

How to groom a dog

Regularly grooming your dog can keep him free of parasites and improve his general appearance and also let him know that you love and care for him. During grooming you also have the opportunity to check for the signs of good health such as the dog's skin, eyes, ears, coat and teeth. In the past it has been advisable to groom your dog at least once a week, but I think that you should do this nearly every day, especially if you have just got yourself a new puppy.

Grooming every day with a young dog or puppy is a great way of building that bond and letting him know that it is very acceptable for humans to touch, stroke and even restrain him, so that this behaviour becomes natural and enjoyable. Initially many dogs find being touched stress full as they are not sure what you are going to do. In the first instance it is wise to touch your dog lightly and reward that slight touch, letting him know that this procedure will get a treat. Once you have touched and stroked him on every body part, you may find that the puppy dog starts to enjoy this procedure.

You may then use a soft brush and repeat the procedure with lots of rewards. This task completed, you may then approach the pleasure of grooming your dog with the following tools: a comb, brush, nail clippers and blunt-ended scissors.

It is important to have the proper brush. Short bristled brushes are best for short and medium haired dogs and long bristles are more suitable for longhaired dogs. Preparation Choose a specific place to do the brushing each time. Use a table. Lift your dog up onto the table and reward him for a couple of minutes, because you have already done the basic grooming job on the floor with you sitting at his side, this does not come as such a shock.

Let your dog sniff the tools you will use and as he does, reward him, doing so will help calm him. Offer your dog a toy to occupy him, and to teach him to associate grooming with positive events, which are fun and stimulating. Brushing Begin by brushing against the grain (so to speak). This helps to loosen dead hair and to stimulate the skin. Use a flannel cloth to bring out the shine in your dog's coat after brushing. If your dog has long hair or a double coat, some matting of the hair may occur. A long toothed rake is an ideal grooming tool which will help clear the matted hair which may have occurred from burs, food, tar and other sticky substances. This is not only unsightly but can also irritate the dog. Try combing gently to remove the clumps. If a matt is too tight or large, you may need to cut it off. The fur will grow back in time. Always use blunt end scissors to cut. Matting of the hair can be avoided or lessened with proper and frequent brushing, each day as mentioned. Remember be gentle!