

mxBlokes

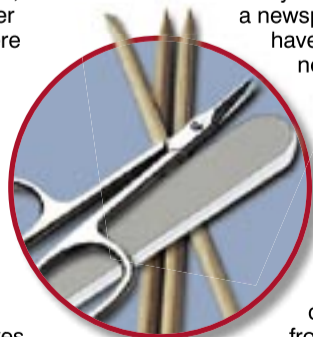


Get nailed

Think giving your fingernails a clip once a fortnight is all they need? Think again, guys.

● Nail care is one of many grooming habits that have recently boomed in popularity with men. Many of us would still balk at the idea of going to a salon to have our nails done, but a growing number of men are doing just that. Image consultant Emily Hawkins from Melbourne's Man, What A Fuss salon said there were a number of reasons men were fussing over their fingers. She said it was a mixture of men wanting to look professional and more attractive. "Their hands are on show during business meetings, their skin is on show all the time, so it is just a way of not only them relaxing but taking care of themselves and wanting to look good," she said. "Women look at their skin, their hands, their shoes and their clothes when they first speak to men, so there is a little bit of pressure on guys to maintain their image and

keep up to date with all the new trends. "With nails, a lot of guys don't do much and that is why they come to us once a month when they get their hair cut, and we file the dry skin around the nail bed, give them a massage, buff them." Hawkins said her main clients were predominantly suits and footballers keen to look good at work and play. But those working in blue-collar jobs were less likely to preen themselves professionally. "I think they are the sort of people who do feel a bit self-conscious getting things done," Hawkins said. "It will still take a bit of time I think for them to feel comfortable getting treatments done."



Similar to the success of women-only spas such as Fernwood, Hawkins said guys were more comfortable in men-only salons. She said although the men who visited Man, What A Fuss were happy to be worked on, they did not want to make it obvious to the outside world. "It's more of a comfort thing where they can relax, read a newspaper or *FHM*, have a coffee and not have to worry about people looking at them wondering 'Oh my God, what are they having done?'" she said. Hawkins said guys still copped grief from mates but said most had a beauty routine anyway. "I think some of them still do give it to each other but they are secretly doing it themselves," she said. "I think a lot of guys steal their girlfriend's products at home and have a bit of a play with

them, but it is becoming a lot more acceptable now." Buzz word "metrosexual" may be big on the streets, but it is a no-no at Man, What A Fuss. Hawkins said the word turned some men off, as did the term "beauty consultant". She prefers to be called an "image consultant". So what can men do at home to keep their hands and nails looking great? Man, What A Fuss owner Kate Allen said men should put as much effort into caring for their hands and nails as they did their face. "Your hands are always on show, in business meetings or on social occasions," she said. "They are always the first to see the sun so it is really important to keep the skin on your hands healthy." Allen recommend using an exfoliating scrub or fruit acid peel on hands followed by a decent nail and hand cream. "Exfoliating removes the dead skin cells which can make your hands look quite old and crappy," she said. An occasional hand massage is also recommended.



Man, What A Fuss owner Kate Allen takes mX through the three steps of nail care.

Filing (1) is useful for cleaning up men's nails. It is also a healthier method of shortening the length of nails than cutting. "Filing is used to neaten the nail, to take off the sharp edges and improve the shape of the nail," Allen said. "Some guys have their nails rounded but most have them squared, probably because they believe it is more masculine."

The cuticle, which attaches the nail to the skin, is a sensitive area that needs a great deal of care. "They are really important but a lot of guys ignore them," Allen said. "What happens then is that you get little tears, called hang-nails, which can be quite painful and look ghastly." The team at Man, What A Fuss uses an oil (2) to soften the cuticle before using a

wooden instrument to push it back (3). Allen said cutting the cuticle (4) was a measure done only when the cuticle became too attached to the nail. She said some men let it reach the point that dead skin covered half the nail. "This is not something you should do at home," she said. "If you cut back the dead skin sometimes it can come back even worse, so you have to keep on top of it."

