

EST 30

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Esthetician – Nail Technician
Nail Fills, Repairs, and Removal

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Nail Fills, Repairs, and Removal

Rationale

Why is it important to learn this skill?

Nail fills, repairs, and removals are the majority of work performed by nail technicians. Once a technician establishes a clientele, the clientele is maintained by performing fills, repairs, and removals. These services will comprise of up to 90% of a technician's income.

Outcome

When you have completed this module, you will be able to:

Perform a nail fill, fix and repair nails, and remove enhancements.

Objectives

1. Describe nail fills.
2. Describe nail repairs.
3. Describe nail removal.
4. Demonstrate nail fills.

Introduction

As the natural nail plate shifts forward, maintenance is required every two to five weeks. Nail enhancements are shortened, the apex is reshaped, art is added, and the nails are sealed. Sometimes, nails will be recoloured.

Being meticulous during nail preparation and the creation of a set of artificial nails will reap benefits during a fill. When a client returns for a fill, the technician will either work with high quality returning material, or be forced to deal with correcting poorly created nails while performing a fill. Bonders, primer, nail preparation, etc. can all cause problems during a fill.

Objective One

When you have completed this objective, you will be able to:
Describe nail fills.

Assessment

When a client returns for a fill, the technician must first examine the nails, looking for perimeter lifting, chips, nicks, cracks, trauma (broken nails), and air pocket lifting. Also assess how much the nail has grown out, the health of the nail, and the health of the cuticle. The photograph to the right shows 6 weeks growth. Shortening and reshaping are required, as is thinning of product.



Nails are worn consistently, but a client's lifestyle will change. Clients may want nails shorter, as for activities such as gardening; nails may need to be shortened for playing baseball or a musical instrument.

Shape change, may require full removal, such as from a square to an almond because c-curve is different.

During assessment, have clients choose colour. It is good practice to know any colour changes before work is started. Thick sparkles may need to be embedded deeper in the nail, a colour polish can be done at the end. These things must be known beforehand, so the nail can be properly constructed.



Shorten and Reshape

During shortening and reshaping, the technician must always be observant. Look for lifting, cracking, chips, and separation of the product from the natural nail plate.

Approximate finished length must be known.

- Confer with the client. If they want the free edge shortened, file it with a manual or electric file.
- When using an electric file, use a medium grit arbor band. Hold the nail firmly with the thumb on top of the nail, and index finger underneath.
- Hold the file vertically. Begin on the left free edge corner and move the file slightly into the nail. One method is to push the arbor band into the nail to the desired depth and move across the nail plate in one pass. Although this method removes all of the desired material in one movement, it is not comfortable on the client. A more comfortable method is to push the arbor band a small amount into the nail and then move across the nail plate, only removing a thin band of material. This process is repeated until the total desired amount of material is removed.

De-Bulk the Artificial Nail Plate

- After the free edge of a nail has been shortened to length, tilt the finger-tip upwards at a comfortable angle and tilt the arbor band parallel to the artificial nail plate. Moving from right sidewall to left sidewall, slowly remove layers of material. The point of this step is to de-bulk the nail and reduce the apex which has shifted toward the free edge. Do not remove all of the artificial nail.

The photograph to the right shows a nail that has been shortened and de-bulked.



- As a cautionary note, keep the file on a medium RPM, and move it continuously across the nail plate. Pausing on one spot will cause heat to build up. Prevent the arbor band from contacting the cuticle.
- Smooth down any bumps around the perimeter of the artificial nail.
- If lifting has occurred, it will appear as a cloudy or shadowed area. It is important with gel to not file directly on top of the lifted area; the vibration of filing directly on top will cause further separation. If separation has occurred along the cuticle, it is generally in one corner of the 'u' that signals the end of the artificial nail.

Removing Lifted Product



A lift appears as a cloudy spot or a shadow. This depends on the colouration of the building product. With **perimeter lifting**, the problem is usually incorrect nail preparation, or chipping of a corner. Nail preparation is a solution, incorrect c-curve is another cause; client trauma is another cause. Make sure c-curves are uniform. Look closely at the photograph on the left. At the top right of the cuticle, there is a small, hairline lift. If left unnoticed, bacteria would grow under the lift and any product placed over top would lift as well.

Once lifting is discovered. Mentally draw a line behind the lifted area. File out the perimeter line, slowly working toward the lift. Remove the product in thin layers, not going completely to the natural nail plate. Once the lift is reached, the lift will pop out. Check for signs of bacterial infection and pseudomynis. If the nail is clean and healthy, clean the nail and move on to nail preparation. Any lifted area has some amount of bacteria, moisture, and oil. It must be properly prepared.



Hold the electric file at a 45° angle to the nail plate and position the edge of the arbor band just below the lifted area (toward the free edge). Etch a line into the artificial nail to separate the lifted area from the rest of the artificial nail. Using very little pressure and small movements, continue etching down toward the natural nail plate. Check the depth of the filing each time until the natural nail plate is almost reached.



Pick off the lifted piece with a cuticle pusher. The lifted portion must be fully separated from all other material in order to be detached.





The photograph to the left shows the artificial nail after the lifted portion has been removed.



The photograph to the left shows the artificial nail after the nail has been prepared and a protein bonder has been applied. The protein bonder helps the product bond to the natural nail plate. This nail is ready to be reconstructed.

If the lift has been removed and the natural nail plate has discolouration, additional steps must be taken. Yellow discolouration can mostly be buffed out, as it is often superficial and not dangerous. Note that the discoloured material is contaminated. Remove this material last, and then perform SDS to all affected tools and equipment as per EST 1.

If the discolouration cannot be removed by buffing, an experienced technician may react differently than a new technician. It is the clearly stated position of these ILM's, that contraindications must be immediately referred to a physician. Experienced technicians, however, may choose to work on the nail using caution and proper protocol. They may apply an anti-fungal agent to the affected area, wash hands, remove all materials from the work surface, and perform SDS on all tools, linens, and equipment as per EST 1. Reset the station, keep the compromised area isolated and leave it until the final task. Perform all fills, repairs, and removals on the other nails. Once the other nails are completely finished, dehydrate the affected area. Apply only non-porous products over the affected area. The use of porous products will feed oxygen to the area, so non-porous products are necessary. Mark the area with an

embellishment or decal and write that down in notes. As part of the client's home care regime, have them apply an anti-fungal spray on top of the artificial nail and under the free edge. The next time the client returns, compare the affected area with the covering and notes. Recommend a two-week fill to see the area quickly. If the area has increased in size, recommend the client to a physician and remove any coloured product, so that the physician can clearly see the affected area.

If colouring is cosmetic, remove all colouring to inspect the health of the natural nail.

Lifts can occur anywhere around the perimeter of the product. Air pocket lifting will appear as a near-perfect circle in the centre of the product.

Pocket lifting is usually caused by product that was not fully cured (gel), a ratio that is too wet (liquid / powder), or trauma. When an artificial nail experiences trauma, something may give way to the force. When an artificial nail is not flexible enough, pocket lifting can occur as the artificial nail flexes away from the natural nail plate. If pocket lifting occurs on only one nail, trauma is the likely cause. If pocket lifting happens on all ten nails, it is most likely the technician's fault. A pocket lift is removed in the same way that a linear lift is removed. The bit is moved in a circular pattern around the lift to cut it away from the solid product.

Free Edge Check

This stage is like the rough draft of a paper. This is a rough shaping to make sure that all free edges are intact. Use a hand file to rough-in the free edge, keeping in mind the final shape and placement of new product. This check will help the technician determine if repairs are needed. Look to make sure that sidewall are coming straight out from the finger.

Nail Preparation

Refer to EST 29A or EST 29B for complete instructions.

Reapplying Product, Reshaping, and Sealing

Most of reapplying product will occur at the cuticle area and the new apex (and any lifted areas). Please see EST 29A and EST 29B.

During the final shaping, it is critical to inspect each nail from various angles. This point, the technician must determine the viewpoint to which the nails will be oriented. When the nails are coming off the fingers, they can appear 'straight' in three different ways. Firstly, the nails can appear straight from the viewpoint of the technician working on them; secondly, the nails can appear straight from the viewpoint of the client, looking at their fingers with the palm facing away; and thirdly, nails can appear straight from the viewpoint of the client, looking at their fingers with the palm facing toward them, with the fingers curled. For a middle ground, have the client lay their elbows—one at a time—on the work surface with the forearms pointing straight up. It is best to use this viewpoint to align the artificial nails to the fingers. While the client is in this position, compare all of the nails for length. Clients can arrange pairs of fingers beside each other for a comparison, or clients can press their palms together.

Objective One Self-Test

1) What is the recommended length of time between fills?

2) When a client returns for a fill, which conditions is a technician looking for during the assessment?

3) What does lifting look like?

4) A nail technician removes a pocket lift and discovers that the natural nail underneath is strongly discoloured. What is done?

5) What does air pocket lifting look like?

Objective One Self-Test Answers

- 1) The recommended length of time between fills is from 2 to 5 weeks.
- 2) During an assessment, a technician is looking for: perimeter lifting, chips, nicks, cracks, trauma, air pocket lifting, nail growth, and health of the nail.
- 3) Lifting looks like a cloudy spot or shadow.
- 4) Refer the client to a physician.
- 5) Air pocket lifting look like a near-perfect, shadowy or cloudy circle surrounded by product.

Objective Two

When you have completed this objective, you will be able to:

Describe nail repairs.

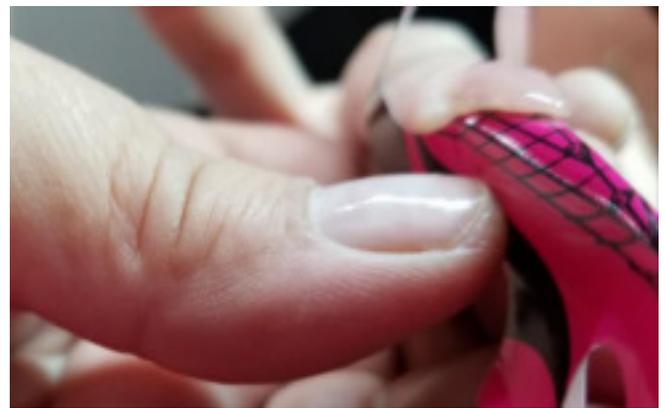
When applying a form to an existing nail to repair the nail, it is imperative that the form match the existing c-curve and arch. The form must also be customized by trimming for the hyponychium and fitting tightly from sidewall of natural nail to sidewall of natural nail. The fixes that are listed below occur after all nail preparation has been completed. Check the manufacturer's specifications as to the steps required for the system being used, in relation to the building component. This objective covers the application of building components.

Perform any required steps from Objective one. Apply the form and recreate the free edge according to EST 29A or EST 29B.

Make sure that the form is placed to match the existing c-curve. See the photograph to the right, and the photograph below.



Look at the photograph to the right. Notice that there is no gap between the form and the free edge. The form must fit snugly to rebuild the sidewall, making sure that the sidewall of the artificial nail fully follows the sidewall of the natural nail plate.



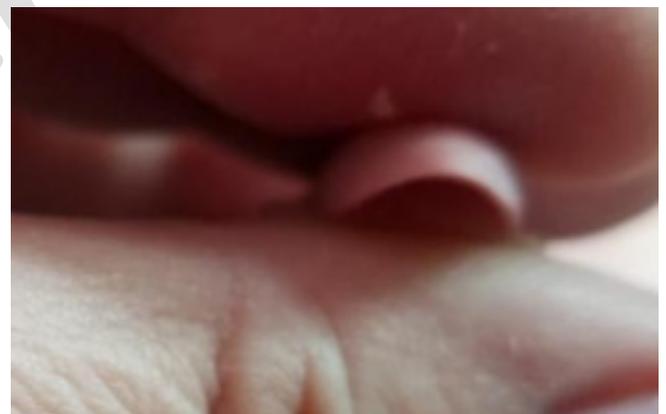
Look at the photograph to the right and observe how the sidewall of the artificial nail closely follows the sidewall of the natural nail plate, the full length of the nail plate. Also note how the artificial nail comes straight out from the end of the sidewall. Keep applying product to construct the apex and sidewalls.



The photograph to the right shows a completed fill. This nail is ready for colour and sealant.



The photograph to the right shows the completed, symmetrical c-curve.



Free Edge Chips

Regardless of the shape of chip and size of chip, all free edge chips are fixed with the same process. Apply the form in the same manner as shown above. Repeat the same process as outlined above.

Objective Two Self-Test

1) When applying a form to an existing nail to repair the nail, what must the form match?

2) What must be done to the nail before a fix is performed?

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Objective Two Self-Test Answers

- 1) When applying a form to an existing nail to repair the nail, the form must match the c-curve and apex.
- 2) Before a fix is performed, the nail must be prepared.

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Objective Three

When you have completed this objective, you will be able to:

Describe nail removal.

Nail Health

The main goal of a nail technician is to prioritize the health of the natural nail. If a client requests a removal of a set of non-porous nails, it is not recommended to file the artificial nails completely away. The best outcome is to reduce the artificial nails, not remove them entirely. If a technician tries to remove all of the artificial product, it will likely leave the client's nails thin and weak. Tenderness will result, and any trauma to the weakened nail plate may result in damage to the nail bed. It is best to finish the reduction with a manicure that includes nail oil and two layers of nail strengthener. The strengthener will level off any uneven spots and make the nails appear continuous up the nail plate. The client can reapply the strengthener while the nails grow out.

Porous artificial nails can be soaked off, following manufacturer's specifications. These nails may include a non-porous outer layer which will require filing. Once the non-porous layer is removed, soak the porous product in solvent (this can take up to 30 minutes). The soaking process will dehydrate natural nail. It is best to finish the removal with a manicure that includes nail oil and two layers of nail strengthener.

Electric Filing

Exercise caution with electric files. These devices can be destructive to the natural nail plate if the incorrect bit is used, or incorrect technique is used with the correct bit. An excellent idea is to use the electric file on oneself first, to feel how the bit reacts. Even with the correct bit, damage to the natural nail plate can occur if: too much pressure is applied, the bit stays too long on the same spot, if the bit digs too deep, the bit is held at an incorrect angle, the grit is too aggressive, the wrong direction of drill bit rotation has been selected, and the skin is touched with the bit. A medium or fine diamond bit will work well for natural nail preparation. Using any other bit may risk damage to the natural nail plate.

Client Education

For best results when servicing a new client: educate the client. Educating clients regarding their home care regime will result in better nails (and higher client satisfaction) and less work for the technician during the next fill. When the client returns for their first fill, show them how to use the nail strengthener that you provide, and show them how to use a file to smoothen any ridges or sharp edges that may develop when they are at home. For example, a client may develop a hairline lift in between fills. If the client has been properly educated, they can apply a strengthener that will temporarily prevent further lifting and keep debris and bacteria from entering the lift. Nails are prone to chipping in the final week before a fill, because the nails have continually grown since the last service and are now getting caught on things. If a client has been educated to file their nails 1 to 2mm at this stage, and then coat the nails and seal the free edge with strengthener, the chipping will be greatly reduced. As a bonus, the application of the strengthener will add a new gloss to the nails, thereby making them look shinier. When a client becomes part of the process, they derive more satisfaction from their nails.

A technician may become overwhelmed by the wide array of ingredients that appear in products. Most manufacturers offer product knowledge classes; these classes are invaluable sources of information. Ask your wholesalers and sales representatives to keep you apprised of any learning opportunities. Customizing quality ingredients and products to clients will increase satisfaction and extend the look and performance of the artificial nails. These positive outcomes will increase customer loyalty and trust. Many experienced nail technicians will make their own products—with quality ingredients—and retail them to clients. Make sure to follow all applicable labeling standards. For example, a simple, high-quality nail oil can be made of jojoba oil. This oil is effective in maintaining skin health. Vitamin E oil can neutralize free radicals, while and myrrh oil and frankincense oil have many beneficial properties.

If a client does not feel comfortable with artificial nails, they may still be retained as a regular client. They may be open to receiving a regularly scheduled manicure that focuses on the natural nail, or a manicure that includes gel polish. A well-rounded nail technician will be able to provide a diverse range of services for all clients.

Objective Three Self-Test

1) What is the main goal of a nail technician?

2) What is the best outcome for removing non-porous product?

3) How are porous artificial nails removed?

4) When can the electric file be destructive to the natural nail?

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Objective Three Self-Test Answers

- 1) The main goal of a nail technician is to prioritize the health of the natural nail.
- 2) The best outcome for removing non-porous product is to reduce the artificial nails, not remove them entirely.
- 3) Porous artificial nails are soaked off.
- 4) The electric file can be destructive to the natural nail if the incorrect bit is used, or incorrect technique is used. Incorrect techniques include: holding the bit at an incorrect angle, too much pressure, staying on one spot for too long, using a bit that is too aggressive, digging too deeply, selecting the wrong direction of drill bit rotation, and touching skin.

Objective Four

When you have completed this objective, you will be able to:
Demonstrate nail fills.

Laboratory Exercise

Purpose: to perform a fill on a set of nails.

Materials

Desk	UV / LED Lamp	Overhead Lamp
Chairs	Electric File	Cuticle Pusher
Electric File Bits: Diamond cone, diamond, mandrel with arbor bands (medium and fine)		Dappen Dish
Dust Vent or Towel	Sanitizable Dust Brushes	Gel brushes
Assorted Tips	Lint-free Wipes	Files: 100 and 180 grit
Forms	Nail Clipper	Nail Cleaner
Polish Remover	Hand Sanitizer	Primers / Dehydrators
Bonding Component	Building Component	Sealing Component
Colour	Nail Oil	Hand Cream
Tip Cutters	Medium Viscosity Cyanoacrylate	
	Pinching tool	Sable brushes
Paper Towels	Stork Scissors	
Buffer Blocks: medium and fine	Monomer and polymer (Colour Optional)	

Procedure: The procedure for performing a set of fills is listed below. For more detailed instruction, see the appropriate section of this ILM.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1) Assessment. | 5) Remove and lifts. |
| 2) Shorten and reshape. | 6) Make note of fixes for free edge. |
| 3) De-bulk. | 7) Prepare the nails. |
| 4) Check for lifting. | 8) Reapply the chosen product. |

Instructor verification:

Module Summary Self-Test

1) Approximately, how much income is generated from fills?

2) If a technician is not meticulous during nail preparation and the creation of a set of artificial nails, what will be the result?

3) Why is it important to have the client choose their colour during the assessment?

4) When an electric file is used to cut out a lift, at what angle is the file held?

5) When performing final free edge shaping, a nail technician should look at each nail from ___ viewpoints.

6) What other options does a client have, if they do not want artificial nails?

Module Summary Self-Test Answers

- 1) Approximately, 90% of a technician's income is generated from fills.
- 2) If a technician is not meticulous during nail preparation and the creation of a set of artificial nails, they will be forced to deal with correcting poorly created nails while performing a fill.
- 3) It is important to have the client choose their colour during the assessment, so the nail can be properly constructed.
- 4) When an electric file is used to cut out a lift, it is held at a 45 degree angle.
- 5) When performing final free edge shaping, a nail technician should look at each nail from 3 viewpoints: straight from the technician's sitting position, straight from the viewpoint of the client, and the viewpoint of the client with the palms facing the client, fingers curled.
- 6) If a client does not want artificial nails, they can select a natural nail manicure, or a manicure that includes gel polish.