



ASK THE *expert*

Q: What's the scoop on the new UV gel manicures that everyone is talking about? —*Laura G., Boca Raton*

A: The latest generation of manicures is as close as you get to indestructible, boasts zero dry time and lasts around two weeks or more.

Tammy Bigan of Sky Salon, explains this new technology, also called soak-off gels or gel polish. It looks like standard polish but lasts longer because the polymer/monomer fusion is cured onto the nail with an ultraviolet (UV) lamp.

PROS:

- Can be used on natural or acrylic nails
- Indestructible manicure and pedicure
- Lasts about 2 weeks
- Drying time: nonexistent
- Looks great on short & long nails

CONS:

- No changing nail color at whim between applications
- Costs more than a regular manicure
- Limited color selection
- Nail technician expertise is required

“What my clients love most,” explains Tammy, “is there’s

no sitting around post mani/pedi waiting for your nails to dry, only to nick them the moment you go to grab your keys from your bag. You can even put on sneakers and head straight to the gym if you want, without smushing the shiny finish.”

There are several brands available, but the key to perfect application lies with your nail tech. “At Sky, we do a dry manicure/pedicure to prepare the nail with no soaking, so that the nail does not swell and cause the gel to separate from it when it shrinks back after application,” Tammy notes.

And for colors? Her personal favorites include nudes like O.P.I. Axxium’s Barefoot in Barcelona, bright corals such as Creative Nail Design’s Tropix, and the deep red metallic Good Gossip, by Gelish.

The cost of a gel manicure is more than a regular one, upward of \$35. But the cost is

well-warranted by the ultra-durable finish, everlasting shine, and the length of time it lasts. Near the cuticles, after two weeks, a line of new nail growth is obvious. Some clients deal with this issue by going clear near the cuticle, and colored toward the nail edge. Others choose O.P.I. Axxium since shades can be touched up with the same shades available in their regular nail color line.

In addition to being a longer-wearing alternative to standard polish used with a regular manicure or pedicure, UV gels are healthier for the natural nail than previous nail extending products like acrylics and hard gels. UV Gel removal is much gentler and does not involve filing, which causes damage to the nail. Removal takes about 10 to 15 minutes, but it can be tricky and should be done by a professional.



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