

Nail photography tricks for pediatric and geriatric patients



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CHALLENGE

Nail photography is challenging because of unequal finger length and the different anatomic planes of the nail components/plates. In addition, nails do not have much of their own skin background. It is difficult to include all of the fingers and the thumb in a single frame. Different techniques have been suggested to overcome these problems, but they have their own limitations.^{1,2} The primary emphasis in nail photography is to have all nails in one plane and preferably in a small frame. The technique of Inamadar et al¹ seems to satisfy these needs, but it is difficult to keep all of the fingers in a flexed position. The technique gets more difficult for children because they are unable to keep a stable position for an adequate amount of time, and it is difficult for geriatric patients because of the greater prevalence of joint problems and tremor.

SOLUTION

We suggest the use of supporting material below the fingers in a flexed or semiflexed position—eg, using a soft ball (Fig 1, A) that can be cleaned with spirit after use, clay (Fig 1, B), or an empty tissue roll or its pipe (Fig 1, C and D). Clay can be covered with fresh plastic wrap at each use to avoid contamination. It has an added

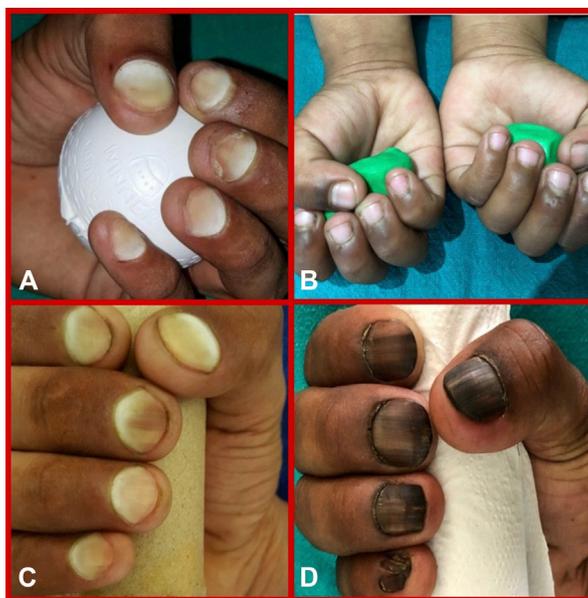


Fig 1. **A**, Use of a small ball as supporting material for nail photography. **B**, Use of clay as supporting material for nail photography. **C**, Use of an empty toilet tissue roll as supporting material for nail photography. **D**, Use of tissue roll as supporting material for nail photography.

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Funding sources: None.

Conflicts of interest: None disclosed.

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J Am Acad Dermatol 2019;80:e29-30.
0190-9622/\$36.00

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaad.2018.07.015>



Fig 2. **A**, Use of a bottle as a supporting material for nail photography. **B**, Placing the fingers on the patient's eyes provides good support.

advantage that it can be molded according to the size of the patient's hands, making it suitable for children. This material provides good support, keeps all nails in a single frame, and overcomes the problem of fine tremor and instability. Other options include placing the fingers of both hands side by side on a plastic bottle (Fig 2, A) or over the patient's eyes (Fig 2, B). The latter position has the disadvantage that the thumb is excluded in some of the frames.

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