

BRITTLE FINGER NAILS

Hard and Brittle Nails, Found Most Commonly in:

- Elderly individuals
- Climates with lower humidity
- Dehydration by nail polish remover, from applying and removing the polish more than 3 to 4 times a month
- Winter, when “forced air heat” often dries out skin as well as nails because of low moisture content of the air.

Suggestions for Patients with Hard and Brittle Nails

- Use of non-drying soaps such as Dove, Oil of Olay, Neutrogena, or Purpose
- A strict irritant avoidance regimen including wearing light, cotton gloves underneath vinyl gloves when doing wet work and heavy cotton gloves for dry work.
- Avoid frequent contact with:
 - hydrocarbons
 - raw foods
 - citrus products
 - detergents and other strong soaps
- frequent application and removal of nail polish with acetone and less harmful acetate polish remover
- formaldehyde-containing products which we feel may be sensitizing (less so in the toluene sulfonamide, Formalin resin)
- other contact irritants
- Keep nails shorter while the problem is active. If you tap a long nail distally, it may transmit a great force proximally; therefore, putting more stress on an already weakened nail plate.
- Biotin Forte 3 mg - once a day with meals for 4 to 6 months.

How to Add Moisture to Hard, Brittle Nails

- Begin with 10% glycolic acid preparation or 12% lactic acid preparation once in the morning and decrease to 5% lactic acid preparation if the problem resolves.
- Apply a heavier moisturizer at bedtime. At times, soak the nails in tap water for 5 minutes before applying the heavy emollient. The patient then wears light, white cotton gloves. Again, once the dryness improves, we may switch to a 5% lactic acid preparation at bedtime.
- Humidifier for the house and place of work.