

לוקוטי ופסקי הלכות "חוקי חיים"

ותלמוד
"חוקי חיים"
לעשות רצונך
בלבב שלם

חוקי חיים

שע"י "חדר הוראה" שכונת מנחת יצחק פעה"ק ירושלם תובב"א - בראשות הרב חיים אהרן בלייער שליט"א

Halochos compiled by HaRav Chaim Bleier – Translated from the Hebrew edition by R' Zerachya Shicker

Please do not
read during
davening or
Krias HaTorah

Cutting One's Nails

Parshas Vayeira 5785

365

Cutting Nails on Erev Shabbos

Source

1. It is a mitzva to wash the head and cut the nails on Erev Shabbos (ש"ע א"ח סי' ר"ס). Some say the reason is to not enter Shabbos unkempt (ביאור הגר"א); others say it is a fulfillment of oneg and kevod Shabbos to beautify oneself in honor of Shabbos (ס' הבתים פ' ס' הקדוש והשבתה שער ט', י"א).
2. **Every erev Shabbos.** Some say it is a mitzva to cut the nails every erev Shabbos (ס' היראה, ט"ז סק"א בשם מהרש"ל), as implied by the Mechaber placing it together with washing the head, which is a mitzva every erev Shabbos (חוט שני שבת פ"ה). Others say the point is that when one wants to cut his nails, he should only do it on erev Shabbos or erev Yom Tov, having in mind the honor of Shabbos rather than his personal benefit (ס' המשכיל). Some say one should at least cut them every other erev Shabbos (י"ד).
3. **Erev Yom Tov.** Similarly, nails that need to be cut should be cut on erev Yom Tov (מטה אפרים סי' תרכ"ה י"ג). If one cuts them on erev Yom Tov, he may also cut them on erev Shabbos Chol HaMoed, but if he did not cut them on erev Yom Tov, he may not cut them on erev Shabbos Chol HaMoed (see below 39).

Thursday

4. The poskim say one should not cut his nails on Thursday (מ"ב סי' ר"ס). The poskim give different reasons for this, with practical differences between the reasons, as will be explained.
5. **Resembles melacha.** Some explain that since the nails begin to regrow on the third day from when they are cut, they will begin to regrow on Shabbos (ט"ז סק"א), which looks somewhat like melacha. Although it is obviously not a true issur, as one did not do any melacha on Shabbos—just as one may water plants before Shabbos even though they will grow on Shabbos—nevertheless it still looks somewhat like melacha (ש"ע שבת הלוי ח"ו סי' כ"א אות ב' בביאור דעת ה"ט"ז). However, most Acharonim do not give this reason for this halacha.
6. **Kevod Shabbos.** Some explain it is a lack of kevod Shabbos. Since the nails begin regrowing on the third day, they begin to become less neat on Shabbos, and are thus not in the best possible shape on Shabbos (א"ר שם). According to this, there is even more reason not to cut them on Wednesday, as they would be even less neat on Shabbos.
7. **Contrary to kevod Shabbos.** Some explain that it is because it is contrary to kevod Shabbos for the nails to begin growing that very day. However, if they start regrowing before Shabbos, it is not a problem. According to this, one can cut them on Wednesday since the main thing is not to have them start regrowing on Shabbos—but he will not have the advantage of cutting the nails in honor of Shabbos even though he is not entering Shabbos unkempt.
8. **Wednesday night, Thursday night.** For these halachos, Wednesday night has the status of Thursday, i.e., l'chatchila one should not cut his nails then. Similarly, Thursday night after tzeis hachochavim has the status of Friday; one may cut his nails then and it fulfills kevod Shabbos (קצוה"ש).

Wednesday

9. **Resembling melacha.** According to the first reason (above, 5) that it looks somewhat like melacha, that is only when one cuts them on Thursday, causing them to start regrowing on Shabbos. However, if one cuts them on Wednesday, they begin regrowing on Friday; on Shabbos they merely continue to grow. This would be mutar.

10. **Kevod Shabbos.** According to the reason of kevod Shabbos (6), that they begin to become less neat on Shabbos, it is certainly worse to cut one's nails on Wednesday, as mentioned. However, according to the reason that it is contrary to kevod Shabbos for them to begin regrowing on Shabbos (7), it is not a problem to cut them on Wednesday, as they do not begin regrowing on Shabbos, as mentioned.

Yom Tov on Sunday

11. Based on the reason of resembling melacha (5), it would seem that when Yom Tov falls on Sunday, one may not cut his nails on Friday either, as they will start regrowing on Yom Tov, unless we say that one may be more meikel on Yom Tov since it is just a grama. According to the reasons of kevod Shabbos, one may cut his nails on Friday since that is a fulfillment of kevod Shabbos. In practice, the poskim hold one may cut his nails on erev Shabbos in this case (מור"ר בשו"ת שבט הקהתי ח"א סי' קה).

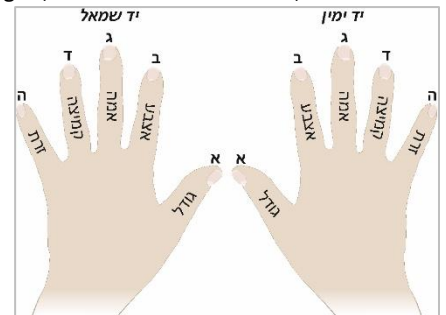
Order

Order of Hands, Fingers

12. **Left hand first.** When cutting nails, one should first cut the nails on his left hand, then his right (ש"ע ר"ס, ש"ע הרב). (כל בו, רמ"א סי' ר"ס).
13. **Order of fingers on the left hand.** One should not cut his fingernails consecutively in the order of his fingers, as some are concerned this is a sakana or can cause one to forget his learning (הרב). He should skip fingers in the order דבהג"א [each finger has a letter, א for the thumb through ה for the pinkie], i.e., he should start on the left hand with the ring finger [ד]; then the index finger [ב]; the pinkie [ה]; the middle finger [ג]; and the thumb [א].
14. **Right hand.** Next, he should cut the fingernails on the right hand in the order בדאג"ה, i.e., he should start with the index finger [ב]; then the ring finger [ד]; the thumb [א]; the middle finger [ג]; and the pinkie [ה] (רמ"א שם).
15. Although some say one does not need to be careful to skip fingers (ראשונים, הארי"ל), the consensus of the Acharonim is that one should l'chatchila be careful about this (מ"ב).
16. **Toenails.** Some say there is no need to skip when cutting toenails, and they may be cut consecutively (לחז"א פ"ט אות ב' קצוה"ש סי' ע"ג הע' ז, דינים והנהגות). However, from the words of other poskim, it seems that one should also be careful about this with toenails (משמעות הרמ"א בדרכי משה, סתימת מ"ב), especially because there is no reason given to differentiate between them.

Fingernails and Toenails on the Same Day

17. Some are careful not to cut the fingernails and toenails on the same day due to sakana (הובא במג"א סי' ר"ס ומ"ב). Here, too, there are some who are not careful about this (הארי"ל), but the prevalent minhag is to be careful unless it is for a mitzva purpose, e.g., to remove a chatzitza. Thus, it is proper to cut the toenails on Thursday and the fingernails on Friday (שם).



18. Although some are careful not to cut fingernails on Thursday (above, 4), there is no problem with cutting toenails on Thursday, as they are not so visible, so it is not noticeable that they are growing on Shabbos (מחצית השקל). If one forgot to cut his toenails on Thursday, he should cut them on Friday with his fingernails (מטה אפרים סי' תרכ"ה סי' ט), but it is best not to do both in the same sitting; there should be some break in between.
19. **Night, then day.** For this matter, the night is considered part of the following day, just like for all things in the Torah except karbonos. Thus, if one cut his fingernails on Tuesday afternoon, he may cut his toenails on Tuesday evening after tzeis hakochavim because that is considered a different day (א"א בוטשאטש סי' ר"ס).
20. Some say that even if one cut his fingernails at night, he may cut his toenails the following day, as it is considered a different day regarding this (מ"ל דחסידיה על צוואת ר' יהודה החסיד סי' נ"ז).

What to Do with Nails After Cutting Them

Remove Them from the World

21. The Gemara says (נדה דף י"ז ע"א, מ"ק דף י"ח ע"א) that if a pregnant woman walks over nails that a person cut and dropped on the floor, she is in danger of miscarriage, ח"ו, either out of disgust (נמוקי"י מ"ק שם), or due to kishuf (שם), or due to the cheat of Adam and Chava (ש"ל"ה שבת, פמ"ג). Thus, nails should be removed from the world in such a way that it is impossible for a woman to walk over them, as will be explained. [It should be noted that while this matter is not mentioned by the Rambam, Tur, or Shulchan Aruch, several Acharonim do cite it (מ"ב ועוד) ר"ס, מ"ב ועוד].
22. **Burning them.** One who burns his nails is called a chassid (גמ' שם), as there is no possibility of them becoming uncovered (רש"י ותוס' (שם). He is called a chassid because although a person can be harmed by burning his nails, he does so to completely destroy them from the world (תוס' בשם הערוך); also because the smell is repulsive (תוס' הרא"ש).
23. **Burying them.** One who buries his nails is called a tzaddik (גמ' שם), as in practice, he is removing them from the world.
24. **Throwing them.** However, if one ח"ו throws his nails into a public area or in a place where a pregnant woman might walk over them, he is called a rasha, as he causes a woman to miscarry, ח"ו.
25. **In the toilet.** Nowadays, many people throw their nails in the toilet, as from there it is impossible for a woman to walk over them. Some equate this to burning them (ש"ת בצל החכמה ח"ב סי' ל"ה), at least according to the reason that it prevents them from becoming uncovered (טעם רש"י, שמירת הגוף והנפש ח"א עמ' רכ"ד). Others equate it to burying them (ע"פ טעם הערוך ותוס' הרא"ש לעיל).
26. **Nail dust.** The Acharonim hold there is no sakana caused by filing nails with a nail file, as nothing is left of the nails; the dust is not called "nails" (הגר"ח קנייבסקי, הובא בספר מאיר עוז על מ"ב סי' ר"ס).

Only Where They Fall

27. The Gemara and poskim are clear that nails can only cause damage in the spot where they fell. If the area where they fell was swept and they were moved to a different place, there is no concern (מ"ב שם). However, the poskim argue whether it is enough to move them to another spot within one room—the position most poskim take (פרישה) (סי' רמ"א, ברכי יוסף (א"ר הובא במ"ב)).
28. **Sweeping the area.** Thus, if nails fall and one cannot see them on the floor, he can sweep that area of the floor. This way, he most likely moved the nails from the spot they fell, removing the sakana. If he wants to be even safer, he can sweep the whole room and move the dirt to another room so that the nails were also most likely moved to a different room. If nails fell on a carpet, one should use a vacuum cleaner.

Place Not Frequented by Women

29. The whole issue is that a woman might walk over the nails. However, in a place where women do not normally walk, one does not need to be careful about this. Thus, in a beis medrash or mikva designated for men, there is no need to be careful about this. However, in a place where women do go, e.g., a shul's ezras nashim or the like, one should be careful about this (מ"ב סק"ו).

Nail Salon

30. It is common today for women to go to nail salons for all sorts of cosmetic treatments, e.g., manicures, pedicures, and the like. It is common for there to be many nail clippings on the floor, presenting a possible sakana for a pregnant woman to enter. Thus, a pregnant woman should not go into a nail salon without asking the employees to sweep the entire area where she needs to walk before she enters.

31. **Pregnant employee.** Similarly, pregnant employees in a nail salon must be very careful not to step on nails. It is advisable to ask a shaila whether it is worthwhile to work there at all during a pregnancy.

Netilas Yodayim

Ruach Ra

32. After one cuts his nails, whether with a tool or by hand (צות השלחן), he should wash his hands due to ruach ra (שו"ע או"ח סי' ד' ס"ה). Netilas yodayim is also required after cutting toenails (ליקוטי (סי' ב' ס"ה), but there is no need to pour water over the feet (מהר"ח ודלא כא"א בוטשאטש). If one does not wash his hands and he is a talmid chacham, he will forget his learning; if he is not a talmid chacham, he will lose his mind (שו"ע שם) and feel fear that day without knowing what he is afraid of (שו"ע שם ס"ט).
33. **Cutting someone else's nails.** If one cuts someone else's nails, the one cutting does not need to wash his hands, as no ruach ra descends on him, but the one whose nails were cut needs to wash his hands (אשל אברהם מהדו"ת סי' ד' ס"ה, כף החיים). One should remember this after a manicure or pedicure.
34. **Nail filing.** One should wash his hands even after just filing the nails, as the dust left on the hands is considered dirty and ruach ra descends.

One Netila

35. Strictly speaking, one does not need to wash his hands three times from a cup; any water works, even without a cup. The main thing is to wash each hand entirely, or at least until including the top knuckles. Merely washing the fingertips is not enough. However, some go further and wash the hands from a cup three times, alternating between the hands.

Throughout the Year

36. We mentioned the mitzva to cut one's nails every erev Shabbos and Yom Tov. Some say it is preferable to do so before chatzos; others say it is preferable after chatzos.
37. **Erev Pesach.** One should be careful on erev Pesach to cut the nails before chatzos. However, if one forgot, he may be meikel after chatzos and even cut his own nails or have someone else cut them free of charge (מ"ב סי' תס"ח סק"ה).

Chol HaMoed

38. The Mechaber holds one may cut his nails on Chol HaMoed (שו"ע (סי' תקל"ב ס"א). However, the Rama argues and holds one should be machmir not to cut them on Chol HaMoed so that he will cut them on erev Yom Tov and not enter Yom Tov unkempt. If one would be allowed to cut them on Chol HaMoed, people would be lazy and rely on cutting them on Chol HaMoed, similar to the halacha of haircuts and shaving (מ"ב שם סק"ב).
39. **Erev Shabbos Chol HaMoed.** Thus, if one indeed cut his nails on erev Yom Tov, he may cut them again on erev Shabbos Chol HaMoed, as he did not enter Yom Tov unkempt (מ"ב שם). Some hold that if one cuts his nails every erev Shabbos, he may also cut them on erev Shabbos Chol HaMoed even if he did not cut them erev Yom Tov (שו"ת נחלת שבעה הובא בבאר היטב שם).

Rosh Chodesh

40. In some places, people do not cut hair or nails on Rosh Chodesh (צוואת ר' יהודה החסיד סי' מ"ה, מ"ב סי' ר"ס סק"ז). L'chatchila one should be careful about this.
41. **Rosh Chodesh on erev Shabbos.** Some poskim write that one should not get a haircut on Rosh Chodesh even when it falls on erev Shabbos (מג"א סי' ר"ס). The poskim discuss whether one should also be careful about Tzavaas R' Yehuda HaChassid and not cut his nails or whether there is room to be meikel.
42. Some hold that one who cuts his nails every erev Shabbos may cut his nails even when erev Shabbos is Rosh Chodesh. This is unlike haircuts, as it is not common to get a haircut every week (משמעות המג"א הנ"ל, שבעים תמרים סי' נ"ו, שו"ת אלף המגן סי' י"ב, שו"ת מהר"ם מבריסק (ח"ב סי' צ"ט, שו"ת משיב הלכה ח"ב סי' ד', שו"ת רבבות אפרים ח"ד סי' צ"ז).
43. However, others hold one should not cut his nails on Rosh Chodesh even when it is erev Shabbos (ע"ב ס"ד) unless they are long and extend past the flesh, in which case they are meikel and allow cutting them even on Rosh Chodesh that falls on erev Shabbos (כף החיים אות י"ב).
44. **Women.** Some say that there is no problem for women to get haircuts or cut their nails on Rosh Chodesh even not for a mitzva purpose (יד אפרים סי' נ"ו); when necessary, one may rely on this.
45. **1st day of Rosh Chodesh.** Some are meikel to allow cutting fingernails on the first day of Rosh Chodesh, as the problem is only on the second day of Rosh Chodesh or on a one-day Rosh Chodesh (יד אפרים בקי"א לצוואת ריה"ח אות נ"ז בשם הדרכי תשובה).
46. **Rosh Chodesh night.** Some allow cutting the nails on Rosh Chodesh night, as the problem is only on Rosh Chodesh day (אשל אברהם מהדו"ת סי' ת"ז); also on the second night of Rosh Chodesh (מ"ל דחסידיה סי' נ"ז).