

Acrylic Enhancements

Trouble Shooting



When your clients start to experience issues with their acrylic enhancements or you're having issues with acrylic when you first start out, it can be a frustrating experience for both you and your clients.

The key here is to understand it has happened to us all!



And to become a strong, competent Nail Professional is to not get frustrated and quit, it is to put on your detective hat and figure out exactly what may be happening.

START FROM THE BEGINNING

There is a specific checklist you need to run through if you're finding there are problems with your acrylic applications, and it starts with asking yourself and your clients questions.

First, review your client assessment form. Is there any information here that would indicate that your client may have an issue with acrylic?

Have they ever worn acrylic before? Yes or No?

It is important to realize that not every client can wear every nail product, a thought that generally goes against public (and most nail professionals) beliefs.

Body chemistry (among other relevant factors) can dictate the right and wrong product for any client. And if your client has never worn acrylic before neither of you may even know the answer. Go through the rest of the trouble shooting checklist to confirm it may not be any other factor, re-apply the acrylic and check in with your client in a couple of days. If there still presents a problem, have her come back in and try a different enhancement product. With no background of enhancement history, sometimes it may be a trial and error situation.

What type of nail do they have? Are they thin, flexible, spoon?

Along with body chemistry, the type of nail a client has can also be a contributing factor with whether they are able to wear acrylic or not. Clients with thinner more flexible nails may exhibit difficulties with an acrylic product, as they tend to flex and pull away from acrylic much more often than thicker, less flexible nails, so review your notes to see what type of nails your client has.

Often, we may miss a key element on the client assessment form that points us to the reason a client may be experiencing issues.

When I do my acrylic enhancements, they “pop” off the next day. What am I doing wrong?

Acrylic enhancements like all other enhancement products rarely “pop” off unless in rare circumstances. But as a new student you may find this does happen to you when you’re first starting your applications. Keep in mind that ‘popping’ off is different than lifting.

If you are having issues with enhancements “popping off” or lifting, first as always, review your client assessment form for any indications that the issue may be client based. If it isn't, then follow this quick checklist to see where the issue may lie.

- ◆ **Temperatures** (room and of client hand) can affect the adhesion and proper curing of acrylic so be sure your client's hands are of normal temperature before applying any product (especially in cold winter months and hot summer months), and always work in a room where the temperature isn't too warm or too cold. Any open windows or lack of ventilation can dramatically affect room temperature and therefore affect product effectiveness.
- ◆ **Rare chemical reaction** may also cause acrylic to come off unexpectedly, so be sure to do a thorough client assessment to address any allergies or previous reactions your client may have had to acrylic. It is **NEVER** OK to apply a professional nail product on a client if you are unsure of any reaction.
- ◆ Did your client **wash their hands** and dry thoroughly? Residue, oil, hand moisturizer and debris left on the hands and nail plates can affect acrylic adhesion.
- ◆ Did you properly perform a **‘mini’ manicure** and prep the natural nail plate for adhesion? Remember nail products do not stick to skin and as you learned in Module 2 cuticle is skin - dead skin, but skin none the less, and acrylic won't stick to cuticle if left on the nail plate. Non-sticking nail products definitely lead to ‘popping’ off.
- ◆ Did you **remove all the dust** and properly dehydrate and/or prime the nail plate? Even the

smallest amounts of dust can affect product adhesion so be sure to use a nail brush and remove all dust before starting your application. And remember to keep your work area neat and free of dust and debris.

- ◆ Did you **avoid air bubbles** during your tip application and were the well areas of the tips blended completely? Are you allowing a significant drying time for your tip resin before attempting blending? If you start blending your tip well areas before you allow the resin to dry you are affecting the foundation of your enhancement.
- ◆ Did you apply your acrylic with the **proper monomer/polymer ratios**? Remember these ratios can differ by manufacturer's brand so confirm you are mixing properly. Your acrylic balls should have the consistency of mayonnaise. Too much monomer (liquid) or too little monomer will cause acrylic to either crystallize or come off in chunks when you file and lead to lifting. Go back to acrylic ball practice to get your ratios right (see module 9 for acrylic ball practice).
- ◆ When applying the acrylic did you **stay 1/16th of an inch** away from the skin in the sidewall and eponychium area? Product touching skin will not only cause 'popping' off, but lifting, AND WORSE, could lead to chemical over-exposure as well - avoid touching skin at all costs!
- ◆ Did you **over file** during your finishing? This can thin enhancements in certain areas causing weakness in the stress areas and lead to breakage and lifting. Also, if you are finding that your acrylic is coming off in chunks then look back to your monomer/polymer ratios as they are incorrect.
- ◆ Are you allowing a significant time allotment for the **acrylic to cure** before filing on the enhancement? Filing too soon and not allowing curing will also lead to lifting.
- ◆ What is your client doing after their enhancements are applied? Remember **acrylic can take a full 24 hours to fully cure** so if your client is using harsh household chemicals, swimming in salt or chlorine etc. right after their appointment then these type of activities can dramatically affect the integrity of the acrylic as well. Be sure to ask them when they note that they are experiencing lifting.
- ◆ Is your client a **nail biter or has extra small nail plates**? Nail biters and clients with small nail plates often experience lifting more than a 'normal' client would as their working area (nail plate) is much smaller and harder to apply product on and their foundation (nail plate) is much smaller as well. Advise these clients that they will need to come in for re-balancing appointments more often than other clients - even once a week until they 'grow' into (nail biters nails grow out) their enhancements and that a lot of length isn't the best choice for their first few appointments.

You'll find by re-tracing your steps you'll often come up with a valid reason why your enhancements are not adhering properly. Ask your clients lots of questions to narrow down why there might be an issue - this is the best learning advice. And don't get frustrated - application competence will come with time and

practice.

My client told me that a little while ago she put on acrylic enhancements and her fingers got red and itchy. Is it O.K. to re-apply acrylic on her?

The short answer is - **Absolutely not!** First it should be determined that your client has actually had an allergic reaction to the product, but once a doctor confirms that then that particular client **can never wear or be exposed to that type of product again.** Repeated exposure will worsen allergic symptoms each time. It is best to fully understand your client's risks associated with re- applying a product that has caused an allergic reaction so that you can best educate her on what may be the best direction to proceed.

Is soaking in acetone safe for clients when I remove their enhancements?

Many people believe acetone is a highly dangerous substance and if improperly handled yes, it can lead to harm, however acetone is actually the second safest solvent used in the nail industry right after water.

Now does that mean you can go ahead and drink a cup - clearly not! In normal use in a salon environment acetone poses no danger when handling safely and exposure is controlled.

The amount of exposure a client would have from soaking of a set of acrylic or fiberglass enhancements off is minimal and poses no risk to their health. Of course, as a nail professional you should always follow industry regulations when handling or using any chemical substance. Always check your MSDS sheets for proper handling storage and usage instructions.

Do acrylic enhancements ruin natural nails?

Acrylic has received a bad rap in recent years; however, all great nail professionals know that professional nail products don't ruin natural nails - nail techs do! Acrylic when used safely is a fantastic enhancement product; however, over filing and chemical over exposure can wreak havoc on natural nails and cause skin reactions.

Pronounced ridges in natural nails are often the result of over filing practice. And unsafe removal practices can also weaken natural nails by ripping off layers of natural nail leaving nail plates weak and thin. We suggest proper acrylic enhancement removal practices for the safety of all your clients by using an acetone soak to remove acrylic enhancements followed by a natural nail manicure and nail strengthening treatment. See your Module 9 for more details.

If you feel you've exhausted this Detective's list and you're still experiencing issues, remember you are never alone!

We're here to provide guidance and assistance to you throughout your program and even into your career.

Jump on the TAOND Student Resource Centre and chat with other TAOND students and professionals around the globe - they might have had the same issues and found some tips and hints to solve their similar issues.

Or of course contact us at info@taond.com and tell us how we can help you!