



Louise McSharry

Beauty

Press-on nails are back — and they're a great swap for your manicure...

Long before I ever had a real manicure, I was obsessed with press-on nails. As a chronic nail-biter with small, child-like hands, press-ons were a gateway to the sophisticated fingers of my dreams. Once I discovered gel extensions, I relegated press-ons to my past, but over the last few years my curiosity has been piqued by developments in the market.

Once upon a time, there were few options when it came to length and design, but that's all changed now. These days, there's a press-on for everyone, no matter their personal style. Aside from that, innovation in product development means they wear better, too. Gone are the days of worrying about losing a nail while rummaging through your handbag. If well-applied and cared for, you'll get ages out of a new set of press-ons.

The first step of applying your temporary pals well is cleaning them well. Then, push back the cuticles before painting on a layer of clear nail varnish. This will protect your natural nails while wearing the press-ons, and minimise any damage that might be caused when you remove them.

Select a nail size for each finger carefully — if it's too big, it won't last and if it's too small, it will look messy as soon as there's any regrowth. Then, carefully apply your glue. Even if your selected press-ons come with adhesive strips, glue is the secret to really making them last. A small dot spread thinly across the nail should hold them in place. Too much will make them look messy, while too little won't hold them.

When it comes to removal, the temptation for me has always been to simply rip them off with my other hand. This is a terrible idea, though, and will result in damage to your nails. Instead, apply cuticle oil and see if this will break down the bond. If that doesn't work, soaking them in acetone will dissolve the glue.

So, now you know what to do with them, where can you find the press-on nails of your dreams? If you like bright colours and fun designs, look no further than (1) Paintlab's range of press-ons (€14.50, via beautybay.com). From smiley faces to rainbows, swirls and exciting takes on a French tip, there are some great styles available. Lottie London also have fabulous options (€10.99, via asos.com) in the cool-design stakes, with regular collaborations with top-level nail artists.



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If you're a natural/neutral girlie (that's a gender-neutral term, by the way), I recommend (2) Kiss Bare But Better Nails (€11.99, via boots.ie). These come in a range of lengths and nude shades to ensure there's a neat, naturally pigmented nail for a wide range of skin tones.

(3) SoSu by Suzanne Jackson (from €5.99 at sosutysj.com) are brilliant at hopping on nail trends to make them accessible to people who like press-ons; they have several 'glazed donut' options as well as ombre, diamante and many others.

If you're into colour but not length or design, (4) Elegant Touch (from €6, via boots.ie) have great picks in both classic colours like red and brighter shades like mint or coral.

In short, you don't have to fork out for a pricey manicure to get the nails you want!

@louisemcsharry

Something old...

I remember the first time I tried **MAC's Studio Fix Powder Plus Foundation** (€34, via boots.ie), it felt like magic. One swipe of the sponge across the compact was enough to make my skin look perfect. Redness: gone. Shine: gone. Instead, I was left with the smooth and polished skin of the women in the magazines. Now, I was literally 18, so my skin was basically perfect already, but I have returned to this product time and time again over the years and always found it to be excellent. It offers such impressive coverage without looking cakey and is perfect to have in your handbag on a night out, as it will quickly refresh your face if need be. It is matte, so be careful with placement if you want to retain some glow, or create some with highlighting products.



... Something new

Belfast brand **BPerfect Cosmetics** have become a significant name in the beauty industry right around the world. Their MRS Glam collaboration with makeup artist Michelle Regazzoli Stone includes lashes, tan and makeup, and the latest launch: **Glorious Skin Powder Foundation** (€24.99, via bperfectcosmetics.com). Available in eight shades and undertones, this product contains hyaluronic acid and vitamin E to keep the skin looking fresh and radiant, despite the powder formula. Coverage is buildable, and it can also be used over foundation to set your makeup.



Buying Irish

KiwiSalt Spray (€28.99, kiwicutz.com) is the brainchild of Ciarán 'Kiwi' O'Sullivan. The Cork-based barber and hairstylist wanted to create an Irish product that made use of Irish ingredients. Having discovered that many salt sprays don't actually include salt, he formulated this product with Achill Island salt, organically hand-harvested using a slow evaporation process. The result is a spray that effectively adds texture and holding power to the hair. While this is the first of O'Sullivan's products, he has plans to develop a full styling range.

