidentiality, and respect in professional settings.

Psoriasis (Nail): A condition that can cause pitting, discolouration, and crumbling of the nails.

Refill (Infill): A maintenance procedure that fills the gap between the cuticle and enhancement as nails grow.

Retail Products: Products sold to clients for at-home nail care, contributing to salon income.

Sanitisation: Cleaning surfaces and tools to reduce the risk of infection.

Soft Gel: A more flexible gel that can be soaked off; ideal for overlays.

Time Management: Planning and organising service schedules for timely delivery and minimal client wait.

Top Gel: A sealing layer that provides gloss and protection.

UV Gel: A thick, gel-like substance that hardens under UV or LED light for nail enhancement.

Ventilation: Systems used to minimise inhalation of acrylic fumes and dust during service.



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