

Perfectly groomed



Well-cared-for hands and feet are an important part of looking and feeling good. It is a service that should not be overlooked or underestimated. **Sonette van Rensburg** focuses on current grooming practices, products and treatments.

The first thing I look at when I meet a person is their hands and feet. No matter how beautifully you may be dressed or how good your hair looks, you cannot get around the fact that if your nails are not done, you're just not done.

The nail industry is one of the fastest growing and most competitive industries in the world. As a result, nail salons are offering far more than your average, run-of-the-mill nail service. Beauty, hand and foot services are coming to the fore, ranging from a basic manicure and pedicure to more de luxe and indulgent spa treatments.

Clients are setting higher demands, and are voicing their specific needs and expectations of the salon. Variety, tailored packages and signature treatments have become the norm rather than special add-on services.

Some may require a quiet peaceful environment in order to relax and rejuvenate, others may need a quick service during their lunch break, and then there are those clients who will need sound advice about particular concerns, specific treatments and the products they use.

No matter what your clients' needs are, or what type of service or length of time they are spending, they will come to trust you as well as the recommendations you make. Therefore it is imperative to know exactly what is available and on offer, ensuring that you give your clients the best, most professional, and beneficial service they could possibly receive.

Professional services

Hand and foot services can range from very basic to more deluxe services and spa treatments. By using different products, specialised techniques and equipment, you are able to upgrade or customise a treatment to suit any client's specific needs.



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What is important to remember, however, is that, no matter what treatment you are performing, there are basic techniques and steps that still apply to get the most professional, efficient and effective results from the treatment. So make sure they are followed through with utmost care and diligence from shaping the nails and performing cuticle care to the final touches, such as massaging in hand lotion and applying polish.

Each and every step in a manicure or pedicure should be executed properly and professionally and in the way in which it has been taught. This will not only ensure maximum benefit of each step performed and product used, but will ultimately entice the client to purchase these products for at home use.

Unsafe practices

It is important to address some of the unsafe practices that are taking place in our industry today. The cutting of living skin tissue surrounding the nails and thickened skin tissue under the feet are still a major concern. Despite numerous warnings, and laws in many countries that prohibit nail stylists and therapists from performing them, they are still being done.

CND Education Ambassador, Jo-D Stroh, believes that this all boils down to the lack of education in our industry. "Nail professionals don't always seem to know the difference between the safe removal of non-living cuticle cells and the unsafe practice of cutting living tissue, such as the eponychium," she says. "Be careful of the overuse of implements such as a cuticle nipper, and even metal cuticle pushers, as these can damage the nails and skin if misused. Always treat the nails and cuticle with the utmost care, and use your metal implements as →

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TRY AND MAKE THE TREATMENT A COMPLETELY SENSORY EXPERIENCE BY INCORPORATING ALL THE SENSES

Treatments defined

Basic treatments - These are quick no-fuss services, which are done to maintain the condition of the nails and to prepare them as a canvas for the perfect polish.

• **De luxe treatments**

What makes these treatments different is the use of more intensive moisturising products to treat cuticles, nails and skin. Scrubs or exfoliants are also used to slough away dry skin cells. Heat treatments such as electric mittens, booties, or paraffin wax can be used to help to increase the penetration of oils and lotions deeper into the skin for maximum hydration.

• **Spa treatments**

These treatments are of benefit to the skin and nails as well as the client's personal well-being, focusing on areas such as relaxation, detoxification, upliftment, therapeutic skin repair and renewal, intensive hydration, and indulgence of the senses.

Spa treatments have a very specific purpose. Many of the products available today contain active ingredients, which perform certain functions. These active ingredients usually need an action to activate them and encourage their activity in the skin. The results are as follows:

- Improves skin tone through hyperemia;
- Removes waste products, effectively assisting with the detoxifying process;
- Supplies oxygen to the blood and capillaries and increases warmth to the tissues, resulting in a healthier-looking and glowing skin;
- Stimulation of cell activity within the dermal layers of the skin, providing a rich supply of blood and nutrients and assisting in cell renewal and regeneration.

recommended. Instead of aggravating thickened skin, recommend a combined treatment of a good quality professional cuticle cream and cuticle oil to treat the cuticles and nails to a hydrating and conditioning cocktail."

Shantelle Booysen of Medi Heel warns against blading and excessive foot filing, which is becoming less and less of an option in the spa. "By blading you have no control over how much skin you are removing from the heel," she says. "It may give an instant solution but is often painful the following day. I have actually heard of many people that have experienced bleeding heels after blading. This could be a very serious risk to both therapist and client."

"With keratolytic chemicals, such as Medi-Heel, you are only dissolving dead skin cells and leaving the healthy skin under the feet intact," she adds. "In this way the heel does not compensate to protect itself, and does not form a thick white callous. In fact, over time, you find yourself with healthier, softer feet."



Limited soak time

Although there is nothing more relaxing and soothing than the feeling of soaking your hands in warm water, it has its advantages and disadvantages. This step usually assists in softening the eponychium, making it easier to lift and roll back to expose non-living tissue. The biggest drawback is the hydrophilic structure of the nail, which absorbs and retains water. Extended soaking of the nails therefore rapidly increases the moisture content in the nail, which ultimately results in the client's nail enamel peeling from the nails. So, gone are the days where long water soaks were part of the process. It is rather advisable to keep soaking time to a minimum of 2-3 minutes, and for clients with weak brittle nails to avoid soaking completely.

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Pic courtesy: CND

Treatment innovations

The question is: how can you differentiate your salon and treatments from others? You need to add those special touches and elements that will turn your offerings from ordinary to extraordinary - it's all about making it a memorable experience for your client.

Try and make it a completely sensory experience by incorporating all the senses, such as sound, sight, smell, taste and touch.

Below are some ideas to set the mood:

- Beautiful music, which can be anything from soft meditation to piano or flute - something that will relax and suit the environment;
- Candles, aroma oils and incense burners - the aroma of scented candles coupled with soft flickering lights really creates a relaxing ambience;
- Flowers, petals or stones in water or strategically placed in the salon or spa have a very calming and soothing effect;
- Warm moist or cool scented towels have a very welcoming and an immediate relaxer;
- Using colour or themes to do up a therapy room, and changing these on a regular basis, has become one of the latest trends.
- The ideas are endless . . . these special touches combined with professionalism, as well as efficient and effective products and techniques, will make all the difference and ensure that your clients return time after time to be pampered. →



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Novel brands

Professional brands that cater for these treatments, are also incorporating and providing many of these elements in their products, especially when it comes to smell and touch. Fragrance is definitely one of the greatest elements; some salons even create their own signature fragrances.

Let's take a look at some product innovations in this regard:

OPI believes that by offering new flavours and products, clients will have an expanded menu to choose from for their manicure and pedicure service. The company's hugely popular coffee and tea scrubs and massage lotions, plus the refreshing new flavours of tropical citrus and cucumber, will help salons to personalise their professional services, which will, in turn, assist in increasing profitability.

Almonds are not just good to eat but have numerous benefits. They contain Vitamin E in abundance, which is also known as the food for our skin. Vitamin E protects our skin, prevents cell damage, has anti-ageing properties and also fights certain skin disorders. Its emollient and nourishing properties are great for dry skin, and keep the pH of the skin at a normal level. Its light texture makes it a great carrier oil, as it is easily absorbed into the skin and helps to maintain skin tone. Almond oil also has a sweet refreshing fragrance, which has a positive impact on your senses.

The CND Almond Manicure system, with its beautiful shimmery masque and almond hydrating lotion, is sure to be a winner this winter. The products

ONCE THE MANICURE OR PEDICURE IS DONE, THE CLIENT WILL WANT TO CHOOSE A NAIL POLISH OR COATING TO COMPLETE HER SERVICE



feature a conditioning and synergistic blend of sweet almond oil, Jojoba oil and Vitamin E, designed to deeply penetrate and protect the skin and nails.

Back in ancient times, Cleopatra knew about the effects of proteins on the skin, as she enjoyed bathing in donkey milk. Milk Solutions offers a combination of milk and honey to protect and soothe the skin for softer, smoother hands and feet. The range includes a Milk & Honey Warming Tension Relief Cream - a warming massage medium to improve circulation and relieve muscular tension; and Finishing Cream - a mattifying cream to absorb excess oiliness and perspiration.

The range also incorporates the calabash massage as part of its treatment protocol to promote circulation, sensory nerve perception and lymph drainage, as well as a deep sense of relaxation and well-being. Calabash massage is non-invasive, relaxing and natural.

The finishing touch

Once the manicure or pedicure is done, the client will want to choose a nail polish or coating to complete her service. It is all well and good performing a manicure or pedicure with perfectly shaped nails and meticulously cared for cuticles, but if your polish application is not perfect it will affect the client's perception of the entire treatment.

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Also, always remember to use your systems together – using the same base coat, polish colour and top coat from a particular brand will give you the best results and ensure service longevity.

Many salons are still using acetone prior to the application of polish to cleanse the nail plate of creams and oils. Not only is this very dehydrating for the natural nail plate, but it is also not as effective as using a proper nail preparation product designed for this purpose, alternatively, Isopropyl Alcohol (IPA) is just as effective and much more gentle on the nail plate.

Stroh shares some tips on how to achieve a perfect polish application:

- Use a natural nail dehydrator to make sure that the nails are completely free of oils used during the manicure or pedicure service.
- Apply one thin coat of base coat, suited to the client's natural nail condition.
- Apply two thin coats of client's choice of polish, allowing drying time in-between each application. Be careful not to touch the skin.
- Make sure that you don't have too much polish on the brush, gently pull away the lateral nail folds, place the brush 2/3rds up the nail plate and move the brush towards the cuticle area in order not to flood the cuticles. Fan your brush slightly, and apply a thin stroke of polish down the centre and one on either side of the nail. Keep an eye on the edge or corner of the polish brush instead of where you are placing the polish – this will help to achieve the best results.
- Finish your service with a thin layer of top coat, and complete with a spritz of quick-drying spray to accelerate the evaporation of solvents, hence drying the polish faster.

Now that you know what's on offer, use your resources and imagination to create your very own signature treatments that are unique to your spa or salon. **PB**

Sonette has been in the nail and beauty industry for 24 years. She consults with salons, spas and training salon professionals in all aspects of nail and beauty technology, basic salon skills, client relations and perfecting technical skills. email: sonettevr@gmail.com



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