



Your Professional Image

BUILDING BLOCK FOR SUCCESS - reusable across all programs

Applies to: Cosmetology, Barbering, Esthetics, and Nail Technology

Suggested time: 2 hours (theory and demonstration)

How to use this plan: The lines under "Say" are scripted word for word so every class hears the same information - read them aloud. *Italic in brackets is what you do.* The jade "Teaching move" names the method; the "Students" line is their involvement.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define professional image and list its main parts.
- Apply grooming and dress-code standards for the salon floor.
- Demonstrate good posture and ergonomics to prevent injury.
- Explain how first impressions affect client trust.

Materials and Equipment

- SGS chapter slide deck, projector, and a full-length mirror
- Example of proper salon attire: smock or apron and closed-toe shoes
- A cutting stool and styling chair for the ergonomics demonstration
- Student workbook or chapter handout

Key Terms

professional image, personal hygiene, grooming, dress code, first impression, ergonomics, posture, repetitive motion, physical presentation.

Lesson Sequence

1. Opening Hook - 10 min

Teaching move: *Surprising fact that raises the stakes.*

SAY (read aloud):

Here is a fact that might surprise you: a client decides whether they trust you in about seven seconds - before you ever pick up a tool. Seven seconds. That snap decision is based on your professional image: how you look, how you carry yourself, and how clean your station is. Today we learn how to win those seven seconds every single time.

- **Students:** name one thing that makes them trust a professional on sight.

2. What Is Professional Image - 10 min

Teaching move: *Define the parts as one message.*

SAY (read aloud):

Professional image is the total impression you create: your personal hygiene and grooming, your clothing, your posture, your attitude, and even how clean and organized your station is. The client reads all of it as



one message - either 'I can trust this person with my body and my look,' or 'I am not so sure.' Every part counts.

- **Students:** list the parts of professional image they can name.

3. Grooming and Dress - 15 min

Teaching move: Make the standard concrete and visible.

SAY (read aloud):

Let's get specific. Personal hygiene comes first - clean body, fresh breath, clean nails, hair done. You are a walking advertisement for your own skills. For dress, you follow the salon's code, but the basics never change: clean, professional clothing, a smock or apron to protect it, and closed-toe shoes, because we drop sharp tools and spill chemicals. *[Hold up the smock and point to your closed-toe shoes.]* Simple rule: if you would not want your client to see it, do not wear it to work.

- **Students:** describe exactly what they will wear on a clinic day.

4. Demonstration - Posture and Ergonomics - 15 min

Teaching move: Tell-show-do; protect their career from injury.

SAY (read aloud):

Now something that will protect your whole career: ergonomics. That is the science of working without hurting your body. This job is hard on the back, neck, wrists, and feet, and the injuries build up over years from repetitive motion - doing the same movement again and again.

[Demonstrate at the chair.] Watch me. I keep my back straight, I bring the work up to me instead of hunching down over the client, I keep my wrists straight, and I raise or lower the chair so I am not reaching or stooping. Now you try - stand and position yourself the way I just showed you.

- **Students:** practice proper standing and working posture at a station while you observe and correct.

5. The Station Is Part of Your Image - 10 min

Teaching move: Extend image to the workspace.

SAY (read aloud):

Your image includes your space. A clean, organized, disinfected station tells the client you are safe and you care. A messy station tells them the opposite, no matter how talented you are. Set your station before the client arrives, and reset it between every client. The client notices.

- **Students:** describe what a client-ready station looks like.

6. Check and Mirror Activity - 10 min

Teaching move: Quick check, then self-assessment.

SAY (read aloud):

Quick check - name three parts of professional image. *[Pause.]* Why closed-toe shoes? *[Pause.]* Why does posture matter for your career? *[Pause.]* Now a mirror check: look at yourself and your station the way a client would in those seven seconds, and fix one thing right now.

- **Students:** do a self and station check in the mirror and fix one thing.

7. Recap and Closing - 10 min



Teaching move: Recap, then frame image as a daily choice.

SAY (read aloud):

Let's recap. Professional image is hygiene, dress, posture, attitude, and your station, all sending one message. Closed-toe shoes and a smock keep you safe. Good ergonomics keep you working for decades. And a clean station earns trust. Image is not vanity - it is a daily choice that protects your client's trust and your own body.

- **Students:** commit to one image habit they will bring to every clinic day.

Assessment

- Performance: posture and ergonomics check-off at the station.
- Observation: arrives dressed to code with a client-ready station.
- Written: short quiz on the parts of professional image and ergonomics.

Assignment

Read Your Professional Image and complete the workbook. Come to the next clinic fully dressed to code, and set a client-ready station before class begins.

Instructor Notes and Safety

Model the standard yourself - this lesson lands hardest when the instructor demonstrates it.

Watch for repetitive-strain habits early and correct posture all program long.