How to help get your puppy used to grooming

Tips from our Groomers

Why is grooming important for dogs? Grooming is important for all dogs! To ensure their coat remains healthy, dead hair is removed, and the coat is kept matt free. This is not only a great bonding time for you and your dog but it ensures your dog is healthy and looks its best at all times.

Neglecting to brush and groom your dog causes matting and buildup of dead coat. Believe it or not! All dogs do require grooming, especially those with longer coats and non-shedding varieties- *for example* (Poodles, Shih-tzu, Cavoodle, Groodle). Long double coats - *for example* (Rough coated collie, Border collie, Pomeranians) to name a few. All of these breeds require regular, thorough brushing (multiple times a week).

Matting causes pain to your dog it can cause other serious skin issues underneath the coat. If you cannot commit to regular brushing at home. Your Groomer can recommend a schedule for
your dog’s grooming specific grooming requirements. To ensure they remain knott/matt free, in the hairstyle you want and their skin is kept healthy. Dogs that are matted will have to be shaved short. **Tip:** *If you cant get a metal comb through your dogs coat comfortably, it is matted and will need to go short!*

**Nails:** Dogs nails should remain short and regularly trimmed. Overgrown nails can grow into your dogs foot pads and cause pain, infections and foot deformities. Therefore it is essential to get your dog used to grooming and nail trimming as puppies. It is important to take your dog to a professional groomer if you are unable to groom them at home. Groomers encourage puppies to come into the salon from the time they have had their first two needles so that they can feel comfortable, safe and accept grooming as a part of their routine. We often place puppies on a four weekly schedule to get them used to the basics of grooming before we are able to complete more complex hair-cuts, trimming ect. **Tip:** *Don’t leave it until your dog is matted or needs a hair cut to see us!*

**What tools do I need?**
Three to Four tools are really all you need for most breeds of dogs. 1. A slicker brush. The length of pins are depending on your dogs length of coat. A short pin shown at the bottom (red and grey) for a short to medium coated dog or a puppy. The larger (blue) slicker brush for a longer coated dog or adult longer coat dog. Nail clippers and a metal comb.

How can I help get my puppy comfortable with grooming at home? You can help to get your puppy feeling comfortable with the grooming process at home by regularly brushing them at home. To help make the brushing process easy and stress free, keep your brushing sessions to five minutes at a time initially. You can gradually increase the amount of time you spend brushing, once your dog seems comfortable. This is to help them learn that grooming is a positive experience. Only reward your dog when he/she is showing good behavior.

How do I brush my puppy? Prepare an area for your dog to be brushed in your home. You can place a towel or bed for them to lay down on. Often lifting your puppy up high onto a table or washing machine is best for brushing. Make sure your puppy is secure (always
using a lead etc.) and cannot fall. You may require a helper for this. Use the appropriate slicker brush (short for short to medium or puppies, longer pin for longer coats and longer coated adult dogs). Start at your puppies rear and gently brush through the coat with your slicker brush. Long coated puppies you can start at the rear foot. Short coated dogs do not need their legs or feet brushed.

As your dog gets older its grooming requirements may change. Longer coated and double coated dogs as listed in examples prior will require thorough brushing which involves line combing right to the skin over the entire coat of the dog with a slicker brush and a metal comb. *(See “Grooming your long coated dog”).*

Double coated long and short dogs – for example (Pugs, French Bulldog, Siberian husky, Border collie) will also in time require ‘de-shedding’ which is a process of removing dead, shedding coat. Different tools are required to complete this process. The shedding will start to develop around the time your dog reaches sexual maturity around (8-12 months this varies depending on the breed). *Consult your groomer if you have questions about your dogs grooming requirements. We are always happy to assist.*

*Check out this video for a great example of how to get your dog used to grooming at home*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXUjH0Ownso
You should also help de-sensitize your dog to nail trimming at home by lifting their feet and playing with their paws and nails. Reward your puppy when he/she is calm and doesn’t pull away. Keep this short and sweet if your puppy accepts it. Let go and reward! Over time increase the amount of time you lift the paw for. You do not want to be doing this longer than a few seconds at a time. This will help them to be able to accept the nail trimming process and feel comfortable at all times.

If you are confident and you have done some desensitisation work at home already. You can try to trim your puppy’s nails at home.

Please only trim off the hook of the nail at the end (**see diagram Page 5**). The dogs nail is filled with blood (**the quick**). If you cut this area your dog’s nail will bleed. The quick is easy to see in white nails but impossible to see in black nails. Once your puppy has a negative experience with nail trimming you will have to work twice as hard to correct this. Your groomer can help you with regular appointments while your puppy is young to help them get used to nail trimming and grooming.
Ask for help! Please Consult your groomer or trainer if you have issues with brushing your dog or trying to trim their nails. They can direct you further and help address or correct issues especially while your dog is still a puppy. Grooming, brushing and trimming nails is an essential part of life (especially for a long haired dog) and we want to make it a positive experience for them. Dogs who do not tolerate the grooming process are extremely difficult and dangerous to groom. As jumping around near sharp objects can cause injury. They are often a source of stress for their owners and end up very costly for their owners in the long run.

1. Cutting a long nail:
Cut the nail here to avoid damaging the quick and causing bleeding. The quick will gradually recede. 

2. Cutting a short nail:
Cut here. Trimming regularly will help you avoid cutting the quick.

3. Cutting or filing:
A little every few days will cause the quick to gradually recede.

4. A well-maintained nail:
Regular trimming will make the process easier!