



# Dog Grooming

*Helping you and your dog feel and look their best.*

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## **GROOMING FOR DOGS**

**I have heard that some dogs like Poodles and Bichon Frises do not shed. Is this true?**

While some dog breeds shed more heavily than others, all dogs, with the exception of hairless breeds, shed. Often people obtain Labrador Retrievers, believing that since their coats are short they will not shed very much. The fact is that Labs often shed quite a lot and have a tendency to do so year round. The northern breeds such as Huskies and Malamutes, while they shed year round, have a major coat blow in the Spring which usually lasts a couple of weeks to a month. Poodles and similar coated dogs do not tend to shed as much as the other breeds because they do not have a double coat. Poodle shedding is often deceptive; when they shed their hair it does not end up on the floor. Instead it remains in their coats and contributes to the creation of mats if not properly brushed.

**What does having a double coat mean?**

Dogs have two types of hair: guard hair and undercoat. Dogs with heavy undercoats to keep them warm have a tendency to shed more than dogs that have minimal amounts of undercoat. For the most part knowing what a dog is bred to do assists with knowing how much undercoat they will have. For example, Newfoundlands, which were bred for ocean rescues, have significant amounts of undercoat, where as Papillons, which were bred as lap dogs for aristocracy, have no undercoat at all. An exception to this is the Standard Poodle, which was actually bred for water retrieval, yet it does not have close to the amount of undercoat that is found in a Labrador or Golden Retriever.

**As animals age, do they need more frequent grooming?**

We do find that as our pets age they no longer shed as efficiently and do need to be brushed more often. Additionally, because they often get less exercise they will need their nails trimmed more frequently. Another thing that we have observed is that animals that are overweight also do not seem to shed properly.

## **How do I know which brush is best for my pet?**

There are many types of brushes and combs out there and having the right tool can certainly make your job significantly easier. We recommend that you visit your groomer and ask to be shown which tools you will need and how to properly use them. As a general rule, shedding blades are best for dogs with double coats and short-coated dogs such as Labs, Goldens & Beagles. They can also be very useful for breeds with coats similar to Bernese Mountain Dogs, Huskies and Malamutes, however you will need more than just a shedding blade for these guys. For Maltese, Lhasa Apsos and similar coats a comb and slicker brush is best. Undercoat rakes and slickers are helpful for Newfoundlands and Rough Collies and the like. Dogs such as Doberman Pinschers should only have rubber brushes as their skin scratches very easily. Picking the right tools also varies within breeds. For example, some Golden Retrievers have very little coat, whereas others have a coat type more akin to a Husky.

## **My dog smells, is it okay for me to bath him once a week?**

If you are concerned that your dog smells, it is necessary to first rule out any health issues since the coat and skin are often a good indicator of other underlying issues. After that has been ruled out and you want to bathe your dog that regularly, you must be sure that you are using a hypoallergenic shampoo or simply rinse them with water. Dogs have a different pH level than humans, so it is imperative that only shampoo formulated for dogs is used.

One word of caution: Do not bathe your dog until it is thoroughly brushed out, unless your dog is short coated like a Labrador Retriever or German Shepherd. Bathing dogs without brushing first makes it much more difficult to remove any mats and soap may get in behind the mat and create an irritation if it is not completely rinsed out.

## **Should I clean my dog's ears weekly?**

We default to your veterinarian's advice on ear cleaning for your particular pet, however most dogs do not need to have their ears cleaned on a regular basis. You should nevertheless make it a point to examine your dog's ears every few days. If you want to wipe the inside flap weekly, that should pose no problem, however when we flush out their ears on a regular basis we are upsetting the natural balance of the bacteria, both good and bad, in the ear. If there is any indication that your pet may have an ear infection such as a strong odor, tenderness, redness or the ear is hot to the touch do not attempt to clean it and seek veterinary attention.

## **How do I know when my dog's nails should be trimmed?**

When your dog is standing, their nails should not be in contact with the floor. If they are, the nails have grown too long. It really becomes a problem if your dog's nails are curling as this affects their ability to walk appropriately. How often your dog's nails will need to be trimmed will vary on an individual basis, however a general guideline is every two weeks. As with ears, simply examine the nails every few days. If you are uncomfortable cutting your dog's nails you can swing in for a nail trim at any time.

### **When I tried to cut my dog's nails I made her bleed, what happened?**

If you cut too deep into your dog's nail you will hit a vein, more commonly known as the quick. If you hit the quick you can use styptic powder or cornstarch to aid in clotting. Quicks can bleed excessively, but it is rarely a serious matter. If you are concerned that you cannot stop the bleeding or fear infection you may wish to contact your veterinarian. The quicks grow with the nails, so if your dog's nails are long, it is quite probable that the vein is long too. The good thing is that as you cut nails regularly, the quicks will recede over time so even a dog with very long nails, if you are diligent, can have nice short nails some day.

### **Help my dog got sprayed by a skunk!**

If your dog has had a skunk encounter do not use tomato juice! The best product to lessen the stench is the following homemade recipe:

- u ½ cup good degreasing dish detergent (such as Dawn)
- u ½ cup baking soda
- u 1 quart 3% hydrogen peroxide

Mix the above ingredients in an open container and shampoo onto dog. Let set for 10 minutes and rinse thoroughly. When washing around the eyes, omit the hydrogen peroxide. Follow with a regular dog shampoo. This recipe will help to lessen the odor, but only time will take it away completely.

### **How often should my dog be professionally groomed?**

The frequency of grooming varies depending upon the breed of the dog, the amount of time spent at home in grooming activities and the lifestyle of the dog. Typically we recommend that Poodles and Bichon Frises are groomed every four to six weeks; Terriers, Spaniels, Shih Tzus, Lhasa Apsos and Maltese are groomed every six to eight weeks, and dogs such as Labs, Golden Retrievers, Newfoundlands, and Shepherds are groomed every eight to sixteen weeks.

The more time you put into your dog's care at home can certainly lessen the need for professional grooming. This is where it becomes a choice of faithfully maintaining your dog at home or having a professional grooming on a more regular basis. For example, if you are the guardian of a poodle and do not brush your pet at all at home, we would recommend your dog be groomed at least every three to four weeks to prevent matting. On the other hand, if you regularly and properly brush your dog that length of time could be extended to six or eight weeks. The same is true for Labrador Retrievers. A lab that is brushed at least three times a week may only need to be professionally groomed a few times a year as brushing alone will remove dirt and dead hair, thus keeping the coat shiny and healthy.

Additionally, the lifestyle of the dog and guardian also play a role in the need for grooming. A dog that has a tendency to roll in the feces of other animals or swim in murky ponds will need grooming more often. Dogs that live on dirt roads have a tendency to become dustier more easily and dogs that live with smokers often have a film of debris on their coats.

### **What is involved with a professional grooming?**

While grooming varies from animal to animal, it typically involves a bath, any scissoring or clipping of hair, a nail trim, and ear plucking and cleaning if necessary.

### **Is there anything special that needs to be done for any breeds in particular?**

Certain breeds such as Poodles, Cocker Spaniels, Schnauzers and Bichon Frises do need to be clipped or scissored on a regular basis. Additionally, certain breeds need to have the hair plucked from their ears in an effort to prevent ear infections. For those dogs that require the hair be removed from their ears, it is really best for their guardians to perform this on a weekly basis or anytime they notice a hair or two in their pet's ears. As you can imagine, having a large amount of hair removed can be painful to the pet. There is an ear drying powder available to assist with this process.

### **What is hand stripping?**

Hand stripping is a grooming technique that is used typically on terriers. It involves the use of a special tool that helps to train the body to grow in a coarser coat. It can also be performed solely through the use of fingers, yet this is a bit more difficult. Many people prefer this to having their terriers clipped as it gives a more natural, "rough" look. Hand stripping is required for showing several of the terrier breeds. Hand stripping cannot be performed on some of the more soft coated terriers such as the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier.

### **My dog's behavior is terrible, how will you handle her?**

It always helps to remember that we work with hundreds of different dogs a year and that as professional groomers we expect dogs to be dogs and puppies to be puppies. Grooming is a learning process that requires patience. The truth is though we usually find that most dogs are actually easy and willing partners in the grooming process; quite possibly because they are out of their natural environment and standing on a table. It is rare that we get a dog in that we would consider a "difficult" groomer. If a dog is going to have a problem it is often about having either their face or nails clipped. It helps to be experienced so that you can move quickly and can get the job done and over with. One thing that guardians can do at home is to handle their dog's face and feet in a positive manner. This mean no squeezing muzzles to teach a dog not to bite!

### **What are some things I can do at home to make grooming easier?**

Probably the most important thing that a guardian can do is to handle their dog all over their body in a positive manner, and bring them to their groomer frequently as young puppies. If the dog is comfortable with being handled and being in the grooming environment, grooming is much easier. This way it is just part of the routine and they will be less apt to be fearful and more readily accepting of a relative stranger handling them. We love to see puppies come in, even for just a quick brush or bath. This way they can be eased into the grooming experience and it can remain positive. It is often very difficult for a one year old dog that is matted to have a first grooming as there is no way to make this a positive experience.

### **How long will it take to groom my dog?**

The length of time that it takes to groom a dog varies from dog to dog. It really depends upon the breed of dog, the condition of the dog and the behavior of the dog. We typically have people drop their dog off in the early morning and they are usually ready to go home in the early afternoon.

### **What if my dog has fleas?**

If while being groomed we determine that your pet has fleas we will give him a flea bath. We do not use or encourage the use of flea dips because there are many safer alternatives available. For more information on fleas, please refer to our website on this topic.