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Painting techniques – a range of nail art techniques which could include the use of free hand, brushes, textured sponges, colour shapers and marbling techniques

Pancreas – an organ in both the digestive and endocrine systems. It is an exocrine gland secreting pancreatic juice containing digestive enzymes to break down food and an endocrine gland secreting hormones to regulate blood glucose levels.

Papilla – a small projection in the skin between the epidermis and dermis and at the base of the hair follicle that contains blood vessels and nerve endings

Papules – small solid round bumps in the skin, they do not contain pus, they often occur in clusters and may be caused by inflammation, infection, abrasion, accumulated skin secretions, or hyperkeratinisation. They may in some cases be transitional lesions that become vesicles or pustules.

Paraffin wax – is a white, odourless, tasteless and solid form of paraffin, with a melting point of between 47°C and 64°C. Used in face hand, foot and body masks to transfer heat to the tissues and to soften the skin, soothe muscles, induce perspiration and exfoliate dead skin cells.

Parasitic infection – disease present in the body and caused by a parasite, an organism that lives on or in another organism and from which it receives nourishment.

Parental consent – the permission or approval given by a parent for a child to have a treatment or service

Paronychia – infection of the nail fold it is caused by bacteria entering the skin through a crack or tear in the tissue around the nail, it is characterised by pain redness and swelling

Partnership – the legal form a business takes when two or more people provide the start up cash and share the risks, costs, responsibilities and workload in the business. Each partner is liable for the debts of the others therefore it is advisable to draw up a legal partnership agreement.

Patch test – the use of a small amount of a particular substance applied to the skin prior to treatment to check the skin's tolerance

Pathogenic – harmful and disease producing

Payment – the act of paying

Payment cards – debit or credit cards used to pay for goods and services instead of cash

Pectorals – two pairs of muscles in the upper chest wall, pectoralis major and minor, they pull the upper arms towards or across the chest.

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Pedicure – a manicure of the feet, it improves the appearance of the feet and toenails, it helps to prevent nail diseases and disorders. The pedicure includes cleansing, hard skin removal, nail filing, cuticle treatment, foot and leg massage and nail enamel application. Sometimes additional treatments to nourish or hydrate will be included in the form of a mask or thermal treatment.

Percussion – massage manipulations also referred to as tapotement, they include hacking, clapping, cupping, beating and pounding.

Percussion vibrator – a mechanical, hand held vibratory, massager, used on small areas of the body, it has small detachable heads to provide different effects.

Perform – to carry out, or accomplish a work function to the specified standard.

Performance – the execution or accomplishment of work and the way in which something is achieved.

Perfume – a mixture of essential oils (fragrant essences) extracted from plants, flowers and leaves, aroma compounds (chemical fragrance) stabilising and preserving agents and solvent to create a pleasant smelling liquid, to apply to the body for its fragrance, or use in other ways such as; added to soaps, air fresheners, pot pourri, scented candles, bath products and skin care ranges.

Peristalsis – a pattern of smooth muscle contractions in the oesophagus and small intestine to propel digested food through the digestive system. There is a contraction of smooth circular muscles to prevent food moving backwards, together with a contraction of longitudinal muscle to push the food forward through the digestive tract.

Perm – to curl the hair or eyelashes

Perm lotion – an alkaline substance applied to the hair as part of the perming process, it reacts with the keratin in the cortex of the hair to break down the disulphide cross links within and between the protein chains. The hair then swells and softens so that it can stretch to take the shape of the hair curler or eyelash rod.

Permeable – allows liquids or gases to pass through

Perionychium – the cuticle at the sides of the nail plate also known as the paronychia edge it is the site of hangnails, ingrown nails and the infection paronychia.

Person specification – a list of the qualities, skills, knowledge and experience you require from a job applicant. These should be categorised as essential and desirable to help the interviewer make the right choice.

Personal appearance – the outward look, state, manner, style, or condition of an individual or the act of a person coming into view or making a visit

Personal development – an individual's growth, progression, or maturity

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Personal protective equipment – items worn or used by an operator to protect them from harm.

Personal presentation – the manner, style and appearance of an individual to suit a particular environment or occasion. A beauty therapist must always look professional; wearing the correct, clean and crease free uniform, appropriate shoes, a minimum amount of jewellery that conforms to company policy, hair tidy and off the face, short clean nails free from nail enamel, with suitable makeup and fragrance and when necessary the correct personal protective equipment.

Personal safety – an individual's own responsibility to make sure they are safe and free from harm or injury and not to take unnecessary risks.

Petrissage – deep massage movements with applied pressure to compress the underlying muscles. Kneading, wringing, picking up, frictions and skin rolling are all petrissage movements performed with the padded palmar surfaces of the hands, fingers and thumbs. The hands should be moulded to the area and the movements should be slow and rhythmical.

Petroleum jelly – a semi solid waxy substance with no smell or taste, when applied to the skin it acts as an occlusive, sealing the skin, repelling water, preventing evaporation of moisture and in eyelash tinting is used to protect the skin from staining

pH - the degree of alkalinity and acidity measured on the pH scale, ranges from 0 – strongly acid to 14.0 – strongly alkaline, 7 is neutral. The pH of the skin is 4.0 – 5.5 and the eyes have a pH of 7.4 – 7.6

Phagocyte – a cell transported in the blood that ingests and destroys foreign matter via a process known as phagocytosis

Phalanges – the bones of the fingers or toes

Phlebitis – inflammation of a vein, superficial phlebitis affects veins on the surface of the skin, deep vein thrombosis affects the larger vessels deep in the legs. Can be caused by a complication due to a medical or surgical procedure, prolonged inactivity, varicose veins, obesity, smoking, or an injury

Photo-ageing – a series of changes in the skin as a result of sun exposure or ultraviolet radiation

Photo rejuvenation – treatment using laser light to smooth skin reduce wrinkles, diminish age spots, broken capillaries and rosacea.

Photosensitise – to become sensitive to UVL

Photo-sensitiser – ingredient that can cause the skin to become irritated or inflamed when exposed to sunlight

Photosensitivity – a reaction to sunlight, real or artificial, that produces a rash on the skin, this condition is also called photodermatitis. It may be caused by exposure to UV, topical application of a product that reacts with UV, a metabolic defect, a genetic disorder or a pre existing skin disease.

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Physical – relating to the body and its features.

Physical effects – reactions to a stimulus that may be seen such as a change in skin colour or texture.

Physiological effects – reactions to a stimulus, that occur within the body, affecting any of the body's systems, such as an increase in circulation or lymphatic flow.

Physiology – the biological study of the functions of living organisms and their parts

Phytotherapy – the use of plants, herbs, seaweed, essential oils and botanical extracts, used in conjunction with massage, wraps, packs, water, steam and inhalation

Picking up – a kneading massage manipulation that can be performed single handed or double handed, the technique is to lift, squeeze and relax the muscle being massaged and the effects are to stimulate circulation and lymph flow, release tension and relax muscles.

Pigment – a colouring matter or substance, may be naturally occurring, such as melanin in the skin or added to cosmetics to provide different colours

Pili multigemini – a hair follicle with several hair shafts, each formed by a single branch of dermal papilla which is surrounded by all layers present in a normal follicle, except for the outer root sheath cells. The outer root sheath surrounds the entire follicle.

Pilo sebaceous unit – consists of the hair shaft, hair follicle the sebaceous gland and the arrector pili muscle.

Pineal gland – also called the epiphysis it is a small endocrine gland situated in the brain. It is responsible for the production and release of melatonin, it is stimulated by darkness and inhibited by light

Pitting – small pitted scars that result from over treatment of the follicle during electrical epilation. They will improve in time depending on the level of damage caused. Pitting also occurs in the nail plate when the nail bed beneath is affected by psoriasis.

Plan – a scheme or method worked out in advance to achieve set objectives

Planning permission – a procedure a business will have to follow if it wants to build new premises, to change the use of or extend an existing building. An application has to be made to the local planning department asking for their consent.

Plant room – the room near a swimming pool or spa that contains the filtration and chemical dosing systems and stores the chemicals used to treat the water and keep it clean, all essential requirements in maintaining health and safety in the spa.

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Plantarflexion – a movement which increases the angle between the foot and ankle, when the toe is pointed downwards.

Plasma – the yellowish liquid part of blood in which cells are suspended, it makes up to 50% of the total volume and it contains vital proteins including; fibrinogen which helps with blood clotting, globulins such as haemoglobin to help transport oxygen and serum albumin. It is essentially a transport medium for glucose, lipids, amino acids, hormones, metabolic end products, carbon dioxide and oxygen

Plasticizer – a substance or ingredient in a cosmetic preparation such as nail enamel, to promote viscosity, flexibility or pliability

Platelets – irregularly shaped colourless bodies present in blood to aid clotting and reduce blood loss

Plucking – also referred to as tweezing, to remove the eyebrow hair from the follicle, forcibly, using tweezers.

Polarity switch – a device on a galvanic machine which allows the polarity to be changed from positive to negative.

Policy – a designated course of action, plan, principle or procedure intended to influence and determine decisions, actions and other matters

Polish secures – jewellery for the nails used in nail art. They are in the form of small stones and secured in place by applying to the nail plate between a layer of polish and a top coat.

Polycystic ovarian syndrome PCOS – also known as Stein-Leventhal syndrome and is a condition associated with multiple cysts in the ovaries. Symptoms include, irregular periods, excess hair growth, acne and obesity. It is thought that sufferers have a genetic pre - disposition to this condition but an increased production of androgens and oestrogen, together with an increased resistance to insulin cause this clinical syndrome.

Polymer – large molecule made up of smaller molecules or monomers, connected by chemical bonds.

Polymerisation – the chemical process, which occurs when acrylic components, liquid and powder mix together and activate to form a solid mass used to make a sculptured nail.

Pore – a minute opening in the skin which allows sweat to be excreted.

Port wine stain – a red or purple, irregular shaped area of skin, present from birth. It develops in areas lacking small nerves that control the ability of small blood vessels to constrict. As a result the blood vessels stay open all the time and this shows up as permanent colour. They may be treated by laser or cosmetic camouflage.

Post inflammatory hyperpigmentation - discolouration of the skin after a skin disease or disorder has healed. Some of these conditions include; acne vulgaris, allergies, injury, dermatitis, or burns. The

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areas affected can be light brown to black in colour and they may become darker when exposed to sunlight. It is more common in darker skins but the colour will return to normal over time.

Posterior – the back side of something or behind

Posture – the position of the human body when standing, sitting, or lying down. Good posture keeps the bones and joints in the correct alignment so that muscles are being used properly and it contributes to a good appearance. It also refers to a person's attitude or bearing.

Potential – to have the qualities or abilities to develop and lead to future success.

Potentiometer – an electrical device that varies the voltage in an electrical circuit, thus allowing the intensity of the current to be turned up from zero

Powder – an ingredient used in clay face masks, cosmetics, as a massage medium and nail in products

Pre blended – mix a number of ingredients smoothly together in advance of its use.

Pre heat treatment – treatments using different forms of heat to warm the body's tissues and prepare them for further treatment

Predisposition test – a procedure carried out to assess if there may be the chance of an adverse reaction occurring in response to the application of a specific substance. A client must have a predisposition test prior to an eyelash tint or perm, when a small amount of the substance is placed on the skin to test for an allergic response, a negative reaction means the treatment may proceed.

Premises – land and the building on it, or part of a building

Preparation – a process before an activity to ensure everything is in readiness to meet objectives.

Prepare – to assemble required items in advance, to put in proper order or to make oneself ready for an activity

Presentation – a demonstration, lecture, speech, exhibition or performance

Preservatives – ingredients in cosmetics to prevent bacterial contamination

Process payment – the procedure for accepting, cash, cheques, credit and debit cards, gift vouchers and other cash equivalents in return for goods and services. It includes; providing an itemised bill, accepting payment, making security checks, issuing a receipt.

Product knowledge – all the information relating to the professional products used to provide treatments, the retail items, or other commodities offered for sale. This should include their features, benefits and unique selling points, enabling the therapist to provide accurate and detailed information to a client when making a sale.

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Product liability insurance – provides cover to protect against anyone being injured or harmed by defective products.

Productivity – the amount of work achieved or a measure of worker efficiency.

Professional indemnity insurance – provides cover to protect against the risks involved in doing a job, it protects the business against compensation sought by a client if mistakes have been made or negligence proved.

Progesterone – a hormone secreted by the ovaries in the second two weeks of the menstrual cycle. It is essential for building and maintaining the lining of the uterus for implantation of a fertilised egg.

Promote – to encourage sales through publicity or advertising. To give a person a higher level position in an organisation.

Promotion – a special offer, an activity or product designed to advertise or publicise an event, products, cause or business. It may include; word of mouth, posters, advertisement, personal appearance, demonstration, newspaper article, radio or TV commercial. To be given a higher position in an organisation.

Pronation – to rotate the hand or forearm so that the palm faces down or back

Prone – lying face down

Provide – to supply, give, or make available for use

Proximal – nearest to the point of origin

Pseudofolliculitis barbae – this is a common condition of the beard area in Afro Caribbean men and others with curly hair, more commonly referred to as shaving rash or razor bumps. This occurs when highly curved hairs grow back into the skin causing inflammation. Over time this may cause keloid scarring which has the appearance of small hard bumps in the skin.

Pseudomonas aeruginosa – a type of bacteria that thrives in moist environments, such as a spa, or pool area, it is able to grow in temperatures up to 42°.

Psoriasis – a common, chronic, inflammatory skin disorder characterised by raised red patches of skin covered with silvery scales. It is an acceleration of the usual replacement process of the skin. It may occur on any part of the body although common sites are; elbows, knees and scalp. The cause is unknown, however, a genetic predisposition and a trigger such as a throat infection, injury, certain drugs and physical and emotional stress can make it appear.

Psychological – relating to the mind, mental state and emotions

Psychological effects – a reaction of the mind to a stimulus, to alter mood and feelings

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Pterygium – a forward growth of hardened cuticle over the nail plate

Puberty – the first stage of adolescence the time when sexual maturity becomes evident, it is a time of physical and emotional change, in females this is between the ages of 11 and 14 and in boys between the ages of 13 and 16. These changes are brought about by a huge increase in hormones, oestrogen in girls and testosterone in boys.

Public liability insurance –provides cover for any damages that a member of the public may be awarded as a result of injury or damage to them or their property caused by your business.

Pulse – a wave of pressure which passes along the arteries indicating the pumping action of the heart or a passage of current of short duration.

Pumice stone – lightweight volcanic stone used to remove hard skin

Pustule – a papule with a red inflamed surrounding area and yellow centre that develops at the opening of the follicle or sweat gland in the skin. It becomes infected with bacteria and together with a build up of epidermal cells pus forms