

# How to Groom a Dog

## Purpose

This set of basic grooming instructions inform dog owners, veterinary staff, groomers and even interested animal lovers on how to groom a dog. The dog grooming instructional phases are how to brush/comb the coat, bathe, clean the ears, brush the teeth and clip the nails. These phases will be explained thoroughly to aid in understanding the grooming procedure.

## Introduction

Everyone who handles dogs and has dog experience acknowledges that each dog may react differently to the grooming process. If you need to stop at any time during this process, some phases will be okay to stop, but others could jeopardize the dog's health. Therefore, you will have to be selective when picking a time to quit.

**Time:** Depending on the size and behavior of the dog, this procedure will take no longer than approximately two hours.

**Warning:** During this grooming process if the dog is feeling uncomfortable or distressed to when it becomes aggressive towards, stop the process and try moving on to another phase, especially if the dog becomes uncontrollable. Be patient and do not expect the dog to enjoy every grooming phase.

**Caution:** Allow time for the dog's grooming because some phases may take longer than expected.

Grooming the dog can be done in one's home, inside a professional groomers or veterinary hospitals, or outside. For the dog owner, outside is generally a more convenient location to groom the dog since one does not have to clean the house after everything is done. If grooming outdoors then the fur and nail clippings can be swept into the grass to decompose and for the birds to use as nest material in the spring. If one is grooming the dog indoors proper disposal of the fur and nail clippings in the trash is critical.

In every grooming facility the towels, brushes, and nail clippers used in the grooming will need cleaned in order to maintain a healthy environment and functional equipment for the next grooming session.

## **Procedure**

Now you are ready to groom your dog! Before you get started, there are a couple definitions you need to know:

**Quick** - the blood supply to a dog's nail. This is the tender, living flesh of the nail that allows the nail to grow. One can see this region in clear or transparent nails. Depending on the length of the dog's nails this region is closer or further away from the end of the nail. It appears as the red coloration and comes to a point correlating with the shape of the dogs nails.

**Caution:** If this region of nail is clipped, then dog may cry or whelp and the nail will begin to bleed.

**Styptic Powder** - a special coagulant powder commonly used during dog nail clipping if the nail's quick is clipped. The powder is useful to quickly stop the dog's nail from bleeding.

## **Materials**

- Dog Shampoo
- Dog nail clippers
- Slicker brush
- Dog toothbrush
- Dog toothpaste
- Styptic Powder
- 2 Large Towels
- Bristle Brush
- Comb
- Q-tips
- Veterinarian recommended Ear flush
- Cotton balls

## **Additional Materials**

**Dog Conditioner** - This product is recommended for longhaired dogs. However, one can use on the dog to achieve a softer coat.

**Large Cup** - If you are planning on bathing the dog in a bath tub, the large cup would be helpful to soak the fur, rinse near the dog's head, and to ensure that all the shampoo is out of the coat. Using this large volume of water allows for efficient bathing.

**Rubber mat** – The rubber mat is helpful for dogs on slippery surfaces during the bathing process to help keep their grip to avoid injury.

**Another person** – Another person can be helpful while bathing larger dog breeds or an energetic dog. In addition, another person might be required to restrain the dog as you clip their nails, brush their teeth, and even clean their ears.

## **Grooming Phases**

### **Step 1 Clipping the Nails**

- 1.1 Open the styptic powder container to ensure that it is readily available in case the quick is cut and the nail begins to bleed
  
- 1.2 Lay the dog on its side. If needed, have another person restrain or hold the dog by positioning himself or herself along the dog's back, while holding down both the front legs and hind legs and positioning the dog's head behind their elbow.



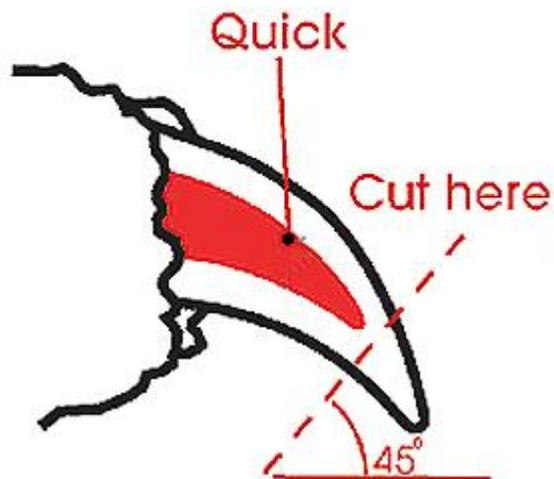
**Caution: Laying dogs on their side may take more than one person depending on dog's temperament and size. The person restraining the dog needs to be in control of the dog's movement to ensure everyone's safety.**

- 1.3 Position the clippers at a 45-degree angle at the end of the nail and moving towards the pads of the paw.



- 1.4 Using the nail clippers, cut the nail just before the curve of the nail. This avoids cutting the quick and causing the nail to bleed. In transparent nails the quick is visible, so adjust accordingly.

## Nail cross section



Caution: The quick is not visible with black nails, so start at the end of the nail and clip a few nail segments at a time, working up towards the curve of the nail.

Warning: If the quick is clipped, bleeding will occur immediately. Quickly apply styptic powder to the bleeding site to clot the blood.

- 1.5 Repeat steps 3 through 5 for the other 17 nails on the front and back paws.

## Step 2 Brushing the Teeth

- 2.1 Squeeze a small amount of the dog's toothpaste onto the dog's toothbrush.
- 2.2 Gently press on the corners of the dog's mouth, towards the back molars, to force the dog's mouth to open.

Warning: If the dog begins to become aggressive during this phase fill free to skip, avoiding injury to the dog or to oneself



- 2.3 Once the dog's mouth is open, gently brush the dog's teeth with the toothbrush in a circular motion. After brushing there is no need to rinse the toothpaste from the teeth.

Caution: Avoid excessive or harsh movements with the toothbrush, as this may cause the gums to bleed and become irritated.

Attention: Dogs toothpaste is edible.

### Step 3 Ear Cleaning

- 3.1 Saturate approximately six Q-tips and four cotton balls with V.M.D. recommended ear flush. Also, gather a handful of dry Q-tips and cotton balls.

Attention: The dog can be either standing or lying for this grooming phase. Just always keep it fun not to stressful.

- 3.2 Squirt a small amount of ear flush in the dog's ears and rub the base of the dog's ears to break up any loose debris.
- 3.3 Using a saturated Q-tip, swab the inside of the ear reaching all the curves and crevices.

Attention: Do not worry about reaching or puncturing the ear drum, since dog's ears are L-shaped; it is very hard to reach.

- 3.4 Repeat Step 3 two more times on the same ear.

- 3.5 Take the saturated cotton ball and wipe the inside flap of the ear, removing any excess debris from the external ear region.



- 3.6 Repeat steps 3 through 5 using the dry Q-tips and cotton balls.
- 3.7 Repeat steps 1 through 6 for the other ear.

## **Step 4 Bathing**

- 4.1 Remove the dog's collar.
- 4.2 If desired, place the rubber mat on the bottom of the tub or wherever the dog will be groomed. This prevents the dog from slipping or injuring itself.
- 4.3 Place the dog into the tub or onto the mat as the lukewarm water begins to fill the drain plugged tub.
- 4.4 Using warm water and a large cup or showerhead, soak the dog's coat to the skin until completely saturated.



4.5 Place the shampoo onto the dogs back and lather thoroughly.

**Attention:** Refer to the shampoo bottle's directions for lathering time and the proper amount to use. Some shampoos require waiting a few minutes before rinsing.

4.6 Rinse the coat thoroughly; making sure all shampoo residue has disappeared.

**Caution:** Avoid getting water and shampoo into the dog's eyes and ears, since this can lead to irritation. Shampoo residue can irritate the dog's skin. Be sure to rinse the coat very thoroughly.

4.7 If inside, place a large towel on the floor away from the bathing area. Drain the tub and move the dog from the bathing area onto the towel. If outside move the dog to a dry area and start to towel dry the dog.

- 4.8 Dry your dog with the other large towel making sure that the dog is shaking and if outdoors the dog is not rolling on the outside ground. This drying technique will be more efficient.

**Warning:** Dogs love to shake their coat after bathing, so avoid areas or rooms that should not get wet.

## **Step 5 Brushing/Combing the Coat**

- 5.1 Use the slicker brush to detangle any knots and remove loose hair from the coat.
- 5.2 Once coat is efficiently dried, use the bristle brush to brush the coat from the head to tail. This will remove any excess fur.

**Hints:** Shedding dogs will have a large amount of loose fur that will take longer to brush out.



**Attention:** Fur may shed excessively, finding an appropriate location is critical to avoid fur on indoor carpet areas or any areas where coat fur will be undesired.

## **Conclusion**

Congratulations! The dog grooming procedure is now complete! Enjoy spending time with your clean, brushed, and healthier companion!



**DIXIE “My Friend”**