

ALPHORA

NAILS ACADEMY

The Ultimate Product & Tool List for Flawless Hard Gel Overlays

Curated by Irina Revunova — International Nail Judge & Founder of Alphora Nails Academy

Welcome! This guide contains the exact professional tools, equipment, and gel systems I use daily in my California salon to achieve long-lasting, lift-free results using our signature safe Russian manicure and gel engineering technique.

1. Hardware & E-File Bits

- **E-File Machine (The Engine of Your Work):**
 - 💡 **Important Note for Students:** You do *not* need to spend a fortune to start. In this course, I will be demonstrating all techniques using a budget-friendly **\$120 machine** to prove that your technique and skills matter much more than expensive gear!
 - **Option A: Budget-Friendly / Amazon Favorites (\$100 - \$120)**
 - *Why I recommend it:* Perfect for beginners and independent masters. It provides low vibration, quiet operation, and sufficient torque (30,000–35,000 RPM) to handle hard gel and clean Russian prep easily without stalling.



- [Shop on Amazon](#)
- **Option B: Premium Professional Portable Choice — Medicool Pro Power 35K Portable** (*Available on Erica's ATA website*)

- *Why I recommend it:* The absolute king of portable, cordless e-files. It delivers an impressive 35,000 RPM with extreme torque, zero vibration, and up to 10 hours of battery life. It is perfect for heavy-duty daily salon work, bulk gel removal, and precise prep without being tied to an outlet.



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- **Desktop Nail Dust Collector**

- *Why I use it:* High-power suction that captures 100% of fine dust during dry hardware removal and filing. It is essential for protecting the respiratory health of both the technician and the client, keeping the workspace completely clean.



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- **Removal Bit 1 (Shaper):** Carbide bit with a blue indicator ring.

- *Why I use it:* I use this for infills, corrections, and removing my own previous work. It is soft with an excellent balance—non-aggressive yet highly effective. It is perfect for both beginners and pros. Beginners, take note: it is very easy to handle, and the risk of over-filing the nail is minimal. Additionally, its shape allows you to easily clean the underside of the nail.



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- **Removal Bit 2 (Piranha - Aggressive):** Flame-shaped carbide bit with a red indicator ring (more aggressive cut).

- *Why I use it:* It has a highly successful flame shape that allows you to work comfortably in different zones. I use it for removing Gel-X extensions and

tackling a large volume of old material when clients come from other salons. Beginners should be cautious with this one and consider using Bit 1 to refine the results.



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- **Bit 3 (Uh-Oh Bit):** Slim carbide bit for under-nail cleaning and detailing.
 - *Why I use it:* Designed for drilling out the natural nail from underneath in hard-to-reach areas and quickly cleaning up any gel floods or run-offs.



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- **Manicure Bit — Soft Flame (Blue Grit):** Diamond flame bit with a blue indicator ring.
 - *Why I use it:* I use a medium (blue) grit blunt-tipped flame bit because it provides the perfect balance of efficiency and safety when opening the cuticle pocket and clearing pterium on normal to thick skin types. The rounded, blunt nose minimizes the risk of piercing the proximal fold, making it highly reliable for deep, clean prep.



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- **Polishing Bit — Barrel / Cylinder: Big E** (Fine / Soft grit).
 - *Why I use it:* I use this barrel bit specifically to smoothly polish the cuticle cut and the surrounding lateral walls. It removes microscopic skin tags, prevents future hangnails, and delivers that flawless, airbrushed Instagram look.



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2. Chemistry & Prep Liquids

- **Dehydrator / Nail Prep:** Pure Alcohol (Isopropanol/Ethanol)
 - *Why I use it:* I use pure alcohol because it contains absolutely no extra chemical additives, completely eliminating the risk of allergic reactions for clients.
- **Acid-Free Primer:** Not Required / Do Not Use
 - *My Philosophy:* I do not use an acid-free primer in this technique. The correct mechanical preparation and base layer absorbency are more than enough for a perfect bond.
- **Certified Asbestos-Free Cosmetic Talc (or Premium Cornstarch):** High-purity specialized nail powder.
 - *Why I use it:* A vital step for a dry Russian manicure, especially when dealing with moist skin. It instantly absorbs moisture, preventing the e-file bit from skipping or tearing the skin. To comply with strict US health regulations, I only use **100% Certified Asbestos-Free Cosmetic Grade Talc** (or an organic cornstarch alternative), completely eliminating the cancer risks associated with low-grade industrial talc.

3. Structural Layers & Gel Systems

- **UV/LED Nail Lamp (The Curing Essential):**
 - 💡 **Important Note for Students:** Proper polymerisation is everything when it comes to hard gel. If your lamp is weak, the gel won't cure properly underneath, leading to instant lifting or severe allergic reactions. But you don't need to overpay! I will show you how to get perfect results using both a budget favorite and a premium station.
 - **Option A: The Ultimate Workhorse / Amazon Bestseller — SUN2 UV/LED Lamp (\$40 - \$50)**
 - *Why I recommend it:* A legendary, time-tested lamp in the nail community. It features a removable metal bottom plate for maximum light reflection, a spacious interior, and a flawless dual light source

(365+405nm) that cures hard gel evenly and thoroughly. It is highly reliable and extremely budget-friendly.



- [Shop on Amazon](#)
- **Option B: Premium Professional Investment — Akzentz Hybrid Pro or Luminary UV/LED Lamps** (Available on Erica's ATA website)
 - *Why I recommend it:* These are the absolute industry standard for elite gel artists. Engineered specifically for complex gel systems, they provide deep, consistent polymerization of hard gels, feature smart low-heat modes to prevent painful heat spikes, and are built to last for years in high-volume salons.



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- **Elastic Base Coat: Base Stay Perfect (Gel Point)**
- *Why I use it:* Creates a flexible, protective cushioning layer over the natural nail that absorbs shock and protects the nail plate during future product removals.
- **Hard Gel / Builder Gel: Fast Gel 116 "Milky" Gel Point Builder Gel**
 - *Why I use it:* High-end engineering, excellent self-leveling properties, and extreme structural strength that holds its architecture perfectly for 4+ weeks.
- **Top Coat: Top Coat Crystal Shine** (Non-wipe, high gloss).
 - *Why I use it:* Provides long-lasting scratch resistance and a flawless, glassy reflection that protects the final look.
 - [Shop all here](#) | Use code: IRINAV10 for 10% OFF

4. Precision Hand Tools

- **Professional Metal Pusher (Orange-Stick Shaped):** Reusable stainless steel pusher with a slanted, flat-edge blade.
 - *Why I use it:* This pusher replicates the exact, precise bevel of a traditional wooden orange stick but is made of professional medical-grade steel. It allows for a completely non-invasive, gentle lifting of the cuticle pocket without scratching the natural nail plate, and it can be perfectly sterilized in an autoclave.



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- **Cuticle Scissors:** [Insert Brand & Model here]
 - *Why I use it:* Medical-grade steel and razor-sharp manual sharpening for a perfectly clean, non-invasive cut during the Russian manicure step.



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- **Nail Files: Diamond Nail File (Coarse)**
 - *Why I use it:* It is a reusable, eco-friendly tool. The diamond coating lasts incredibly long, and unlike bulky packs of disposable files, it takes up almost no storage space.
 - *Sterilization Note:* Perfectly withstands liquid chemical disinfectants and autoclave sterilization. ⚠️ **Important:** Do not process these files in dry heat sterilizers (dry heat ovens), as the plastic base will melt.
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5. Standard Salon Essentials & Course Practice Items

💡 **Quick Note:** I won't spend too much time on these items because, as a practicing nail technician, you likely already have 99% of this standard setup at your station (just like your UV/LED curing lamp). There is no need to buy anything premium or new here—just ensure you have them ready at your desk, along with a set of ring tips for our e-file exercises!

- **Ergonomic Handrest:** Designed to fit over your curing lamp to maximize desk space and client comfort.
- **Desk Lamp:** For clear, shadow-free work area illumination.
- **Replacement Filter Napkins:** For your nail dust collector.
- **Orange Wood Sticks & Dust Brushes:** Standard prep and clean-up tools.
- **Lint-Free Wipes:** Essential for clean, fiber-free prep and final wipe-downs.
- **Water Spray Bottle & Paper Towels:** Used at the very end of the service to wash away any remaining nail dust from the client's hands before applying lotion and cuticle oil (acts as a quick hand wash right at the desk).
- **Colored Gel Polishes:** Any of your favorite go-to shades for the final look.

- **Cuticle Oil & Hand Lotion:** For post-service skin hydration and flawless photos.
- **Buffers (Any Brand):** Standard buffer to smooth out the surface before top coat application.
- **Ring Display Tips:** ⚠ *Required for the course* — Please have these ready! We will use them specifically to practice the proper technique of safe material removal with the e-file bits before working on real hands.