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ASK ANA: Nail Care
How To Strengthen Nails

Question
“Hi Ana, my nails keep peeling and I don’t understand why. Is there any way to fix it?” ~Victoria

ANSWER

The Frustration
One of the biggest frustrations when trying to grow long nails is the fact that they keep breaking. Broken nails make it difficult when doing nail art ideas too.

So many people ask me how to grow their nails. Actually, our nails are always growing.

The key is to get them to stop breaking. See my “How to Stop Breaking Nails” article for more tips.

But the most important way to stop breaking brittle nails is to understand the factors that contribute to broken nails. The damage is reversible.

You’re just a few days away from beautiful natural nails that are stronger and stop peeling.

Let’s take a look at the things that make nails brittle, break, and peel.
Nail Anatomy 101: The Perfect Balance

Natural fingernails are a composite of keratin cells and the perfect balance of 18 percent moisture (water) and 5 percent body oil.

» Nails with too much water are spongy and far too flexible like particle board forgotten in the rain.

» Nails that have inadequate moisture split and fracture like brightly colored fall leaves.

Important note: I’m not a nail tech, and I don’t possess a science diploma. What I do have is a wonderful ability at performing thorough research and taking complicated subject areas and simplifying them so that everybody else can easily comprehend it. I simply just happen to be very geeky about nails considering that Nail Structure and Product Chemistry by Doug Schoon is my Fingernail Bible … I credit all the sciencey stuff to Mr. Schoon and the entertaining analogies are my own … yep, unquestionably geeky … so, on with the show. ~Ana

An Excellent Water Trap

A miraculous 5% of oil is all that’s required to trap an ideal amount of water in the fingernails. But not all oils are the same.

Naturally, the most beneficial oil is the one your body makes inside the nourishing layer of the nail bed— the pinkish skin underneath your nail plate. Many people confuse the nail plate with nail bed.

The nail bed actually contains cells similar to the inside lining within your mouth—and if you’ve ever suffered the loss of your own fingernail, then you know it’s skin that includes tons of nerve endings and hurts like the bajesus! Speaking from personal experience when I was approximately eight years of age and slammed my thumb in a vehicle door.

My own nail turned green after which it fell off uncovering the sensitive nail bed, that I seemed to bump everywhere… over two months of unbearable pain… but I digress….
Meet The Layers Of Your Nails

Your nail consists of somewhere around 50 layers of dead, densely jam-packed, flattened keratin cells, that are enlarged approximately four hundred times in the image directly below. Keratin is extremely important to the natural nail’s flexibility.
Similar to a Sponge

A normal fingernail plate holds almost one-third its own weight in water! I’m positive you’ve observed that immediately after you’ve been in the shower or bath for too long.

Using a process called diffusion, water and oil move in between the 50 layers of cells plus the microscopic gaps between the cells.

Water molecules are so small that they will travel through and between the cells. Oil molecules happen to be much bigger and can only go between the cells.
Your Nail’s Natural Enemies: Houston, We Have a Problem

Fingernails are exposed to 2 major solvents; water and nail polish removers.

The average person cleans their hands with cleansing soap twelve to twenty occasions each day with harsh, antibacterial soaps!

» Your fingernails absorb the water
» Cleansing soap washes away your nail’s natural oil.
» Water evaporates from the nail even quicker … Rinse and repeat :D

Considering the fact that the nail’s oil was washed away, water evaporates even more. Now your body’s perfect 18% water/5% oil balance is down the drain. You have fingernails which are dried and stiff, ready to break the next time you bump them.
Polish Lovers Watch Out?

Peeling and Splitting?

Whatever dries out the nail plate also will decrease flexibleness and resilience, this includes acetone AND non-acetone polish removers.

Most of the people are convinced non-acetone removers are less dangerous and much less destructive. This just isn't correct.

Acetone is a better solution as it dissolves the lacquer faster. Less time scrubbing equates to much less drying damage to your fingernails.

*Acetone and the chemicals in non-acetone remover (ethyl acetate & methyl ethyl ketone) are typically risk-free solvents when used moderately. When used only once each week, the drying out result is actually short lived and swiftly corrects itself. ~Doug Schoon, Nail Structure and Product Chemistry*

Picture your own nail’s keratin layers just like the paper pages of a book. Typically the paper fibers interlock firmly together very similarly to the keratin cells in each keratin layer of your nails.

The spine of the book is like your cuticle. Totally new, the book pages stack together perfectly flat. Everything lies smoothly.

So what happens as soon as the book’s pages become soaked? The water gets absorbed into the paper fibers, they relax, and spread out.

What happens once the pages dry? All of the paper’s fibers continue to be spread out so the pages dry distorted therefore the layers of the pages don’t match smoothly together any longer.
Your Fingernails Are Tougher Than a Book

However, you could possibly be thinking, “Ana, my nails get wet again and again so this small book comparison isn’t right.” And you’re correct … up to a point. And that point is when your brittle fingernails begin peeling and cracking.

Too much exposure to water over a period of time weakens the nail plate and causes all kinds of damage. The photo below is what peeling nails look like under an electron microscope. A little different as compared to the nice, smooth photo below, right?

What’s The Answer?

Actually … considering the fact that I can’t advise no hand washing, your only other option is to get the oil back in your finger nails.

Remember when I mentioned not all oils are created the same? A lot of people have applied avocado, canola, mineral, or olive oil into their fingernails with no success. The reason is because the oil molecules are way too large. They won’t go into the keratin layers, therefore they just sit on top.
Jojoba’s History

Despite the fact that jojoba wax ester has been around since 1822, it obtained notoriety in 1971 when the United States stopped the import of sperm whale oil which was implemented extensively in the cosmetics industry.

The market sector ended up being compelled to look for a replacement and jojoba was determined to be most suitable.

Without becoming far too geeky on you, the vast majority of vegetable seed oils are triglycerides. Jojoba wax ester consists of long-chain fatty acids and fatty alcohols with no side branching. This particular chemical arrangement accords jojoba special attributes unparalleled in the plant kingdom. (Hort.Purdue.Edu)

What Makes Jojoba Important to Strong, Healthy Nails

Jojoba wax ester is the same molecular size as the human body’s particular oil, sebum. For the reason that jojoba is made up of wax esters and fatty acids which are comparable to human sebum, it’s a favorite ingredient in cosmetics and skin products. (eHow.com)
The Reason Why It Really Works

“Oils are absorbed into the nail plate to keep it flexible, but much more slowly than water. Similar to how oils are absorbed a lot more slowly right into the nail plate, it is also a lot more difficult for the oils to escape. Therefore, oils stay in the plate for a very long time and can exert a dramatic long-term influence on the durability of the natural nail plate.”
~Doug Schoon, Nail Structure and Product Chemistry

What to Look for in a Nail Oil

As you can probably guess by now, your nail oil MUST have jojoba wax ester, and ideally at the start of the ingredient list.
How To Apply Nail Oil Guidelines

The Initial Three (3) Days

When I started using a jojoba wax ester nail oil, I noticed that my nails seemed to keep soaking it up like a sponge.

I just kept reapplying it until the absorption slowed down. That took three days. As a result, I created the directions for a three-day hydration treatment.

During the first three days, you will use quite a bit of oil.

After that, you’ll apply it only as needed. For me, that’s about 4 times per day.

1. Clear away all nail lacquer.
2. Proceed with the basic daily application instructions below. As soon as you're finished, your fingernails will feel a little bit oily.
3. Once in awhile throughout the next hour or two, rub the surface oil into your nails.
4. Whenever you do this, your fingernails will feel less oily. When you feel the oil has become absorbed, reapply.
5. Repeat step 4 for your first 72 hours. After you get to the point that it takes your fingernails 4 hours or more to absorb the oil, you can proceed to the basic application.
Basic Daily Application

Two Times (2x) Daily or more

1. Uncap the pen, twist end until you see oil inside the bristles.
2. Brush oil on your nail, cuticle, sidewalls and under your free edge of the nail.
3. Recap pen.
4. Using your fingers, massage the oil directly into the fingernails and fingers up to the knuckle closest to your nail.
5. Spend a bit of time massaging the matrix (right behind the cuticle) * This improves the flow of blood to where your nail is created so they really will be stronger and healthier.
6. Carry on using this oil application with lacquer manicures, acrylic or gel manicures. Just like your fingernails are not solid, neither is lacquer, acrylic monomers or gel. Jojoba wax ester is absorbed into each one of these products whilst keeping them a lot more flexible as they aren’t dehydrating.

Polishing After Nail Oil

Using 91% rubbing alcohol or pure acetone, swiftly cleanse the surface of your own nail. Doing this will remove the oil sitting on top of your own nail for increased adhesion of your own lacquer. Polish your nails by using your chosen base coat.

Base Coat: Essential!

Base coats include a high percentage of a resin, which actually improves nail plate adhesion and reduces yellow staining.

Top coats usually have high amounts of nitrocellulose to increase wear by covering the polish by creating a preventative shield in addition to maximizing high gloss.

Base coats and top coats are definitely not interchangeable. Any polish that claims to be a base coat and top coat will be a disappointment and lead to early polish chipping.
Taking off Nail Polish

Consider Acetone

Considering the fact that acetone works quicker than the non-acetone ingredients, which in turn causes you to rub and scrub a lot more, it’s actually more effective to begin using acetone to take off your nail polish.

Moisturize

Simply, just wash your hands when finished to get a little water inside your fingernails after which you can rub in your nail oil completely.

The Result?

With proper nail care, your brittle fingernails will be a thing of the past and you’ll know how to maintain beautiful long nails!

And if you like doing nail art, it’s a joy to be able to wear your creations for 7-10 days.
About Ana
NailCareHQ.com – MyBlissKiss.com

I’m tired of the lies—and I’m pretty sure you are too.

» Does garlic really strengthen my nails?
» Should I soak my nails in water to hydrate them?
» Do lemons really bleach yellowing nails?

If you search through Google and YouTube, you’ll find people saying “Yes” and “No” to each of those questions. Where’s the truth?

A Woman with a Mission

NailCareHQ.com is my mission to help women and men find the truth in quality, personal nail care advice.

I love to research things that interest me… and nail care interests me A LOT! I’ve been polishing my nails since I was 13—over 30 years ago! Ack!!!

I am continually finding a ton of misinformation, myths and old-wives-tales on the internet. I decided to create a place where people could easily find quality information that doesn’t read like a university textbook.

NailCareHQ.com’s purpose is to provide you with all the nail care information you need in one place.
Ana’s Story

“How do I get my polish to stop chipping in the shower?”
It all started in 2010 with a simple little search in the website, that to me is like a shiny, black Magic 8 Ball,—Google.

Google’s results led me down a two-week long rabbit hole! I felt like Alice finding new exciting tunnels— websites, nail blogs and the holy grail of nail art instruction…YouTube.

After 80 hours of research—yep … two weeks, 8 hours a day!—I think I had learned just about everything the Internet could offer me about nail care and nail art.

My Frustration

But I had also lost countless hours to watching videos from teenagers who don’t have a clue how to make decent videos or supply good information.

In fact, some of them were providing completely WRONG information. I’m sure you’ve experienced this too.

Something Had to Change

I decided then to create a website where you could come and learn everything about healthy nail care techniques that are based in science and actually work!

I wanted to create a site where you can learn the basics of nail art from beautiful photos, detailed print instructions, and high quality, in-focus videos.

Thus, NailCareHQ.com was born. It is meant to be your exclusive resource for all things nail related and a place where you can ask me anything without feeling put down for asking a valuable question

And, yes… I did learn how to stop my polish from chipping in the shower.

Happy Polishing!

Ana Seidel
Knowledge is Power

I sincerely hope that you, dear reader, and all our fans out there will ask as many questions as possible to get an educated understanding of nails.
Get Naked!

WANT TO GET RID OF HANGNAILS AND HYDRATE YOUR NAILS? READY FOR GORGEOUS, STRONG NAILS?

Join the thousands of other nail-fanatics and hydrate your brittle, breaking nails to dramatically reduce frustrating hangnails, dry cuticles, and cracked nails.

TAKE THE CHALLENGE

http://myblisskiss.com/challenge

Bliss Kiss™
Get Bliss For Your Nails

Ready to start your journey to longer, stronger nails now? We only sell the highest quality products and always guarantee your satisfaction.

What People Are Saying

We love celebrating the Simple Successes our customers share with us. Here are just a few of the results from our satisfied Blissettes. You can find more here:
Best Stuff Ever!!!

I’ve always had problems growing out my nails because they would always bend and break. I’d tried every strengthening/hardening treatment out there with no results. After reading about Bliss Kiss on a nail blog, I decided to give it a shot.

I noticed the clear spots disappear from my nail and much healthier looking cuticles by the second day of the 3 Day Hydration challenge. Three weeks later, my nails are stronger than they’ve ever been in my life!! I actually have to file them down instead of chopping them all off.

Also I no longer get hangnails which I used to have a huge problem with. I’ve gotten so many complements and I even got the girl I work with to buy it for herself after seeing what it did for me. I wish I would have found this sooner! Thanks Ana!

~Alis Ionascu

Amazing!

I have been fighting my cuticles and nails for as long as I can remember. My cuticles get so dry that I pick at them constantly and my nails are weak and thin.

I’m only 2 days into the 3 day challenge and my hands are in the best shape they have EVER been! I was skeptical about the cost and the amount but it is absolutely worth it.

After trying countless cuticle oils and creams this is the first thing that has ever worked for me. And a little goes a long way! I’ve been applying it non-stop for 2 days and haven’t even used an eighth of the bottle. This morning one drop was enough for all 10 nails.

This stuff is unbelievable!

~Tanya
My Nails are Long and Strong Now!!

This stuff is AMAZING! Once I got it I did the 3 day hydration. Already I could see that my cuticles and nails were looking much healthier. Mind you my cuticles and nails didn’t look bad to begin with.

Since I’ve gotten it I’ve continuously applied it to my cuticles, top of my nails and even the underside multiple times a day. I make sure to apply after I’ve washed my hands or had them in water for any amount of time.

Since using this my nails are no longer breaking!! In fact they are getting so long that I find it very difficult to even type this now. I would definitely recommend this to anyone who is looking for a way to improve their nails and help them grow healthy and long.

I will for sure be ordering more of this when I run out, I don’t know what I’d do without it!

~Thrifty Mom

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