

Brushing Your Dog: The Key to Getting That Beautiful Coat

Brushing removes dead hair from the coat before it mats, stimulates the skin and evenly distributes the natural oils over the coat. This allows the individual hairs to lie more smoothly, look shinier and repels dirt. Try to spend just a few minutes every day or so brushing the coat instead of waiting until the coat is tangled then trying to demat it. You and your pet will be happier for it.

Puppies and brushes

Puppies are constantly shedding their puppy coat. They should get used to being groomed and handled as soon as they come into the home. If your puppy just "won't hold still long enough" to be brushed, groom in short sessions and just brush a small section at a time until the puppy gets used to being brushed. Try putting your pup up on a counter, the washer or dryer or a table. Your puppy is more likely to hold still then if you attempt to groom him in your lap. Talk to him softly and treat him gently. Teach a "grooming word" such as "stand" and keep saying it. Eventually the puppy will know that "the word" means "hold still you're about to be groomed". And as with all pets, remember to praise him quietly if he's still. End the brushing session on a positive note, like when he's being still.

What should your grooming session consist of?

- **Remove all mats before bathing your pet.**
Getting a tangled, matted coat wet will cause the coat to mat up even more. Water tends to tighten the mat, shampoo gets caught in the mat and is hard to rinse out, and drying shrinks it into an even tighter knot.

You can make the brushing and dematting process easier on yourself and your pet if you dampen the coat before brushing with a coat conditioner or tangle remover. Brushing a dry coat will cause static electricity that will damage and break off the ends of the hair. Spray the coat well with the conditioner and allow it to sit on the dog for several minutes -- or apply it to each layer as you brush. These are especially helpful when working with dogs with long, flowing coats, such as the Maltese, Lhasa apso, Shih Tzu, Silky Terrier and Yorkshire terrier.
- **Brush your pet's hair layer by layer so that it pulls the least on the skin.**
- **Brush the head last.**
Pets tend to object less to those things they can't see. The head is a sensitive area for many pets, and you want to keep the pet comfortable as long as possible. Therefore, starting at the rear is less stressful on the pet.
- **Combing: The final step in brushing.**
The final step in brushing is to go through the coat using a fine/medium toothed comb, checking for any mats that may still be in the coat.
- Good luck and HAPPY GROOMING!