

Five Ways to Improve Your Polish Application

Use this handout to help your students learn the best nail polish application techniques to increase their speed and confidence.



A neat, quick, accurate polish application is one of the most important aspects of providing high-quality service to your clients. But if you have a less-than steady hand, it can sometimes be nerve-wracking. Here are six ways to improve your technique to make your polish application easier and more professional looking.

1 Prep smart: After the basic manicure, be sure you have thoroughly cleansed the nail plate from all residue so that the polish will adhere. Make sure your client is certain about her polish color choice to avoid any potential do-overs. Offer to swipe a test patch onto one of her nails. Next, to help her avoid any post-polish smudges, ask her to put on any rings or jewelry she may have taken off prior to the manicure, to get her car keys ready, and to pre-pay if possible.

2 Base coat: A proper base coat is the foundation of a good polish application; it prevents yellowing and allows the polish to adhere. Use a base coat meant to be used in conjunction with the polish you are using. Manufacturers formulate their products to be used together. Start with the client's dominant hand and apply a thin coat, then place in the dryer. Repeat with the other hand.

3 First color coat: Mix up the polish, but to avoid air bubbles, roll the polish bottle between your hands instead of shaking it. Start applying the color to the nails of the first hand about 1/8" from the cuticle and apply in three strokes (first the center, then each side), fanning the brush slightly and pulling to the tip. As you polish the sides, you can pull the skin away from the sidewalls to avoid getting polish on the surrounding skin. After coating each nail, cap its free edge before moving on to the next. Capping the free edge prevents the polish from chipping. Do this by moving the brush back and forth on the tip of the free edge.

4 Second color coat: Repeat the technique from the first color coat, applying a thin layer of color to the tips. Do not cap the free edge. Using a small art brush dipped in acetone, clean up any smudges on the skin or cuticles.

5 Top coat: Be sure to use the correct top coat for the product you are using. As with base coats, manufacturers formulate their products to work together. Apply a thin, even layer of top coat, and cap the free edges with it to further prevent chipping. Apply a polish-drying spray to the client's nails, and allow her nails to dry for 10 minutes or longer under a nail dryer.



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