



Grooming: Brushing and Bathing Basics

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Different dog breeds have specific grooming needs. Brushing and bathing can be great ways for you to bond with your dog as well as having a clean healthy pet that people want to be around. Use the following tips to make the process enjoyable for you and your dog. Consult your veterinarian or groomer for additional help.

Brushing: Because many dogs stay indoors all year round they do not have a normal shedding cycle. Instead of shedding once or twice a year, like their ancestors, they lose small amounts of fur all the time. Brushing is a good way to keep your dog clean and free of matting.

Tips:

- Use a brush or comb specially designed for your dog's coat. Check with your veterinarian or groomer to see what is appropriate. Do not use a brush with hard wire bristles on the dog's skin. If it hurts when you press it to your arm, it will hurt them.
- Right when you get your puppy, get them used to being brushed. Start by showing them the brush and giving them a piece of food. Gradually build up to giving them a treat as you actually brush the dog. They make very small soft brushes designed for puppies.
- Brush with the direction of hair growth. Hair grows in different directions on different parts of the body. Be careful on the underside of the dog and any place with sparse growth.
- If the dog is matted, carefully trim the areas before beginning to brush. Watch for mats under the dog's ears and where the forepaws meet the body.
- Use a Kong or stuffed toy to occupy your dog during grooming sessions. They will look forward to their brushing.

Bathing: Dogs, unlike people, do not need to bathe daily or even weekly to have a healthy coat. Their skin produces much less oil than ours. Over bathing can lead to excessive dander and a very uncomfortable dog. Depending on the breed of dog they may only need to be bathed every quarter or whenever they are really dirty.

Tips:

- Get puppies used to baths early on by using a damp washcloth to clean their bodies. Use food to distract them while using the cloth to keep them from chewing.
- Use a shampoo that is specially designed for dogs. Do not use human shampoo or dish soap. It is too harsh for their skin. Ask your vet or groomer what they recommend.
- Use warm water when bathing. Do not wash the dog outside on a cold or even cool day. They can become hypothermic.
- Brush out any excess hair before getting them wet. This will also remove excess dirt.
- Give them a Kong or waterproof toy to play with in the bathtub. Try smearing a small amount of natural peanut butter against the side of shower just at head level. The dog will be too busy licking the peanut butter to jump out of the tub.
- Avoid getting water or soap in the dog's eyes and ears.
- Thoroughly rinse out soap and conditioner. Even the gentlest soap can irritate the skin. Be especially cautious around the dog's belly and tail.
- Towel dry your dog or use a blow dryer on the cool setting after the bath.
- Between baths use a waterless odor and dander remover specially designed for dogs.