

Thinning

"Thinning of the nail plate and ridges can be caused by over-filing, heavy-handed use of files or an inappropriate grit," states Elissa Newton-Smiths. "Use a light touch and I recommend never filing the nail plate with any lower grit than 240." The improper removal of product can also cause thinning, too.

Nail biting

One of the most common nail conditions you'll encounter as a professional is nail biting. "If a client is a nail biter, you will be able to help them in their journey to beautiful natural nails with a tailored package of weekly appointments," enthuses Toni Larkin.

"Nail biters will need to come into the salon more regularly to keep on top of any rough skin and hangnails that could encourage them to pick and bite. The regular stimulation of a manicure and the removal of non-living tissue from the nail plate will help encourage nail growth."



Images show before and after images of a nail biter, following a regrowth programme with Antonio Catalano, Scratch Stars Natural Nail Specialist of the Year finalist 2019.

Onycholysis

"Onycholysis – or the separation of the nail plate from the nail bed – is seen as a white area," explains Marian Newman. "This can be an allergic reaction and is often associated with a fungal or bacterial infection."

"If a narrow white area is noticed on several nails, it is usually the beginning of an allergic reaction." Marian advises that all products should be removed from the nails and the client referred to a healthcare specialist.

"Lifting can also happen if/when the nail plate is thinned by over-buffing or improper use of an electric file," Marian adds. "The bond between the nail plate and the nail bed can be disrupted if the nail plate is too thin and flexible."

Discolouration

"Leukonychia – or white flecks on the nails – are usually harmless and can be caused by injury to the matrix," explains Julie-Anne Larivière. "There is no actual treatment for the condition; the spots will grow out on their own."



If white spots are present on the surface of the nail plate, this may also denote damage to the nail from harsh removal or over filing.

Heavily pigmented products can stain the nail upper layers of the nail plate. To help avoid discolouration, be sure you're always using your system's correct preparation techniques and base products.

A change in colour could also be down to a change in the client's health, including a variety of conditions or external factors such as smoking. If you suspect something suspicious, always refer your client to their GP.



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Bruised nails

If the nail sees a dark spot of blood, there may be bruising under the nail plate. Black or bruised toenails may be present with sporty clients, as the result of repetitive trauma caused by activity or wearing ill-fitting footwear. Streak shapes may denote a splinter hemorrhage.

Marian Newman suggests avoiding the area if it is painful, there is pressure under the nail or the bruise cover more than a quarter of the nail. "Otherwise, treat the nail gently," Marian advises. "The blood will eventually grow out."

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