

## Nail Technician

Nail technicians offer a range of cosmetic treatments for clients' nails. This includes applying, repairing and removing artificial nails (nail technology) and decorating them (nail art).

### The Work

You could be:

- checking the customer's hands for skin or nail problems
- discussing what the customer wants and advising on the most suitable treatment
- in a manicure, massaging the client's forearms and hands, or in a pedicure, the lower legs and feet
- preparing the client's nails by removing old extensions or polish, cleaning and softening the cuticles, treating the skin around the nails and filing the edge and surface of the nails
- applying nail extensions by using acrylic, gel, fibre glass or silk wraps
- cutting, filing and shaping each nail into the desired style then apply different types of nail polish in the colour of the client's choice
- using a special UV lamp to set gel nail polish
- painting patterns and colours on nails, either freehand or using a stencil
- advising on aftercare to lengthen the life of extensions and polish and prevent infection.

### Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual salaries may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting pay is often based on the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or the National Living Wage (NLW).

As of 1 April 2026 the National Minimum Wage is £8.00 an hour for workers under 18, £10.85 an hour for workers aged 18 to 20. The National Living Wage for those aged 21 and over is £12.71 an hour. With experience this can rise to around £15 an hour.

### Conditions

- You usually sit at a table with the client, in a nail salon or nail bar, hairdressing or beauty salon.
- You would wear a salon uniform or a white coat. Some technicians wear a face mask.
- You must keep your work area clean and follow health and safety regulations on hygiene.
- You may work alone or with other technicians, hairdressers or therapists.
- You might have to work some evenings and weekends.

### Getting In

- In some areas you do not need formal qualifications to train as a nail technician.
- Some people who first train in other aspects of beauty therapy go on to specialise in nail technology and nail art after studying part time for Vocational Training Charitable Trust (VTCT) or other qualifications.
- There are training courses in nail treatments, nail technology and nail art, or including these subjects, at further education colleges and private training centres throughout the UK.
- In Scotland, there is the SVQ Nail Services at SCQF Levels 5 and 6. The HNC and HND in Beauty Therapy offers units in nail treatments and in hand, foot and nail therapies. For entry to SVQ at SCQF Level 6, you need SVQ at SCQF Level 5. For entry to an HNC or HND, you need up to 2 Highers or an appropriate SVQ or NC.
- If you suffer from allergies or sensitive skin, you may find that some of the materials will cause irritation. Some of the chemicals cause fumes – good ventilation in the premises is important.

Opportunities for nail technicians have been increasing because of the growing popularity of nail extensions and nail art. There are employment opportunities in beauty or hairdressing salons, specialist nail salons, large department stores, airports and shopping malls.

You can find jobs on the Find a Job service on the GOV.UK website or other recruitment websites.

## What Does It Take

You need to have:

- a good knowledge of nail structure
- social skills for working with customers
- a confident and outgoing personality
- a steady hand.

You need to be:

- artistic and creative
- able to use your initiative
- patient – it can take up to 2 hours to apply and decorate extensions
- a good listener
- tactful and discreet
- well presented
- able to follow health and safety procedures.

## Training

- It is important for nail technicians to keep up to date with new developments and products.
- Many product manufacturers offer short courses on new nail products, techniques and fashions.
- Courses offered by the Vocational Training Charitable Trust (VTCT) are available at a number of centres.

## Getting On

- There is no formal promotion structure for nail technicians. Many aim to become self-employed.

- You could set up your own salon, or provide a mobile service visiting clients in their own homes. You could also broaden your range of services by studying for additional courses in areas such as massage or ear piercing.
- If you run your own business, you may need a licence from the local authority environmental health department. The requirements for a licence may vary from area to area.
- You could work on cruise ships or, with more training, in spa therapy.
- A small number of nail technicians work with fashion designers and photographers, producing elaborate and highly ornamental nails for fashion shows or magazines.

## Contacts

### **British Association of Beauty Therapy and Cosmetology (BABTAC)**

Tel: 01452 623110

Email: [info@babtac.com](mailto:info@babtac.com)

Website: [www.babtac.com](http://www.babtac.com)

X: @BABTAC

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/BABTACofficial](http://www.facebook.com/BABTACofficial)

### **Confederation of International Beauty Therapy & Cosmetology (CIBTAC)**

Tel: 01452 623114

Email: [enquiries@cibtac.com](mailto:enquiries@cibtac.com)

Website: [www.cibtac.com](http://www.cibtac.com)

X: @CIBTACofficial

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/CIBTAC](http://www.facebook.com/CIBTAC)

### **Habia (Hairdressing and Beauty Industry Authority)**

Tel: 01302 774926

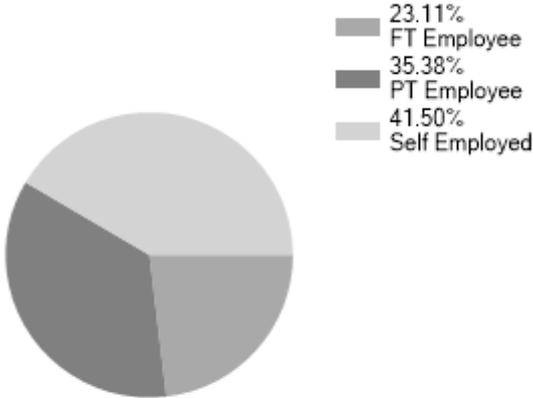
Email: [info@habia.org](mailto:info@habia.org)

Website: [www.habia.org](http://www.habia.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/HabiaUK](http://www.facebook.com/HabiaUK)

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

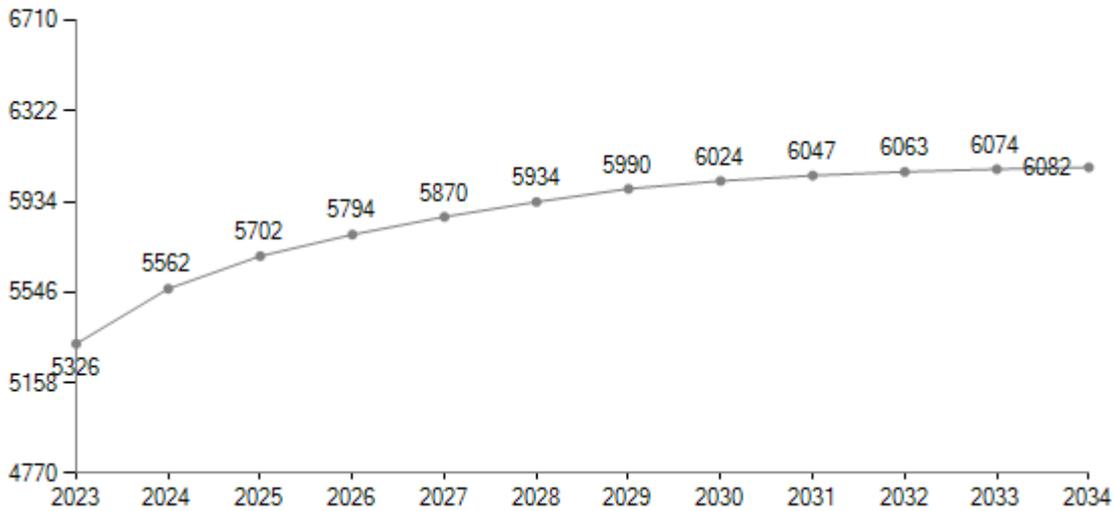


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)