

Steps	Reason and patient-centred care considerations
18. Assist the patient to re-dress as appropriate and move into a comfortable position.	Promotes patient comfort and dignity.
19. Dispose of bowl or clean with detergent and water if reusable. Store inverted to avoid dregs of water collecting in it. Dispose of/clean any other equipment as per local policy and return any of the patient's equipment to their locker. Clean the bed-side table and put any belongs you moved back in their original position. If appropriate ensure the patient can reach the nurse call bell.	Reduces risk of infection. Maintains patient safety.
20. Perform steps 8-10 of the common steps (pp. 144-146).	To ensure that the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • patient is safe, comfortable and receiving the appropriate care; • results have been documented in the patient's records; • equipment is clean and in working order.

Evidence base: Baillie (2009); DH (2010); Dougherty and Lister (2011); Gasper et al. (2010); NICE (2012a); NMC (2007, 2015); Sargeant and Chamley (2013)

Trimming nails

What is normal

Most patients have their own hygiene practices, which may be very different from yours, so remember to ensure you are working in partnership with your patient.

Remember to constantly observe and assess the condition of the patient's nails and surrounding skin.

Before you start

Remember to perform the common steps (pp. 144–146).

Essential equipment

Scissors, nail clippers, nail file, soap/hand cleanser, bowl, warm water, towel, hand-lotion if the patient wishes.

☑ Care setting considerations

It is possible to trim a patient's nails in all settings as long as the necessary equipment is available.

☑ What to watch out for/action to take

If any areas of skin or any nails have been observed which are abnormal this must be reported to a relevant individual and recorded in the patient's notes.

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1.	Perform steps 1-7 of the common steps (pp. 144-146). Offer assistance as required to prepare the patient so you are able to access the nails you are going to trim. Only uncover the area you are working on. Assist the patient to find a comfortable position.	To prepare the patient and yourself to undertake the skill. Maintains patient dignity. If you are at the patient's bedside ensure you draw the curtains fully.
2.	Fill a bowl with fresh warm water, check the temperature carefully and if possible check that the patient is happy with the temperature. Change this water at any time if it becomes too cool or dirty.	Patient safety. Reduces risk of contamination.
3.	Ensure the bowl and the patient are at a height which is comfortable for you to work, changing this throughout the procedure as necessary.	Cares for your back.
4.	Trimming fingernails Soak the patient's hands in the water and gently clean around and underneath their nails if required.	Trimming toenails Soak the patient's feet in the water, wash their feet and gently clean around and underneath their nails if required. Check their feet for any signs of:
		Reduces risk of contamination. Assess the condition of the skin and nails and ensure any potential problems are reported.

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<p>Check the condition of the patient's nail beds; are there any signs of inflammation (redness) or fungus (discolouration)? If so report this to your mentor or a registered nurse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • redness, warmth, soreness or pain (infection) • numbness or tingling (neuropathy) • dry or cracked skin • swelling • blisters, cuts, scratches or sores • in-growing toenails, corns, calluses • toenail fungus (discolouration). <p>If you find any of the above report it to your mentor or a registered nurse.</p>	
<p>5. Dry the patient's hands and nails carefully.</p>	<p>Dry the patient's feet very carefully, especially between their toes.</p>	<p>To promote comfort and prevent the patient from feeling cold.</p>
<p>6. Trim one nail at a time. If after trimming any nails have a rough edge you will need to wait until the nail is properly dry and then file it smooth.</p>	<p>Trim one nail at a time. Cut the nail straight across. Do not cut down into the corners, you should still be able to see the white tip at the top edge. If after trimming any of the nails still have a rough edge wait until the nail is properly dry and then file it smooth.</p>	<p>To ensure nails are not cut too short and are smooth so they do not catch on clothing or scratch skin.</p>
<p>7. Apply hand-lotion if the patient wishes.</p>	<p>If the patient desires you can apply lotion to the top and bottom of their feet, but not between the toes.</p>	

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9. Perform steps 8-10 of the common steps (pp. 144-146).	To ensure that the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • patient is safe, comfortable and receiving the appropriate care; • results have been documented in the patient's records; • equipment is clean and in working order.

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Washing a patient's hair in bed

What is normal

Most patients have their own hygiene practices, which may be very different from yours, so remember to ensure you are working in partnership with your patient.

Remember to constantly observe and assess the condition of patient's hair and skin on their scalp.

Before you start

Remember to perform the common steps (pp. 144–146).