

# HEALTH }

## Diamond Nails? Crystal Nails? What Are You Really Getting?

How many times has a client come in saying she just heard about some new type of exotic nail enhancement you've never even heard of before? Techs are continually reinventing applications and renaming old standards to keep a fresh menu for clients. Find out what's really behind the names with this guide. We recommend handing this out to clients so they won't get fooled on services.

### French Manicures

A French manicure, also referred to as pink-and-whites, can be done using several different techniques:

- 1 Using polish over any type of enhancement or on natural nails.
- 2 Applying white tips with a clear or sheer pink acrylic or gel, or resin with fiberglass, or acrylic powder. Acrylic powders can also be custom blended for French looks to better match the color of a natural nail.
- 3 Applying natural colored tips with white acrylic or gel, resin with fiberglass, or acrylic powder on the tips and clear or a sheer pink on the nail bed.
- 4 Using a form and sculpting the white tip using acrylic or gel, and clear or a sheer pink on the nail bed.
- 5 Airbrushed over any enhancement or natural nail.

## What Are You Really Getting?

### Standard Nail Service Terms

These are terms that apply to the most common nail enhancement services.

**Acrylic:** A liquid and powder that is mixed and applied with a brush. The product hardens in about two minutes on its own without any UV lamps.

**Gel:** In basic terms, gel is pre-mixed acrylic in a gel-like state. Gels are usually odorless and almost always require curing in a UV lamp.

**Wraps:** Wraps are thin pieces of material (usually silk, fiberglass, or linen) that are adhered to nails to help increase their strength and durability. Wraps are usually applied with resin, glue, an activator, and sometimes a combination of glue and acrylic.

**Acrylic Dips:** This is when resin is applied to the nail, and then acrylic powder is either sprinkled over it or the client's nail is dipped into powder. An activator can also be used to speed up the hardening process.

**Fill:** A required maintenance for any enhancement where the grown-out nail (at the cuticle) is "filled in," to re-finish the entire nail enhancement look.

All of the above systems can be applied in the following ways:

- > Directly onto the nail (overlay).
- > On tips that have been applied with resin (glue) or acrylic.
- > Sculpted using a paper, plastic, or metal nail form.

In addition, all of the above types of services can be finished with a UV gel top coat to protect the enhancement. The UV coating is applied similar to polish and then cured under a UV lamp. UV top coats are protective to the enhancement and will need to be filed off at the next appointment.

### Misleading Service Names

You may hear about the following services. These are typically regular services with clever titles to convince the customer the service is unique and worth more money. The most common ones are:

**Solar Nails** — Solar Nails is a brand of acrylic manufactured by CND. It is one of their original brands and is a true acrylic and nothing more.

**Gel Nails** — A serviced termed "gel nails" is most often an actual and legitimate gel application, with gel and UV lamp. But sometimes a service is called gel nails when in fact it is a standard acrylic application with an added UV gel top coat at the end. You can spot this misnomer by noticing if there is any liquid and powder involved during any step of the service (which means acrylic is being used). Also, notice how many times you were asked to place your hand under a UV lamp — if it's only once, it's probably a gel top coat and not actual gel nails.

**Porcelain Nails** — Nothing more than acrylic or gels, possibly with a UV gel top coat. Porcelain is no longer used on nails, as it once was during the '70s and early '80s, but some clients still use the term.

**Diamond Nails** — Diamond nails are acrylics. The claim is that they are "more expensive" because they are hard like diamonds, but they aren't any different than regular acrylic nails.

**Crystal Nails** — Any type of nail enhancement done with clear acrylic, gel, or resin with clear tips or sculpted with a form.

The above service names are most frequently used as ploys to charge more for "enhanced" enhancements. It doesn't mean there aren't truly unique enhancements out there, and that they may legitimately cost more (because techs are always coming up with new and creative ways to market nail enhancements).

But it's important to be informed and ask questions so you know exactly what type of enhancement you're getting. A lot of techs will use jazzed up names to help differentiate their salon from the competition, and there's nothing wrong with that. But don't be afraid to inquire as to exactly what the enhancement is so you can accurately compare services and prices throughout different salons.