

The Academy of Nail Design's

MODULE 9



“Acrylic Enhancements”

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Welcome to Module 9: *Acrylic Enhancements*

In this module we will be discussing Acrylic Enhancements, Shopping Lists, Pros & Cons, Application with Tips, Re-balance and Removal Techniques.

In this Module you will be required to complete Practice Client Sheets for Acrylic enhancements full sets with tips, sculpting and re-balances.



Please note that along with the step by step instructions provided in this print out material you also have access to our HOW TO video for Acrylic enhancements. We advise you watch the video through while making your own notes. Then print out this guide and along with your notes use them as you complete your first few practice applications.

We have attached the sample Practice Client sheet and Client Assessment form as print out files in your Module 9 Learning Environment.

Also, in your **Client Practice Sheet Area**, you'll find **instructions on how to upload your sheets along with your 'before' and 'after' pictures.**

Please be advised that incomplete sheets will not be assigned to your student desk and you will not receive full marks for them.

As with this and several of our other modules included in this program, we encourage you to conduct your own independent research on the subject.

Every time you see this icon –



It means we recommend taking some time to do research outside of the material we have presented to you in order for you to reach a higher level of understanding. Use the library or the internet, or interview local salon owners or working nail professionals. Get their opinions or background on how they got into this field. What trials and tribulations did they face? How did they overcome them?

Answer the questions posed within the module on the “**Additional Notes**” pages included with your study guide.

We've found that a common thread between our most successful students is that they use this program as a steppingstone, and spend a lot of time exploring the entire industry. We encourage you to do the same.

Once you feel confident in the material presented in the study guide log in to your student desk and take the corresponding test and complete your assignments. Then complete the required number of Client Practice Sheets and upload them.

**Please note that there may be subtle differences between product application processes including product names that you may note from the Star Nail Products used in the Step by Step Video and the products you choose to use throughout your program.*

If you have any questions about product differences, please feel free to contact us directly at info@taond.com. Have Fun!



Acrylic Enhancements



Acrylic enhancements are among the most popular enhancement applications in the world today. Acrylic has been used in the nail industry for decades, but the modern-day acrylics, thanks to millions of dollars worth of technology and research, are now of the highest quality. Originally acrylic products that contained **MMA** (meth methacrylate) were thick and difficult to file and shape. Also, because they adhered so well to the natural nail there were often problems associated with removal. Trauma to this type of enhancement in the form of accidental striking against surfaces or catching them in a door or a handle would often cause significant trauma to the natural nail underneath.

Today's acrylics that are made from **EMA** (ethyl methacrylate) are much more flexible, easier to remove and can be applied much thinner. When the new EMA acrylic enhancements need to be removed, they are easily dissolved in acetone, causing less damage to the natural nail because there is less filing required in this process. When struck against surfaces these new acrylics tend to flex and break away from the natural nail, lessening the trauma associated with too strong of an adhesion. These new acrylics have been formulated to have the same strength associated with traditional acrylics but can be applied much thinner, to create a more natural-looking enhancement.

**Research all the differences between MMA and EMA,
and why MMA has been banned from use in salons in Canada and the United States**



As with every enhancement application there are always Pros and Cons for each. Below we have listed some of the pros and cons to acrylic enhancements.

Pros

- Long-lasting
- Durable
- Can be molded to the shape of any nail to create a natural look
- Smell is associated with traditional acrylic

Cons

- Harder to remove
- Lifting
- Requires more filing to shape
- Primer or acrylic monomer overexposure

Acrylic Enhancements Shopping List

Along with a cuticle pusher, cuticle nippers, nail cutters, nail files, buffers, tips, base coat, polish and top coat as mentioned above you'll also require a **professional Acrylic System**.

Your professional acrylic kit should contain:

- Acrylic powder (polymer) in pink
- Acrylic powder (polymer) in white
- Acrylic liquid (monomer)
- Acrylic brush
- Primer
- Nail forms
- Dappen dishes



Be sure to purchase your Acrylic System from a reputable manufacturer and that it comes complete with all your required materials.

Before we begin our Acrylic enhancement application, let's discuss tips.

Tips

What are tips made of?

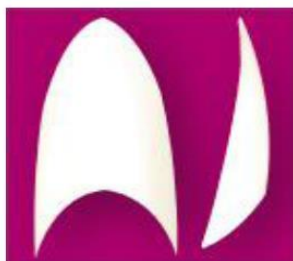


All nail enhancement tips are made of an ABS plastic. That explains why the term – “I wear acrylic tips” is incorrect. Unless you are sculpting acrylic or gel and you're adding length then you are using a plastic tip as the foundation.

A full tip kit typically contains 10 different sizes of the same type of tip. Each tip number refers to a different size. Generally, 1 is the largest in a series and 10 is the smallest. But some manufacturers may have the opposite sizing system.



We use the same type of tips for all enhancement applications. There is no such thing as a tip for acrylic that differs from one that can be used for gel or fiberglass. Tips come in all sorts of shapes, lengths, widths, colours etc.



We recommend purchasing a variety of different types, lengths, colours and widths of tips as every client can have different tip needs. Some clients may need a large fitting tip or love a blue French tip with their enhancements. Some nail professionals swear that clear tips work better with UV Gel and others still love them for nail art, so clear tips are great to always have on hand too.

Also be aware of the size of the well (contact) area of the tip too. Quality of tip materials can vary widely so don't be fooled by too cheap of a tip price – you may regret it in the end.

What is the “well” area?

As you can see from this picture there is a lighter more transparent area of the tip. That is the contact area of the tip that is glued to the nail plate – the “well” area.

Some tips have a full contact or well area (as this one pictured here does) and others have a smaller or half well area. The well area of a tip after it has been applied, is “blended” by gently filing and buffing it even with the nail plate so it looks invisible to the eye before applying your enhancement product.

FULL WELL TIPS



HALF WELL TIPS



What are forms?

Forms, like tips are used in acrylic and UV Gel enhancements applications to add length to a natural nail, a process called “sculpting”.

As with tips, forms also come in a variety of styles and shapes. Play around with a few different styles to determine what style you may be most comfortable using with your sculpted services.



Acrylic Enhancements – Application with Tips

Please note the photos included in this module are all presented live in our Step-by-Step instructional HOW-TO Video.

Before the acrylic enhancement application process, start with a **Client Assessment**. This will help you to assess that acrylic is the correct enhancement application for this client.

Procedure

To begin the acrylic enhancement application process:



1. Wash hands and scrub nails with a nail brush and antibacterial soap, then dry thoroughly. Massage a small amount of hand sanitizer into each hand.



2. Remove any old polish with a lint free cotton pad saturated with non-acetone polish remover. Allow the saturated cotton to sit on the polish for about a minute then gently swipe off polish by wiping the cotton pad toward you and away from skin. Remember as a rule - the less you touch any nail product to the skin the less chance there is of chemical overexposure.

3. Perform a “mini manicure” by gently pushing back the cuticle from the nail plate with your cuticle pusher. Completely remove the loosened cuticle by nipping with cuticle nippers. Gently squeeze the nippers closed then smoothly nip towards you. NEVER pull up and back toward the finger. This action will tear the skin.

REMEMBER - NEVER CUT ANY LIVING TISSUE!

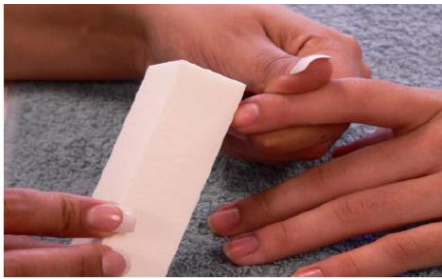


The purpose of the “mini manicure” is to prepare the nail plate for product adhesion by removing the dead tissue (cuticle) from the nail plate as nail products will not adhere to skin. This is the most important foundation step in your application process. If not completed properly a poorly performed “mini manicure” will lead to product lifting. Do not use a cuticle softening product in this procedure as this type of product will interfere with acrylic adhesion.

What is lifting?

Lifting is a term used for when an enhancement product separates from the natural nail.

The reason for concern (not just an appearance issue – though no one likes the look of lifted product) is that dirt, water and bacteria can get trapped between the natural nail and the enhancement and if left unchecked could lead to bacterial infections on the nail plate. So, when applying any enhancement product the main focus is on making sure the product is applied on a clean, sanitized surface and adheres well.



4. ***If required*** by the manufacturer of your acrylic etch (gently scratch up) the surface of the natural nail with a fine grit (preferably a white block buffer) emery board. Remove the dust with a nail brush.



5. If using tips to add length, apply a small amount of brush-on resin in the well area of the tip (see ***What is the “well” area?*** on page 6). Apply an adequate amount of resin, as too little will cause air bubbles to form in the well area. Air bubbles can lead to lifting as well.

Tip application is the foundation of your entire enhancement and requires proper adhesion and placement with no air bubbles. Perfect tip applications can take lots of practice, so take your time and allow yourself some latitude to get it right.

After applying resin to the well area, turn the tip around and butt the well of the tip up against the free edges starting at a 75-degree angle.

Gently press the well area of the tip flat against the nail plate. Be sure to avoid air bubbles as this will cause lifting.



Hold the tip in place to allow the resin to dry - generally about 15 seconds. If you find your resin is setting too fast for you, switch to a slowly setting, thicker resin. This will give you more time to properly apply the tips. Air bubbles in your tip application will cause lifting and/or other adhesion issues, so it is vital to avoid air bubbles during this step. Wipe away any excess resin from the nail.

Once dry, continue applying the other 9 tips before clipping excess length off the tip.

6. With your nail cutters cut the length of the tip to specifications.



7. Blend tip well in with a medium grit file making sure that the tip is fully blended and there is no visible line where the well makes contact with the nail plate, and then shape tip to specifications. Remove the dust with a nail brush.



8. Continue blending on all 10 nails.



9. Apply primer to the natural nail ONLY! Use care to avoid the skin and the tip. Allow a short period of time for the primer to dry.

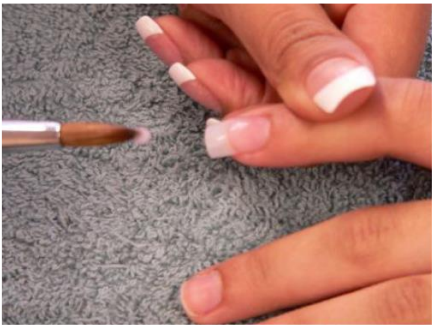


10. Press out the air bubbles in your acrylic brush by pushing the brush into the bottom of your dappen dish of monomer (acrylic liquid) until all the air is squeezed out.

Remove the brush, touch to a paper towel to draw out excess liquid and then gently drag the brush along the surface of the acrylic powder gathering a medium size ball of powder (follow the manufacturer's directions as consistency and ratios will take A LOT of practice and patience – do not get frustrated). Tap one side of the brush against the side of the container to shake loose any excess powder.



11. Apply the medium size ball of acrylic to the center of the nail which is known as **ZONE 2** and with the barrel of your acrylic brush press the acrylic into the nail and stroke out towards each side of the nail and finally towards the free edge. Do not use a patting motion – this will put air bubbles into the product which will show up in the actual enhancement. Gently press the product with your brush. Remember to leave a 1/16th of an inch around the eponychium and the sides of the nail to avoid skin contact and lifting problems.



12. Dip brush into liquid again wipe one side of the brush on the side of the container and pick up a smaller sized ball of powder (same consistency as the first) and place it near the eponychium area known as **ZONE 3** and push the product up to the eponychium area (leaving the 1/16th of an inch free) and stroke out the product into and over **ZONE 2**.

13. If needed to perfect shape, apply a third small ball to the free edge area known as **ZONE 1** and stroke out.

14. Repeat application process on all 10 nails.

15. Check all nails for shape consistency, lumps and valleys. Apply small balls of acrylic to fill out missing areas in order to achieve a smooth natural looking finish.



16. To begin your finishing use a medium grit file to shape sidewalls and end of nails into desired style. Most nail professional use an electric file for this shaping portion of the process which is a great way to cut down on filing time. However, you should not use an electric file as an excuse for sloppy applications with too much product. A good rule of thumb concerning adequate product application is that you should be able to file and shape your acrylic enhancements by hand filing without exhausting yourself.

17. White block and then gold block buff the entire surface to smooth out the surface of the enhancement.



18. For a high shine apply a small drop of cuticle oil to each nail and with a 3-way buffer gently buff the entire enhancement. Remember to continuously move the buffer to avoid heat buildup. Use all three (or 4) sides of your 3-way buffer starting with the strongest grit, then graduate to the smoothest side. When done properly buffing will give a glass-like appearance to your enhancements.



19. Wash hands and nails with antibacterial soap and dry thoroughly.

20. Apply a base coat, 2 coats of polish and seal with a UV protecting top coat.



A beautiful set of acrylic enhancements!



Acrylic Re-balance

What is a re-balance?

Re-balancing your acrylic enhancements is the most popular application – you only do a new set every once in a while. However, due to nail plate growth enhancements need to be *re-balanced every 2-3 weeks* depending on how fast the natural nails have grown.

Formerly known as a “fill” procedure, re-balancing is actually a more in-depth procedure and is more advantageous than a “fill” in preserving the integrity of the enhancement by “re-balancing” the entire enhancement rather than just filling in the new growth area with more product.

Unlike fiberglass or gel applications, acrylic enhancements usually require re-balancing every two weeks due to the lifting factor. **It is important to stick to this 2-week rule in order to avoid any lifting issues.**

The re-balance procedure is similar to the new set application:



1. Wash hands and scrub underneath nails with a nail brush and antibacterial soap, then dry thoroughly. Massage a small amount of hand sanitizer into each hand.



2. Remove any old polish with a lint-free cotton pad saturated with non-acetone polish remover. **REMEMBER** acetone dissolves acrylic, so you need a non-acetone polish remover for this step. Allow the saturated cotton to sit on the polish for about a minute then gently swipe off polish by wiping the cotton pad toward you and away from skin. As a rule, the less you touch any nail product to the skin the less chance of chemical over exposure.

3. Perform a “mini manicure” by gently pushing back the cuticle from the nail plate with your cuticle pusher. Completely remove the loosened cuticle by nipping with cuticle nippers. Gently squeeze the nippers closed then smoothly nip toward you. **NEVER** pull up and toward the finger. This action will tear the skin.

REMEMBER NEVER CUT ANY LIVING TISSUE!



The purpose of the “mini manicure” is to prepare the nail plate for product adhesion by removing the dead tissue (cuticle) from the nail plate. If not completed properly a poorly performed “mini manicure” will lead to product lifting. Also note that we do not use any cuticle softening product here as it will affect the adhesion of the acrylic.



4. With a medium grit emery board file down approximately 60% of the old acrylic as well as remove any excess length. Do not file on the new growth area (this is the natural nail that has grown out at the eponychium and has no product on it). Then white block buffer both the enhancement and the natural nail growth area to etch and prepare for acrylic application. If the manufacturer of your acrylic system recommends not etching the natural nail, then abide by their guidelines. Remove all dust with a nail brush.

5. Make sure that all edges of the acrylic are filed down and blended even with the natural nail, otherwise there will be “fill lines” (fine lines that are actually lifted product) showing through the new acrylic application.



6. Apply primer to the new growth area ONLY! Avoid getting primer on skin or the existing acrylic enhancement. It will discolour or yellow the acrylic.

7. With the correct ratios of acrylic liquid and powder apply a small ball of acrylic to the new growth area ZONE 3 and push it up to the eponychium remembering to stay 1/16th of an inch away from the eponychium, and stroke out the product towards ZONE 2 and ZONE 1.





8. If needed apply a second ball to the stress area ZONE 2 and blend into ZONE 3.

Let's discuss the stress area.

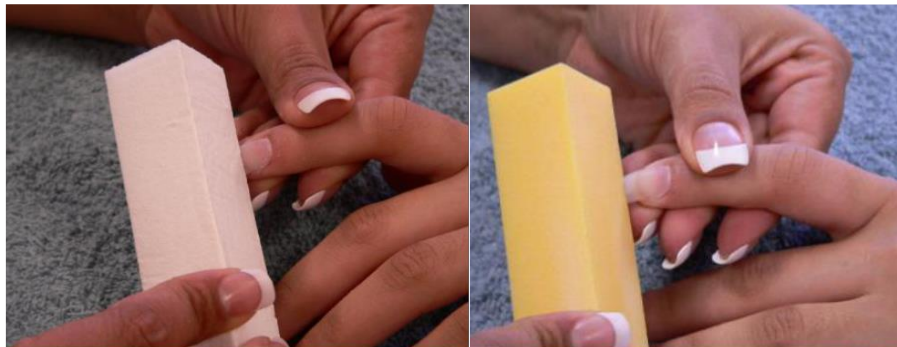
The stress area of an enhancement is where the enhancement takes the most stress or pressure, which is typically located straight across the smile line (the beginning of your free edge). This area of an enhancement usually requires additional product in order to maintain strength throughout the lifetime of the enhancement. By creating a generous “C” curve over this area it will not only balance out the enhancement with a natural look but also give the additional strength that is required.



10. Continue the process on all 10 nails, checking for shape consistency as with the new set.

11. When acrylic has set, file and shape nails to desired style.

12. Smooth out the top of the nail with a white block buffer then a gold block buffer.



13. Apply a small drop of cuticle oil to each nail and with a 3-way buffer, buff all the nails to a shine.



14. Wash hands with an antibacterial soap and dry thoroughly.

15. Apply base coat, 2 coats of polish and seal with a UV protecting top coat.



Now your acrylics has been properly re-balanced and should last for 2 weeks.

Acrylic Enhancements – Sculpting

Sculpting is the term used for the application of acrylic or gel without the use of a plastic tip as a foundation. Forms are used which are made of either foil or plastic. Sculpting is an advanced application process that many nail professionals prefer over tip applications as it allows you greater freedom in creating an original type enhancement instead of being confined by the size and shape of a tip.

The sculpting process for acrylic is similar to the application with tips. You'll require the following:

Required Materials:

- antibacterial soap
- forms
- nail brush
- acrylic liquid (monomer)
- cuticle pusher and nippers
- acrylic powder (polymer)
- acrylic brush
- polish corrector stick
- primer
- containers (dappen dishes) for the liquid and powder
- cuticle oil
- files (including a fine and medium grit, white & gold block buffers and a 3-way buffer)



To begin your sculpted set:



1. Wash hands and scrub under nails with a nail brush and antibacterial soap, then dry thoroughly. Massage a small amount of hand sanitizer onto hands.



2. Remove any old polish with a lint-free cotton pad saturated with non-acetone polish remover. Allow the saturated cotton to sit on the polish for about a minute then gently swipe off polish by wiping the cotton pad toward you.

3. Perform a “mini manicure” by gently pushing back the cuticle from the nail plate with your cuticle pusher. Completely remove the loosened cuticle by nipping with cuticle nippers. Gently squeeze the nippers closed then smoothly nip towards you. NEVER pull up and toward the finger. This action will tear the skin.

REMEMBER NEVER CUT ANY LIVING TISSUE!

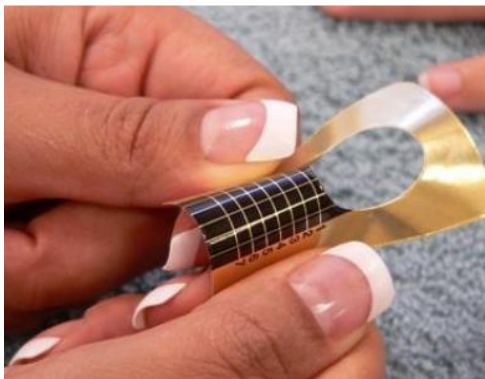


The purpose of the “mini manicure” is to prepare the nail plate for product adhesion by removing the dead tissue (cuticle) from the nail plate. If not completed properly a poorly performed “mini manicure” will lead to product lifting. Do not use any cuticle softening product during this procedure as it will interfere with the adhesion of the acrylic.

4. ***If required*** by the manufacturer of your acrylic etch (gently scratch up) the surface of the natural nail with a fine grit (preferably a white block buffer) emery board. Remove the dust with a nail brush.



5. When applying forms remove the form from the form roll and pop out the inside piece (usually shaped like an egg). Place the popped out middle piece on the back of the form to create additional support. Gently roll the form between your fingers to create a pre-shaped curve to the form.



Place the finger through the hole in the middle of the form and slide the form underneath the free edge and sides of the natural nail.

In order to create a proper enhancement, the form must be flush and even with the free edge of the nail. Any gaps between the form and the free edge will result in excess product creating an edge underneath the enhancement.



6. Apply primer to the natural nail **ONLY!** Use care to avoid the skin. Allow a short period of time for the primer to dry.



7. Press out the air bubbles in your acrylic brush by pushing the brush into the bottom of your dappen dish of monomer until all the air is squeezed out. Remove the brush and re-dip the brush into the acrylic liquid; wipe one side of the brush against the side of the monomer container and gather a medium size ball of powder (follow the manufacturer's directions as consistency and ratios will take A LOT of practice and patience – do not get frustrated).

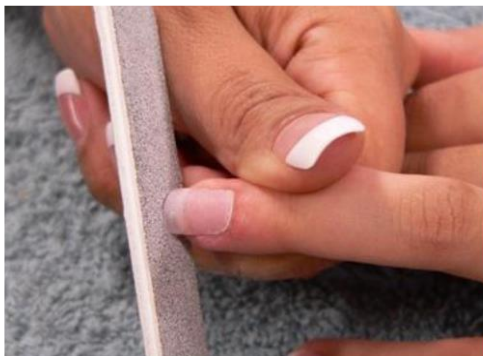


8. Apply the medium size ball of acrylic to the center of the nail, placing $\frac{1}{2}$ of the ball on the natural nail $\frac{1}{2}$ on the form and with the barrel of your acrylic brush press the acrylic into the nail and stroke out towards each side of the nail and finally create a free edge on the form. We recommend creating a square free edge that can be shaped into an oval shape in the finishing stage if that is the desired shape.

When spreading the acrylic do not use a patting motion – this will put air bubbles into the product which will show up in the actual enhancement. Gently press the product with your brush. Remember to leave a $\frac{1}{16}$ th of an inch around the eponychium and the sides of the nail to avoid skin contact and lifting problems.

9. Dip brush into liquid again wipe one side of the brush on the side of the container, if needed, touch to a paper towel to remove excess liquid and pick up a smaller sized ball of powder (same consistency as the first) and place it near the eponychium area known as **ZONE 3** and push the product up to the eponychium area (leaving about $\frac{1}{16}$ th of an inch free of product) and stroke out the product into and over **ZONE 2**.

10. If needed apply a third small ball to the stress area and stroke out.

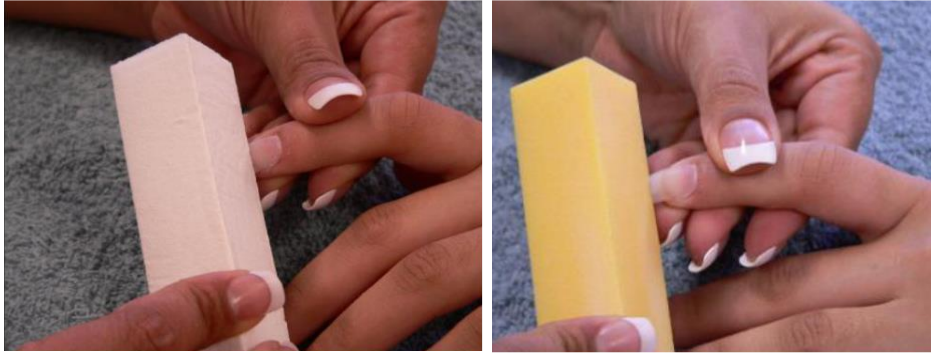


11. Repeat application process on all 10 nails.

12. Check all nails for shape consistency, lumps and valleys. Apply small balls of acrylic to fill out missing areas in order to achieve a smooth natural looking finish. When the acrylic is dry, gently remove the form by squeezing the sides of it together and easing away from the acrylic.

13. To begin your finishing with a medium grit file shape nails to desired style.

14. Smooth out the top of the nail with a white block buffer then a gold block buffer.

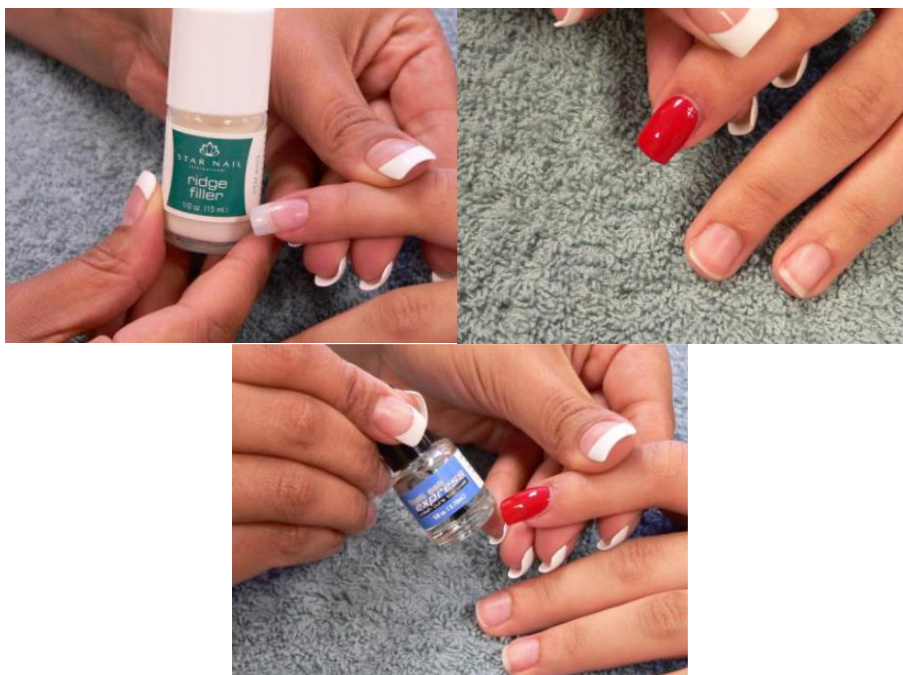


15. To create a high shine apply a small drop of cuticle oil to each nail and with a 3-way buffer gently buff the entire enhancement. Remember to continuously move the buffer to avoid heat buildup. Use all three sides of your 3-way buffer starting with the strongest grit then graduate to the smoothest side. When done properly buffing will give a glass-like appearance to your enhancements.



16. Wash hands and nails with antibacterial soap and dry thoroughly.

17. Apply a base coat, 2 coats of polish and seal with a UV protecting top coat.



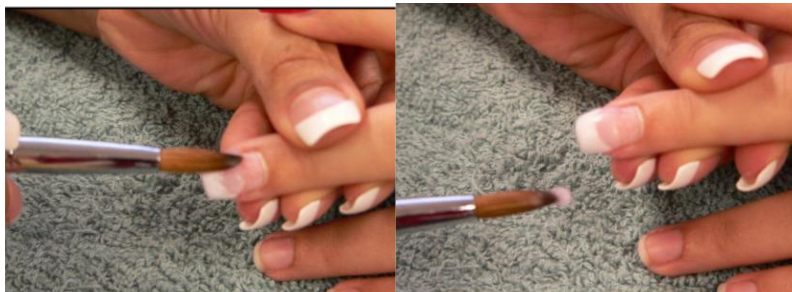
Acrylic Two-Tone – Permanent French Re-balance

Acrylic two-tone or permanent French enhancements are enhancements that are created using a tip or sculpting techniques but use white acrylic to create a French free edge similar in appearance to French polish. Because the French tip is made of acrylic it is permanent when compared to polishing French. Many clients prefer this method as they feel that their enhancements require less maintenance because there is less polish chipping.

To create a permanent French look, follow the same prep and application steps as either your new set with tips or sculpting, but use a ball of white acrylic for your first ball at the free edge and carve out a smile line with your brush.



Then continue with your pink acrylic balls in Zone 2 and 3.



Continue with your finishing filing, cuticle oil and buffing.



And finally, a finished French acrylic look!



Acrylic Removal

At some point in time you may wish to have your acrylic enhancements removed, either to have a new set put back on or for some other reason, for this, there is a simple removal procedure that can be preformed, and if combined with a natural manicure can keep your natural nails in beautiful shape.

Removal should be done with the greatest of care, and when combined with soothing natural manicure, nails should be as beautiful as when they started the whole process. Keeping in mind the state of the nails before any service was performed.



**NEVER pick, pull or pry off any enhancement from your natural nails!
This will cause excessive and often irreversible damage.**

To begin your removal process:

1. Wash hands with anti-bacterial soap and dry thoroughly.
2. Remove any nail polish from nails (removing polish will speed up the removal process).
3. In a double bowl, fill the first larger bowl with warm water, and place a second smaller bowl filled with acetone inside the larger bowl. The warm water will speed up the acetone's power.



NEVER MICROWAVE ACETONE OR ANY OTHER NAIL PRODUCT

4. Place enhancements in the second smaller bowl filled with acetone, and cover hands with a warm dry towel. We cover the hands with a towel to avoid inhaling the acetone vapours from the evaporating acetone.
5. Let enhancements soak for approximately 20 minutes.
6. After 20 minutes remove enhancements and wipe with a paper towel to remove any loose dissolving product.



7. With a medium grit emery board file away dissolving product, careful to only file on the dissolving product and not on the natural nail.

8. If remaining product is still on and has hardened again place enhancements back in the acetone soak to soften the product again.

9. Repeat soaking and filing until all product has been removed.



10. Wash hands well with an antibacterial soap and dry thoroughly.

11. Perform a natural nail manicure.

12. When polishing, use a nail strengthener as a base coat and use another coat of strengthener before applying the top coat (or follow the nail strengthener manufacturer's instructions).

Breakthrough!

A new breakthrough has been introduced in the field of Acrylic. An **ultrasonic removal system** is now available! This system claims complete removal of acrylic applications in $\frac{1}{4}$ of the originally expected time of 45-60 minutes of plain acetone soak by making use of ultrasonic waves.



So...

As one of the world's most popular enhancement applications, acrylic can mean so much to so many!

Acrylic is also used as a foundation product for nail art competitions around the world which goes to show you that the limit to what you can accomplish with acrylic is only in your mind!

Additional Notes

These Additional Module pages are for you to answer the extra questions we asked within the module and to be adding your research notes.

