

3



YOUR PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

LO1

Name four good personal hygiene habits.

LO2

Explain the concept of dressing for success.

LO3

Practice ergonomically correct movement, postures, and principles.

OUTLINE

WHY STUDY THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL IMAGE? 38

APPLY HEALTHFUL HABITS IN YOUR DAILY ROUTINE 39

FOLLOW IMAGE BUILDING BASICS 40

EMPLOY PROPER ERGONOMICS TO PROTECT YOUR BODY 42

Do you believe that first impressions are important? First impressions are often the gateway to obtaining a job interview, new customers, and to building a professional image. Making a positive impact is essential when working in the business of image building. Beauty professionals are often held to higher image standards by clients because they view beauty professionals as image experts. For this reason alone, it is vital to look and act your absolute best when in public. Letting your image be the standard for clients and peers is a great recipe for success (figure 3-1).

There are many factors that help create a professional image. However, how a person looks is often the first clue to determining if he or she has what it takes to do the job. Professional behavior, a positive attitude, team camaraderie, good communication skills, and proper ergonomics make the recipe for success more flavorful! Ideally, everyone should present a great total package.

figure 3-1
Project a professional image.



why study

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL IMAGE?

Cosmetologists should have a thorough understanding of the importance of their professional image because:

- > Clients rely on beauty professionals to look good and be well groomed. Having a professional beauty image helps to build trust with clients and leads to repeat business.
- > Finding a salon whose culture complements your image standards and goals is important for career growth and achievements.
- > There are consequences to not maintaining a professional image, including loss of clients, a poor reputation, and loss of income.
- > Understanding ergonomics can help prevent health issues associated with poor working habits and help professionals stay gainfully employed.

After reading the next few sections, you will be able to:

LO 1 Name four good personal hygiene habits.

Apply Healthful Habits in Your Daily Routine

Being well groomed begins with looking and smelling fresh. These hygienic characteristics are especially important in the beauty business where practitioners are frequently only inches away from their clients during services.

Personal Hygiene

Basic hygienic practices such as showering or bathing should never be omitted from daily personal care practices. **Personal hygiene** is the daily maintenance of cleanliness by practicing good healthful habits (figure 3-2). When working as a stylist, makeup artist, nail technician, or esthetician, you will be in close proximity to clients. One weak moment of drinking coffee right before performing a service, or wearing something that needs laundering because you did not plan ahead, could be disastrous. Rather than telling you that you smell offensive, most clients will simply not return and may tell others about their bad experience.

As a beauty professional it is imperative to always be clean, neat, and have a pleasant scent.

One of the best ways to ensure that you always smell fresh and clean is to create a hygiene pack to use at work. This pack should include the following items:

- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Mouthwash
- Sanitizing hand wipes or liquid to clean your hands between clients (when soap and water are not available)
- Dental floss
- Deodorant or antiperspirant and body wipes

Your hygiene pack will be useful in maintaining the following good personal hygiene habits:

- Wash your hands throughout the day as required, including at the beginning of each service.
- Perform self checks, and wash or freshen under the arms as needed.
- Brush and floss your teeth, and use mouthwash or breath mints throughout the day.
- If you smoke cigarettes, *do not* smoke during work hours. Many clients find the lingering smell of smoke offensive. If you smoke during your lunch break, brush your teeth, use mouthwash, and wash your hands afterward!



figure 3-2
Practice meticulous personal hygiene every day.

milady pro LEARN MORE!

Optional info on **Professionalism** can be found at miladypro.com
Keyword: *FutureCosPro*

After reading the next few sections, you will be able to:

LO² Explain the concept of dressing for success.

Follow Image Building Basics

CAUTION

Many salons have a no-fragrance policy for staff members because a significant number of people are sensitive or allergic to a variety of chemicals, including perfume oils. Whether or not your salon has a no-fragrance policy, perfume should not be worn at work.

Being well groomed advertises a beauty professional's commitment to the beauty industry. Consider yourself a walking billboard, and make sure to follow personal grooming habits and to practice professional behavior.

Personal Grooming

Many salon owners and managers view appearance and personality as being just as important as technical knowledge and skills. **Personal grooming** is the process of caring for parts of the body and maintaining an overall polished look. How a person dresses and takes care of his or her hair, skin, and nails reflects one's personal grooming habits.

Dress for Success

While working, your wardrobe selection should express a professional image that is consistent with the image of the salon (figure 3-3). Your **professional image** is the impression you project through both your outward appearance and your conduct in the workplace. Your clothes must be clean—not simply free of the dirt that you can see, but stain free, a feat that is sometimes difficult to achieve in a salon environment. Because you are constantly coming into contact with products and chemicals that can stain fabric, investing in an apron or smock is advised. Be mindful about spills and drips when using chemicals, and avoid leaning on counters in the work area—particularly in the dispensary. Some salons require employees to wear aprons at all times, while others have dress-code rules, such as black and white attire. These requirements are examples of a salon's culture and how stylists can dress for success.

When shopping for work clothes, visualize how you would look in them while performing services. Is the image you will present one that is acceptable to your clients? It is important to consider body type and shape when choosing what to wear to work. Select clothing that looks flattering and be sure to look in the mirror from various angles before leaving for work. Have you ever tried on an item of clothing and wondered if it is too short, too tight, too low cut, or too ugly? Just about everyone has. In these instances, play it safe and choose something more suitable to wear!

Dressing for success does not mean that you have to be someone that you are not. Everyone has a unique personality and it is okay to let your personality speak through clothing, shoes, and accessories. Just remember to tune in to the salon's culture.

While it is important to always follow the employer's dress code, here are some universal wardrobe guidelines:

- Wear clothing that is clean, fresh, and current with fashion.
- Choose clothing that is functional, comfortable, and stylish.
- Invest in supportive and properly fitting undergarments.

figure 3-3
Be guided by
your salon's
dress code.



- Accessorize your outfits, but make sure that your jewelry does not jingle while you work because this can irritate fellow professionals and clients.
- Wear shoes that are comfortable, have a low heel, and good arch support. Ill-fitting shoes or high heels are not the best choices to wear when a lot of standing is required (figure 3-4).

Hair Maintenance

Complement your professional wardrobe with an up-to-date hairstyle. It is important to keep your haircut and color fresh. To accomplish this, schedule time for a hair appointment, and possibly barter with other beauty industry professionals for hair care services. Even the pros deserve to be pampered. Remember, you are a walking billboard!

Skin Care and Makeup

Skin care and makeup are exciting for beauty professionals. Just like a smile, proper skin care and makeup application can help promote a professional image. Having and maintaining healthy skin is an ongoing process. Develop a skin care regimen that works best with your skin type. Use protective products on your skin such as sunscreens, and if skin problems occur seek professional advice. Makeup should be used to enhance facial features, so take your time and apply makeup prior to arriving to work or school (figure 3-5). Applying makeup at your station is unprofessional and advertises that you have poor time management skills.

Nail Care

Beauty industry professionals have the privilege of using their hands to make a living, but often neglect their own care. Manicures are a great way to relax hands and thoroughly clean nails. Determine a nail length that suits your personal style and maintain their appearance. Chipped nail polish or broken nails may happen occasionally but should not be a regular occurrence.

Professional Behavior

A positive attitude is one of the foundational principles in developing a professional image. Negative gossip and impolite demeanors can bring an ideal atmosphere to a halt. Always be considerate and treat everyone respectfully. Politeness is the hallmark of professionalism, even under pressure. Cooperating with colleagues is a great way to learn.

Another principle for developing a professional image is communication. A frequent form of communication that can easily be misunderstood is online communication. Establishing a professional online image is an essential image-building attribute. Social media websites, including photo-sharing sites, can quickly diminish a person's reputation if media etiquette is neglected.

DO

- Manage your personal pages/walls.
- Use social media to communicate with peers and clients.
- Post helpful content.

DON'T

- Use profane language.
- Participate in or entertain arguments online.



figure 3-4
Working in high heels can throw off the body's balance.

figure 3-5
Develop a proper skin care regimen to enhance your professional image.



- Post nude or embarrassing photographs.
- Forward spam.

Additional specific communication skills will be discussed in Chapter 4, *Communicating for Success*.

After reading the next few sections, you will be able to:

LO3 Practice ergonomically correct movement, postures, and principles.

CAUTION

Not only can wearing inappropriate shoes at work be uncomfortable, it could be dangerous. Flip-flops and open-toed shoes are not safe to wear around electrical tools and sharp implements.

Employ Proper Ergonomics to Protect Your Body

Your **physical presentation** involves your posture and the way you walk and move. Good posture conveys an image of confidence, and can prevent fatigue and many other physical problems. Sitting or standing improperly can put a great deal of stress on your neck, shoulders, back, and legs. Having good posture allows you to get through your day feeling good and doing your best work.

Posture

Some guidelines for achieving and maintaining good posture include the following:

- Keep your neck elongated and balanced directly above the shoulders.
- Lift your upper body so that your chest is out and up (do not slouch).
- Hold your shoulders level and relaxed, not scrunched.
- Sit with your back straight (**figure 3-6**).

Body Movement

Your muscles and bones work together as a musculoskeletal system, allowing you to walk, raise your arms, and use your fingers. **Ergonomics** (UR-go-nom-icks) is the science of designing the workplace as well as its equipment and tools to make specific body movements more comfortable, efficient, and safe.

For example, a hydraulic chair can be raised or lowered to accommodate stylists of different heights, allowing each stylist to service clients without bending over too far. Certain shears are designed to eliminate hand fatigue when cutting hair because repetitive movements are of particular concern.

Each year, hundreds of cosmetology professionals report musculoskeletal disorders, including carpal tunnel syndrome

figure 3-6
Good physical presentation



(a wrist injury) and back injuries. Beauty professionals may have to stand or sit all day and perform repetitive movements. This makes them susceptible to problems of the hands, wrists, shoulders, neck, back, feet, and legs.

Prevention is the key to avoiding problems. An awareness of your posture and movements, coupled with good work habits, proper tools, and equipment, will enhance your health and comfort (figure 3-7).

Ergonomics is important to your ability to work and your body's wellness. Repetitive motions have a cumulative effect on the muscles and joints. To avoid problems, monitor yourself as you work to see if you are falling into these bad habits:

- Gripping or squeezing implements too tightly
- Bending your wrist up or down repeatedly, or contorting your wrist when using the tools of your profession (figure 3-8)
- Holding your arms too far away from your body as you work
- Holding your elbows at more than a 60-degree angle away from your body for extended periods of time. Elbows should be close to the body when cutting.
- Bending forward and/or twisting your body to get closer to your client

To avoid ergonomic-related injuries, follow these guidelines:

- Keep your wrists in a straight or neutral position as much as possible. (figure 3-9).
- When giving a manicure, do not reach across the table; have the client extend his or her hand across the table to you. (figure 3-10).
- Use ergonomically designed implements.

figure 3-7
Proper position
in relation to the
client on a facial
bed



figure 3-8
Improper haircutting position



figure 3-9
Correct wrist and hand position for haircutting



figure 3-10

Follow proper ergonomic techniques when performing nail services.



- Keep your back and neck straight.
- Stand on an anti-fatigue mat.
- When standing to cut hair, position your legs hip-width apart, bend your knees slightly, and align your pelvic area with your abdomen.

Counter the negative impact of repetitive motions or long periods spent in one position by stretching and walking around at intervals. Always put your well-being first.



ACTIVITY

Practice these quick exercises, to help you relieve stress from repetitive movements or from standing or sitting in one position for too long:

For Wrists

1. Stand up straight.
2. Raise both of your arms straight out.
3. Bend your wrists so your fingers point upward and hold for five seconds.
4. Hold your wrists steady and turn your hands, so your fingers face the floor and hold for five seconds.
5. Repeat the cycle five times.

For Fingers

1. Get a ball the size of a tennis ball or a tension ball.
2. Grip it tightly for a count of five. Release.
3. Repeat five times.

For Shoulders

1. Stand up straight and shrug your shoulders upward.
2. Roll your shoulders back and hold for a count of five.
3. Reverse direction and roll your shoulders forward for a count of five.
4. Repeat five times.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 What are four good personal hygiene habits?
- 2 What is the best way to ensure you are dressed for success?
- 3 What are four ways you can avoid ergonomic-related injuries?

STUDY TOOLS

- **Reinforce what you just learned:** Complete the activities and exercises in your Theory or Practical Workbook, or your Study Guide.
- **Expand your knowledge:** Search for websites about the topics in this chapter and make a list of additional resources.
- **Study and prepare for your quiz:** Take the chapter test in your Exam Review or your Milady U: Online Licensing Prep.
- **Re-Test your knowledge:** Take the Chapter 3 Quizzes!
- **Learn even more:** Look up in a dictionary or search the internet for the definitions of any additional terms you want to learn about.

CHAPTER GLOSSARY

ergonomics UR-go-nom-icks	p. 42	The science of designing the workplace as well as its equipment and tools to make specific body movements more comfortable, efficient, and safe.
personal grooming	p. 40	The process of caring for parts of the body and maintaining an overall polished look.
personal hygiene	p. 39	Daily maintenance and cleanliness by practicing good healthful habits.
physical presentation	p. 42	Your posture, as well as the way you walk and move.
professional image	p. 40	The impression you project through both your outward appearance and your conduct in the workplace.