

PetPeople Pet Care Center

Grooming Tips



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Good. Healthy. Fun.

Grooming Tips



Grooming is an important part of your pet's health, and regular brushing and combing help remove dead hair, dirt, and prevent matting. Dogs and cats who are regularly groomed tend to have a healthier and shinier coat because it stimulates the blood supply to the skin.

Grooming your pet can also be a good way to bond and get your hands on them weekly to check for any sign of any bumps, cuts, or other health problems.

Many individual breeds have special grooming needs, so for a more complicated cut or specialized needs you may want to consult a professional groomer. For basic brushing and bathing, or the pet who's grooming is a little less involved, owners should practice the tips below for a stress free grooming experience and a happy and healthy pet.



For Life. For Health. For Love. For Pets.



MAKE GROOMING AS ENJOYABLE AS POSSIBLE - FOR YOU AND YOUR PET!

Grooming sessions should always be fun, or else you and your pet may come to dread them! Make sure to start grooming when your dog is relaxed and happy, especially if your pet is the excitable type. Until your pet is used to being handled, keep sessions short - 5 to 10 minutes at a time. Once your pet is used to it, you can gradually lengthen the sessions until it becomes routine for your pet. If your pet is unsure about being handled, start with short sessions that don't involve brushing or bathing just yet - start your sessions by gently petting every part, including potentially sensitive areas such as ears, belly, feet, and tail.

To make it fun, pile on the praise and give lots of treats to make grooming sessions a positive experience!

The Basics - Brushing & Bathing

Before you bathe, don't forget to brush! A good brushing before a bath removes the loose hair and significantly improves the effectiveness of the shampoo in cleaning all the way down to the skin. It also cuts down significantly on the amount of hair that comes out during bathing, making less of a mess!



BRUSHING

Regular grooming with a brush or comb will help keep your pet's fur in good condition. Brushing helps remove dirt and dead hair, spreads natural oils throughout the coat, prevents tangles and mats, and helps keep skin clean and irritant free. Brushing is also a great time to check for fleas - little black specks that look like dirt, especially near the base of the tail, are a sure sign that fleas have taken up residence on your pet!

There are some basics that apply to every pet - be systematic about brushing. Start at the head and work towards the tail. Use firm



but gentle strokes - pulling or ripping through mats or tangles hurts your pet and may make them adverse to grooming or handling. Use long strokes for pets with long hair, and shorter strokes for pets with short hair. After brushing, you can use a comb to remove more loose hair. If you have a very tolerant pet, you can even try using a hand held vacuum to lessen the mess! Different coats sometimes require different brushes - although each dog may be different, here are some suggestions based on several basic coat types.

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Smooth, Short Coat

(like a Chihuahua or Boxer)

- Brush at least once a week
- Use a soft rubber brush to loosen dead skin and dirt
- Then use a bristle brush to remove dead hair
- Finish with a soft cloth for a polished shine



Short, dense Coat that can mat

(like a Lab or German Shepherd)

- Use a comb to remove tangles
- Get rid of dead hair with a bristle or slicker brush
- A comb is great for 'feathered' areas, like behind the ears or tail
- For extra hair removal and decreased shedding, don't forget a Furminator!



Long, fine Coat

(like a Collie, Golden Retriever, Setters)

Brush daily to remove tangles with a pin brush

- If needed, spray a detangler or grooming spray to condition the hair and make combing easier
- Gently work out mats with a wide tooth comb
- Next, brush all over with a pin brush
- For extra hair removal and decreased shedding, don't forget a Furminator!



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- If you keep your pet's hair long, make sure you trim the hair around the feet and eyes

Non-Shedding Breeds

(like a Yorkie, Poodle, or Bichon)

- Brush daily with a pin brush
- Gently work out tangles and mats with a wide tooth comb
- Detanglers and grooming sprays can be helpful in removing stubborn tangles and mats
- There is no need for de-shedding tools for breeds that have a 'hair' coat, instead of fur, because they don't really shed. In fact, using a de-shedding tool can damage their coat.

- Keep high-quality blunt tip scissors or clippers to maintain your pet's coat between professional groomings



Cats

Brushing your cat is just as important as brushing your dog - if not more so! Because cats are self-groomers, brushing helps remove dead hair, which means less hair in their systems and fewer hairballs. Many felines like the feel of the brush stroking their fur and will welcome a long brushing session. Some may lie down and roll over to be brushed, however, others hate having their legs,



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feet, or stomachs brushed and may resist or swat at the brush. If this happens, give your cat a minute to settle down, then try again.



Before you begin brushing your cat, examine the coat for any tangles, knots, or matted fur. These are especially common in long-haired breeds - check carefully behind ears, around neck, between toes, around their legs, and under their tail. Do not pull through these tangled areas with a brush, as this may hurt your cat and make them less accepting of grooming in the future. If your cat is severely matted, you may require the help of a veterinarian or professional groomer to safely remove the tangled hair.

BATHING

Many experts recommend bathing your dog no more than every 2-3 months; your pet may require more frequent baths in the summertime or if they spend a lot of time with you outdoors. If you use the correct shampoo, you may opt to bathe more frequently and not worry about damaging the coat.



The first step is to decide where to bathe - kitchen sinks or laundry utility tubs work well for small pets, while bathtubs or portable tubs are best

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for larger pets. Outside hoses, while convenient, aren't the best alternatives as the water is so cold. Water should be lukewarm for shampoo to suds properly and for your dog's comfort.



There are many shampoos to choose from, depending on your pet's coat type and skin condition. There are tearless puppy shampoos, moisturizing oatmeal shampoos, soothing tea tree oil shampoos, and medicated anti-itch shampoos. It is important NOT to use human shampoo - it contains harsher detergents, and is not pH balanced for pets. They could damage hair or sensitive skin. To help moisturize a dry coat and to decrease shedding, consider using a conditioner. This can be especially important to help prevent tangles in longer haired breeds.



Before you bathe, consider gently placing a cotton ball in the ear to prevent water from entering the ear canal. Don't forget to take the cotton balls out when you're done!

- First, give your pet a good brushing to remove excess dead hair and mats

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- Place a rubber bath mat in tub or sink to provide secure footing
- Use a spray hose to thoroughly wet your pet, taking care to avoid ears, eyes, and nose.
- Although the direct stream from a hose works best to get down to a dog's skin, if your sink or tub does not have one a large plastic pitcher will work too
- Gently massage in shampoo, working from head to tail
- If the shampoo is medicated, let sit for allotted time to come in contact with skin
- Thoroughly rinse with spray hose or pitcher, again avoiding eyes, ears, and nose
- Repeat as needed if pet is excessively dirty
- For a soft, manageable, shiny coat, repeat with conditioning rinse

DRYING

- Squeeze excess water from coat
- Use a large, absorbent towel to rub hair both with and against the grain, working from head to tail
- Long haired pets should be combed out again to prevent tangles while drying
- Keep pet warm and away from drafts while the hair dries, and do not let your pet outside until completely dry. A damp coat is a magnet for dirt!
- For a full, fluffy appearance, or for especially





thick-coated dogs, you can blow dry the pet with a PET SAFE HAIR DRYER. It is important to **NOT** use a human hair dryer, as the heat can be dangerous or burn sensitive skin. Since pets can't sweat the way we do, heated dryers can cause them to overheat, even causing heat exhaustion or death.



THE EXTRAS

Bathing and brushing aren't the only important steps to properly groom your pet. For most of us, these are easily done at home. However, there are other things that need to be done, whether you choose to do it yourself or have a professional do it for you.

Nail Trimming

Trimming your pet's nails is not just a part of grooming, but important for your their health as well. Untrimmed nails can cause a variety of problems - because nails grow continuously, they can actually curl under and grow back into the dog's or cat's pad. Overly long nails can also break off, which can be painful and bleed heavily. A good indication a pet's nails are too long is a telltale clicking sound as the dog walks on a hard surface.

Like many pet owners, you may be hesitant to trim your dog's nails because you are afraid of cutting the 'quick' of the nail, which may cause

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pain and bleeding. Once you learn how to do it, clipping your pet's nails can be easy and stress free. Trimming your pet's nails is just like trimming your own - you are only cutting off the excess portion. Learning to recognize what is excess and where the 'quick' begins is what you need to know to make nail trimming a stress free experience for both you and your pet.

Preparation

Most people don't really handle their pet's feet until they are about to clip the nails - some animals get very upset at this strange feeling! That's why



it's a good idea to get your dog used to having their feet handled before you attempt a nail trim. Rub your hands up and down their leg, and gently press on each toe - you can even gently hold each nail between your fingers to simulate the pressure from the nail clippers. Remember - take it slow. If your pet objects, take a step back until your pet is comfortable again. Be sure to give lots of praise and even some food treats as you desensitize them to their feet being handled. All dogs are different, but after a week or two of daily foot massage, most pets are better able to tolerate a nail trim. Once your pet is accustomed to being handled, you are ready to start!

- 🐾 First be sure your pet's hair is trimmed between the toes - you don't want to pull on sensitive



fur while trimming the nails!

- Use sharp nail clippers to cut the tip of each nail at a slight angle, just to the point where it begins to curve
- Take care to avoid the 'quick', the vein that runs into each nail. This would be like cutting your own nail too short.
- If you do accidentally cut the quick, it may bleed. Quickly apply styptic powder to stop the bleeding.
- Once nails have been cut, you can use an emery board to smooth any rough edges. A brisk walk on concrete has the same effect!

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- Within the center of each toenail is the blood and nerve supply for the nail, called the quick. Cutting into the quick will result in pain for the dog, and bleeding. In clear white nails you can see the quick, a pinkish area in the middle of the nail. Black nails, however, do not allow an easy view. In this case, look for a thicker wedge shape closest to the toe, then a thinner part that 'hooks' off. The nail can be trimmed back to the thicker, wedge shape area.
- Remember, it's better to trim a small amount on a regular basis than to try and trim them back in large portions. Try and trim your dog's nails



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weekly, even if long walks keep them naturally short. As the nail grows, so does the 'quick' - if you wait too long between cuttings, the quick will be closer to the end of the nail, so you can't cut the nail back to where it should be.

- Trim nails short enough so that when the dog walks, nails do not touch the floor.
- Don't forget the dewclaws! The dewclaw is a small nail on the inside of the front leg, though some dogs also have them on their back legs. Because they do not hit the ground, dogs do not naturally wear them down.
- Invest in a pair of high quality nail trimmers in an appropriate size for your dog - they can last a lifetime.
- Make trimming fun and not a struggle! Take the appropriate steps to get your pet used to handling before you try and cut their nails. Try just one at a time and use plenty of tasty treats.

Don't Forget your Feline Friends!

It is important to keep your cat's nails trimmed too - though they naturally scratch to help keep nails healthy, trimming to keep them short can help prevent them from snagging a nail or damaging your furniture. Trimming a cat's nails works much the same as trimming a dog's. The only difference is that since cat's claws retract, you must gently push on their paw pad to expose the toenail. Once the nails are out, you cut back to just before the quick.

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Ear Cleaning

The key to healthy ears is to keep them clean - check your dog's ears weekly. A slight amount of dirt or wax may be present in normal ears, and can be cleaned once a month. If your dog swims a lot, has long floppy ears, or a history of ear disease, more routine cleaning (often once or twice a week) is recommended. Remove wax and dirt from your pet's ears with a cotton ball moistened with a gentle ear cleaning solution. You may need to remove any excess hair leading into the ear canal; ask your vet or groomer to show you how before trying it at home.



Remember, if your dog is showing severe discomfort, or the ears have a discharge, a foul or yeasty odor, or the ear canals look abnormal, be sure to visit your veterinarian. If your dog has an ear infection, simply cleaning them will not solve the problem. If your dog has a ruptured or weakened eardrum, some ear cleansers and medications could even do more harm than good. Your vet must determine what medication, if any, is needed.





SPECIAL BREEDS, SPECIAL NEEDS

Some breeds may require more extensive grooming needs - make sure you are aware of this before you pick the dog for you! Poodles, including Poodle mixes, Yorkshire Terriers, Bichons, Maltese, and many other breeds usually need professional grooming. Because their hair coat grows continuously, they must be trimmed every 6-10 weeks to keep hair from getting matted and tangled. These frequent grooming trips can be expensive, so make sure you count that into your pet budget if you choose such a breed.



Dogs with loose facial skin or wrinkles, such as Bulldogs, Shar peis, or Pugs, will need special attention. To prevent dirt and bacteria from causing irritation and infection, skin folds must be cleaned daily with a damp paper towel or cotton cloth. Always thoroughly dry the area between the folds - excess moisture can cause problems too.

MAKE IT FUN

Grooming your pet is an important part of their overall health and well being - but it doesn't have to be a chore! Use this time for hands on bonding, and to check your pet for any health concerns - your pet will thank you for it!

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We at PetPeople are a group of dedicated and passionate pet people. We are so enthusiastic to engage our customers, exchange information, and work together to solve common pet problems. We hope you will continue to come to us with questions, problems or situations regarding your pets' care. It is our goal to be a partner with you and your veterinarian in the health and well-being of your pet.

We Care

While we are happy to advise you and share our knowledge with you, we would never propose that our recommendations be used instead of consulting with your veterinarian about any concerns or issues. You know your pet better than anyone, and should always use your best judgement regarding obtaining the best care for your pet.



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