

Module 11 : Nail Tips (French Manicure Nail Tips and Artificial Nail Tips with Acrylic)

- What equipment you need
- Guidance for creating great nail tips
- How to apply artificial nail tips
- Maintenance

By the end of this module, you will know:

- What equipment you need
- Guidance for creating great nail tips
- How to apply artificial nail tips/acrylic
- Maintenance

11.1: Introduction



Nail tips, otherwise known as the classic French manicure, are

excellent for achieving that effortlessly chic look.

While they may at first seem simple, they require a steady hand and a lot of patience. Much of this patience is needed for the tips themselves, which must remain even on each finger for a uniform and professional look.

Applying nail tips is an excellent way to give your client a therapeutic experience. Unlike the rigid environment that acrylics and gels call for, tips are perfect for engaging in a little massage. In addition, it is worth noting that you can use nail tips on the toes too.

In sections 11.2 to 11.4 we first look at how to do French manicure nail tips, on natural nails.

In sections 11.5 and 11.6 we look at how to apply artificial nail tips with acrylic. **This process is supported by a video at the end of the module.**

11.2: Nail Tips/French Manicure: What Equipment do you Need?

- Three different types of nail polish: base coat, white tip coat and top coat
- An emery board, buffer and possibly clippers or nail scissors
- Nail polish remover - acetone (ideally) or non-acetone
- Moisturiser
- Cuticle remover and a cuticle pusher
- A UV lamp dryer (not entirely necessary, but it can speed the process up)

11.3: How Do you Do Nail Tips/French Manicure?

Preparing the hands and the nail plate

Wash the client's hands

Begin by preparing the client's hands with a hand wash/sanitiser. Washing the hands ensures there

is no oil or residue that will interfere with a perfect application.

Remove any nail polish

Next, use the nail polish remover to remove any residue. As with other nail tasks, you should do this whether there is obviously nail polish there or not.

Shape the nails

You also need to shape the nails. Unlike normal manicures, there is a need to leave a little extra length. Doing this ensures that creating the tips is easier, and it also makes them more obvious and easier to flaunt.

Buff the nails

In addition to shaping the nails, you need to buff them a little. Make sure you do this all over, as it allows for you to make an even application. Try not to buff the cuticle, as this can make using cuticle remover more difficult.

Attend to the cuticles

Now apply cuticle remover. Using a cotton wool bud, apply a little to each of the cuticles, then move onto the next one so the remover on the previous one can soak in. Once you have done this, take the cuticle pusher and use it to move the cuticle backwards.

Try not to be too aggressive while you're doing this, as it can cause the barrier between the cuticle and the nail bed to break.

The aim is not to remove the cuticle altogether, you simply need to push it back so the nail looks neater.

Shaping the nails

Do you know what type of shape your clients want? Different shapes fall in and out of fashion, all the time.

It is useful to have a book of nail pictures to hand, so clients know exactly what you're referring to. Feel like being inventive? Then try and grab some pictures of celebrity nails; from magazines or online images.

To shape the nails, you first need to cut or clip them. Again, remember that tips need to be slightly more obvious than your average manicure, otherwise creating that all-important 'white smile' at the top is difficult.

Once you've reached a fairly uniform length across the nails, take your emery board or file and begin creating the shape. Remember to hold the file at a 45-degree angle so you do not cause any damage to the nail itself.

Once you are happy with the shape/length, check with the client to make sure they too are happy with your work. Remember, beauty is always subjective and the client is always right, which means it's for them to determine whether you've done the job right or not. When you have the client's approval, take a little time to buff and then wipe with nail polish remover to eliminate the sediment, in readiness for painting.

Painting the nails/creating the white tips

Start with the base coat. Depending on the client, this may require a glaringly obvious pink tinge that accentuates the natural colour of the nail bed, or they may want something that's slightly more beige and subtle. Going back to the need for pictures, it's handy to have some to illustrate. If you can't find any relevant images, practise on friends or other members of staff and produce a little book yourself.

After painting the base coat, leave nails to dry. Use a UV lamp if you have one – leaving to dry for 120-180 seconds.

Once this is done, you can create 'the smile' with the white nail polish. Fortunately, modern manicurists have access to paper guides, which you place just below the area where you want to create the white tip and use this to guide where the polish goes. Using the guides, create the white tips. Move slowly and don't rush, as the time you invest now into getting it right will lead to results that last. Leave nails under the UV lamp for 120-180 seconds and then remove, to add the top layer.

The top layer you use is simply a clear layer which is designed to seal the work you've already done. It adds the high shine that makes French tips look so refined, which means aiming for a high quality product is essential. Again, you need to place the nails under a UV lamp once you've applied the top coat, in order to dry properly.

What should you do if you do not have a UV lamp?

UV lamps are so easy to access these days, there really is no reason for not having one. While you can easily leave nails to dry without assistance, this is slow, which means it's a method that eats into your profits. Plus, some clients may be under time constraints and in a rush to get their manicures done.

However, if you do not have a UV lamp, it's a good idea to leave two to three minutes between coats. Be extra careful when applying the guides, as they can stick into gooey/tacky bases.

11.4: Creating Great Tips

Follow these steps to ensure that you always achieve a high quality result:

- Make sure you buff the nails lightly every time and always use nail polish remover before and after doing this. This ensures you remove any sediment that could make your work uneven or sticky.

- If you're moisturising the client's hands, take some time to remove the moisturiser from their nails too.
- When applying the base coat, try not to be too liberal. Applying too much can lead to sticky tips, forcing you to start your work again.
- Don't be afraid to give your clients some advice and guidance. Let them know that reapplying a top coat occasionally is a great way to make your work last between visits.

11.5: Artificial Nail Tips with Acrylic



Firstly you need to equip yourself with all the right kit.

If it is your first time, it is advisable to purchase a full acrylic nail kit, containing everything you need and detailed instructions about the process. If you believe acrylic manicures are something you want to invest in for the future, it is possible to purchase separate supplies of each thing (in larger quantities).

Specialist beauty supply stores often offer discounts for bulk buys. It is advisable to opt for good quality products and if you are buying things separately – go for the same brand – as mixing different brand can mean an unnecessary mix of chemicals and ingredients that are harsh for the nails, and may yield poorer results if not compatible

Some items on the kit list you may already have if you have performed a regular nail manicure at home (as well as the basics such as gloves and towels), but here is a list of items you will need:

- Plastic gloves and plastic sheet to cover work area
- Bowl and nail brush
- Hand wash that does not contain moisturiser or conditioner
- Nail varnish remover (with an acetone base)
- Cuticle stick

- Artificial nail tips (which can be clipped and filed to the length and shape you desire)
- Nail tip glue (opt for a good quality one)
- Acrylic/artificial nail clippers (rather than regular clippers)
- Acrylic nail files (more effective than regular nail files for filing the plastic)
- Nail primer
- Acrylic liquid and powder (these will be mixed together to form a paste)
- Thin tipped nail application brush
- Nail varnish and any nail art decoration (such as gems and glitter)

11.6: How to Apply Artificial Tips with Acrylic

Once you have the equipment you need, prepare the area with everything to hand.

Wash the client's hands

Wash/sanitise your client's hands thoroughly and remove any dirt from under the nails with a nail brush. Remove old nail varnish, as acrylics should only be applied to clean, fresh nails.

Wash hands

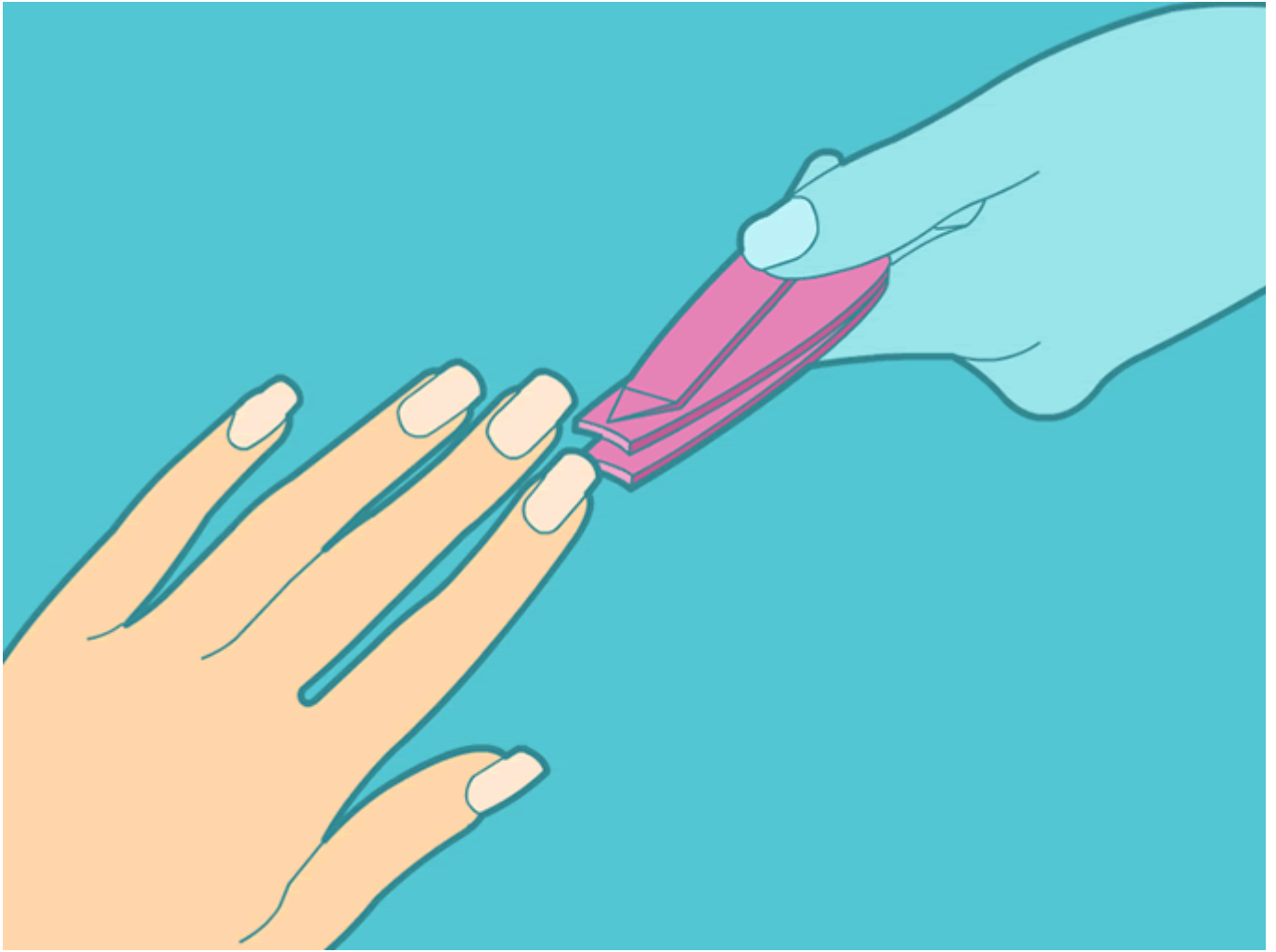


Trim and file the nails

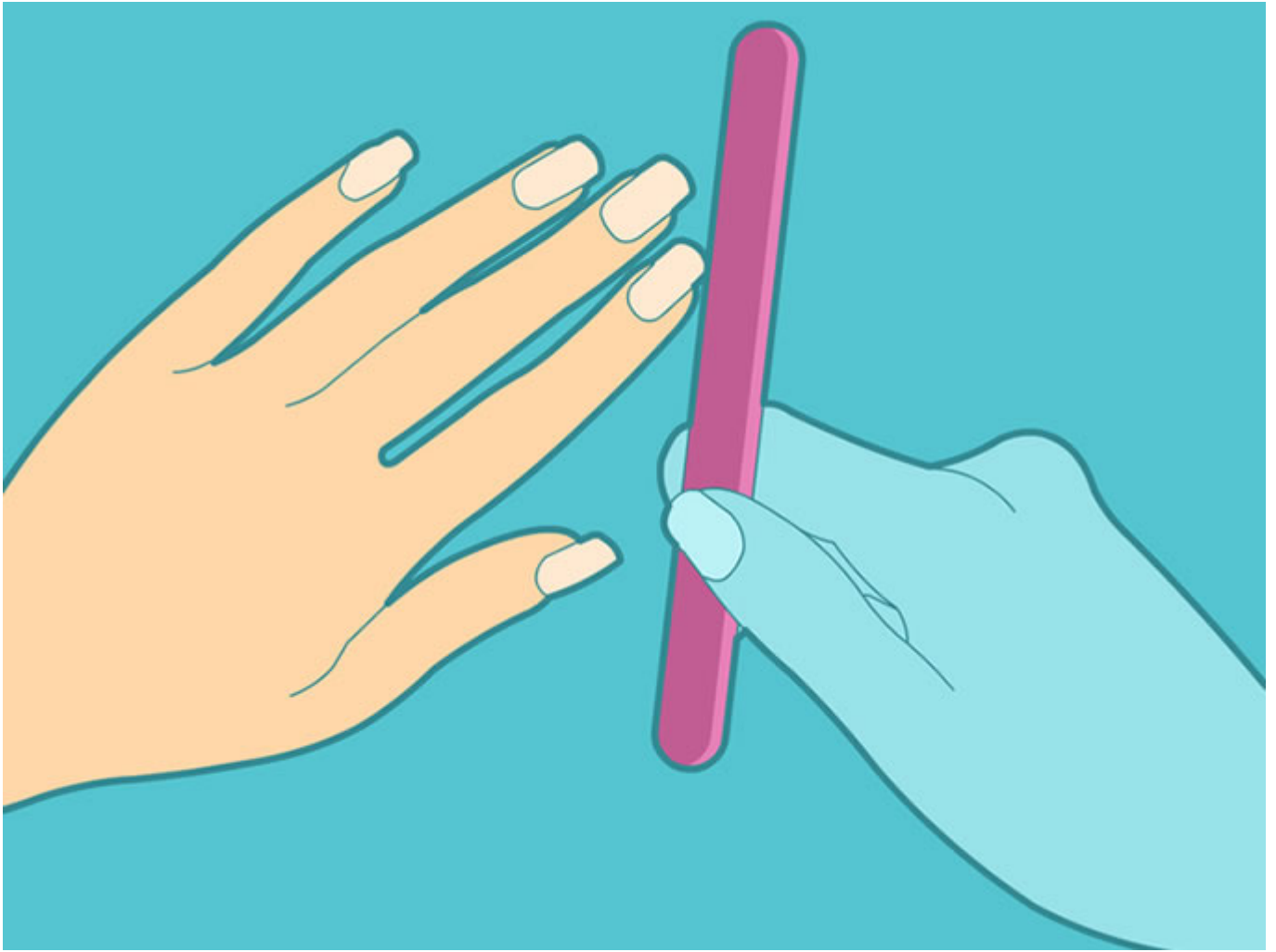
Trim the nails to ensure that they are in good condition as a base for the acrylics (use regular nail scissors or clippers). Remember that having acrylics on will mean that the natural nail will still grow (although slowly), so it is important to cut them right back and strengthen them before the chemicals and plastic are applied to them.

Smooth out any rough edges with a regular nail file as well as filing the surface of the nail or buffing them (this takes off a small layer of enamel and shine from the nail base).

Trim the nails



File the nails



Pay attention to the cuticles

Use the cuticle stick to push back the cuticles. It is important the acrylic will stick to the natural nail, as opposed to the skin (cuticle), so soak the fingers in warm water to make the cuticles wet and soft, and easier to remove.

Push back the cuticles



Application of artificial nail tips

It is now time to apply the tips! This is the fun bit and although it can be tricky first time around, it is relatively easy, once you get the hang of it.

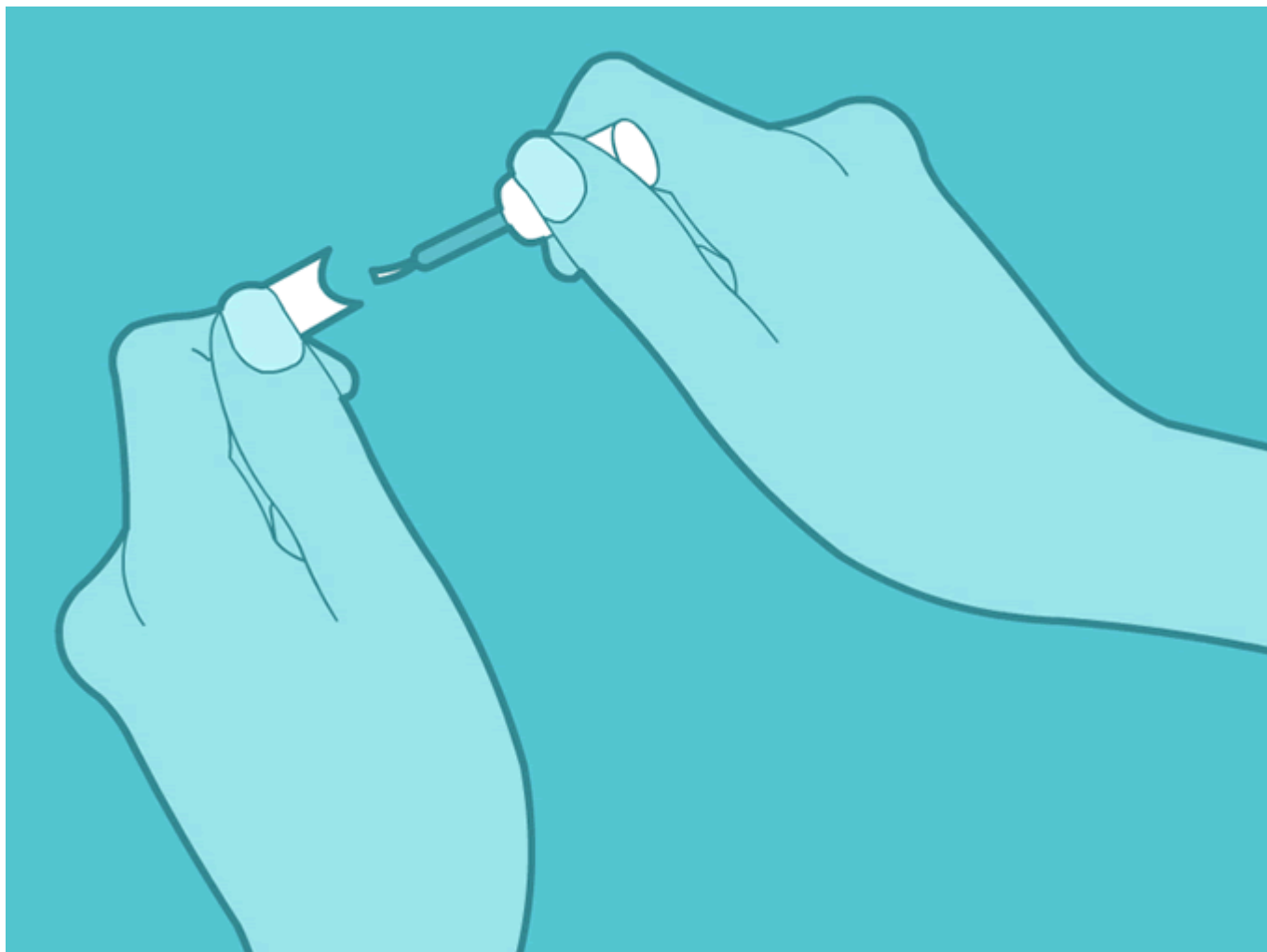
Pair each tip with the right nail and if it does not fit perfectly, simply file down to the correct size. Take the time to ensure that the tips fit the nails properly. A good fit and a strong bond are important to long-lasting and natural-looking enhancements using tips. Select a tip that matches the natural curve of the client's nail plate.

Apply a small amount of glue to the tip itself (not the nail), line up the tip on the free edge of the nail at a 45-90 degree angle and then slowly 'rock' it forward, pressing it onto the nail plate. Hold firmly until the glue dries. The glue should spread evenly to completely fill the space, avoiding any air bubbles. Once the glue has set, use a tip cutter to trim the tips to the desired length and then shape with a file.

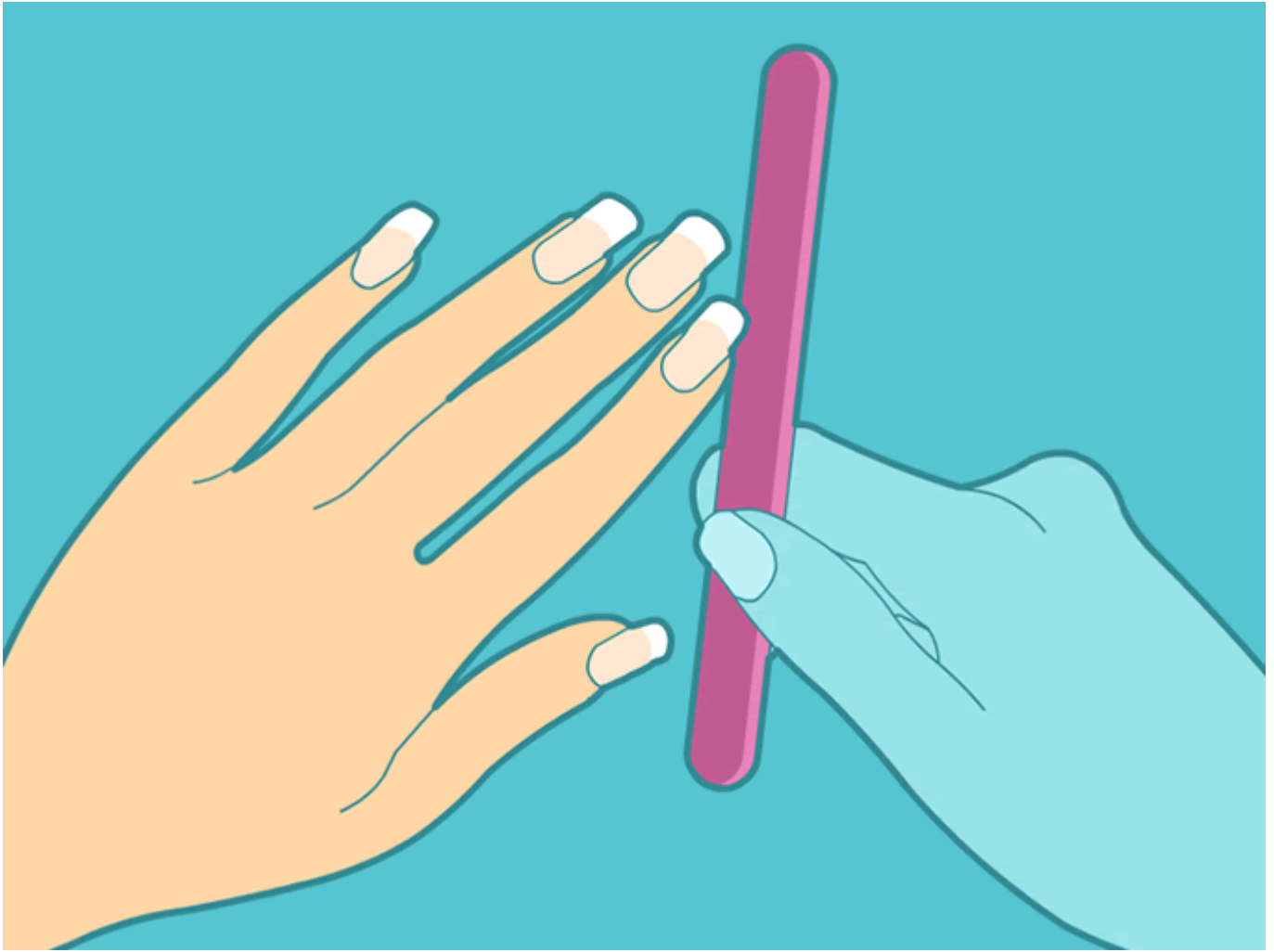
The artificial tips can be then gently filed to 'blend' in the join to the natural nail. Some technicians prefer to thin down or pre-etch the seam prior to gluing to avoid having to file a lot to blend, which also reduces the risk of damage to the nail plate. Liquid tip blenders can also be used, which are brushed over the plastic seam line; softening the plastic so less filing is needed.

Mistakes can happen, especially if you don't have a steady hand or when applying with the hand you don't normally use ... so if you apply a tip incorrectly, soak immediately in water and remove before reapplying. Practice makes perfect! For the first attempt, it may be a good idea to enlist the help of a friend.

Nail Tip Application





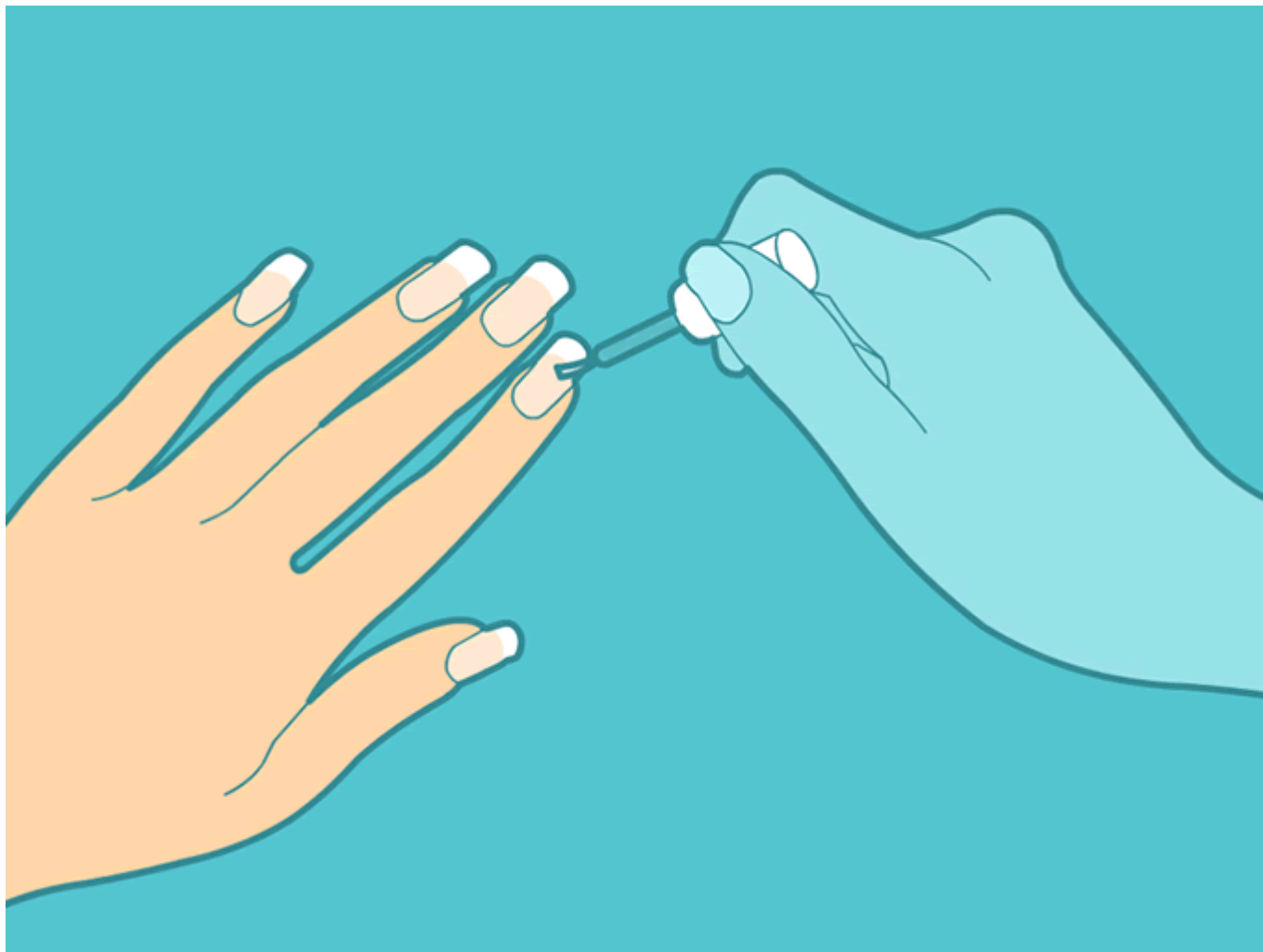


Use nail primer

Ensure you cleanse the nail again to remove any dust or oil, in readiness to apply the primer. Oils need to be stripped from the nails completely before the acrylics are fixed in place. For this, use the nail primer and rub onto the nail surface with cotton wool. It is important to use just a small amount, as the methacrylic acid in the primer can burn if used in excess.

Again, this is an example of how this process can be harsh on the condition of nails, skin and hands – so be careful. It is also important to ensure that the space you are working in is well ventilated as the chemicals can be harsh – so open windows and doors for air flow or wear a paper mask.

Nail Primer



The acrylic mix and application

Using a good quality clean brush, dip the brush into the acrylic materials – the liquid acrylic first, then the powder. Aim for a consistency that is moist but not too wet and that turns the mixture into a bead that is glue-like in texture, i.e. if it falls off the brush it is too dense, if it runs down the brush it is too liquid.

Blotting the brush on some paper towels to rid it of any excess moisture, apply the mix firstly to the top of the artificial nail, smoothing down. Follow this by applying another bead just under the nail tip, smoothing down, and lastly apply a bead to the lower part of the nail. Smooth all the way over it evenly – taking extra care to blend in the base where the nail/skin meets the acrylic so that this is smooth and unnoticeable. Re-apply and build as needed.

Be careful not to apply the acrylic mix to the cuticle itself though. Be patient as the mix dries – this can take up to 15 minutes. To test that it is dry, tap one gently on to the side of a table or hard surface, and, if it makes a solid tapping sound, it has set.

Once you are sure the mix has set, further shape the nails with a file. There are many tips to choose from, including a formal and square tip, a more natural oval tip or more pointed look.

For the first time, it is best to opt for a mix between square and oval so that it looks as natural as

possible and is easy to shape. The more times you apply acrylics, the more chances you get to experiment with which filed look you prefer and what suits you best. Again, take a look online or browse through a nail magazine for some inspiration.

11.7 Nail Art



The fun is in decorating the nail. Applying a base coat will prevent staining of the nail enhancement. Paint with a coloured nail varnish. Add a top coat of clear varnish or any nail art such as glitters or gem stones.

Think about a social event your client might have coming up – what colour dress or outfit will they wear so you can match the nails to it? The Internet is full of great nail art ideas – including for different occasions such as festive or patriotic themes.

Take a look at Pinterest and Instagram in particular for boards of inspiration and nail art designs. Have fun and experiment with colours and styles, to figure out what works best.

Finishing Touches



11.8: Maintenance



Sometimes acrylics can be difficult to keep well maintained, as they grow out as the natural nail grows.

Use the same mix to fill in the base and edges to touch up the look or simply remove and reapply when necessary. If the client prefers to remove the acrylics, you will need to use pure acetone and soak the nails.

These nails should last 2-3 weeks but this will depend on the client. Some clients have natural nails that curl away from the extension but this can be helped if clients apply cuticle oil daily to keep their natural nails hydrated and thus pliable.

11.9: Condition



Applying acrylics to nails over a long time (many months or even years) can make the natural nail condition weak.

Sometimes it is advisable to rest the nails between applications to strengthen them. The chemicals, such as acetone and glues can be harsh to the nail and strip it off essential oils and moisture needed for growth.

If you cover the nail itself with these chemicals, they can become soft or brittle. From time to time, let the client's natural nail grow and simply apply a regular manicure to them (and use lots of hand and nail cream).

11.10: Instructional Video

Artificial Tips - 11m 55s

Watch this instructional video showing how to do acrylic nail tips

Go and Practise

Estimated time: 60+ minutes

Find a friend or family member and practise doing a set of acrylic tips on them following the step by step instructions as set out in this module of the course

In this module you learned all about creating a classic French manicure - otherwise known as 'tips'. French manicures deliver an effortlessly classic look that is appropriate for all situations. Like a normal manicure, there's a little prep work involved. Unlike a normal manicure, you need to know how to create those tips perfectly with an even finish.

We also looked at how to apply artificial tips with acrylic.

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