

Grooming

All dogs and cats need some grooming. The amount of grooming each pet needs depends on the coat length and thickness and owner's personal preferences.

There is a variety of different grooming tools available. Often the selection of brushes depends on the type of coat the dog has. Dogs can have smooth (Boxer), medium (Labrador Retriever), double (German Shepherd), heavy (Pomeranian), silky (Cocker Spaniel), long (Maltese), curly (Bichon Frise) and wire (Cairn Terrier) type coats.

Common brush types:

- **Rubber friction brushes** are an easy to use brush that won't hurt your pet and removes unwanted hair.
- **Bristle brushes** work well for most hair types. Bristle types vary from soft to firm and from long to short. A short, soft bristle is best for dogs with short, fine hair. Long, firm bristles are best for dogs with thick, coarse hair.
- **Wire pin brushes** are best for dogs with medium to long hair.
- **Slicker brushes** are used to break up tangles and mats in medium to long-haired dogs.
- **Rakes and mat breakers** work best on more severe tangles and mats.
- **Shedding tools** have special teeth that remove excess hair from double-coated breeds and reduce shedding. Common variations are shedding blades and FURminators.
- **Flea combs** are used to detect and remove fleas. (This tool cannot eliminate a flea infestation.)
- **Curry brushes or combs** are used to remove dirt and debris and may be used prior to brushing. The short rubber tips also stimulate the natural oils in the skin. Dogs with extremely short hair may need nothing more than occasional use of the curry brush or comb.



The frequency of brushing depends on the dog's coat type and length. A general rule of thumb is to brush your dog at least weekly. Frequent brushing helps to reduce shedding of hair. Dogs with heavy, silky or long coats may need daily brushing to prevent matting of the coat.

Some dogs will need to have their coat clipped by a groomer. Certain breeds have a particular look that is achieved through grooming, for example a poodle. Owners may elect to have their dog clipped for a variety of reasons. It is important to remember that short-haired dogs should not be clipped as their coat acts as insulation from the heat in the summer. If a dog is matted, a groomer will need to shave the mat off. Do not attempt to remove mats with scissors as it is too easy to inadvertently cut the dog's skin.

Cats should also be brushed on a regular basis. Long haired cats need to be brushed multiple times a week in order to prevent matting. As cats age, they frequently have difficulty grooming their back and rear legs due to arthritis. Brushing helps to maintain a healthy coat. Regular grooming will also help prevent hairball formation for some cats. Rubber friction brushes work best for grooming cats. Some long haired cats will also need to be shaved down to prevent matting.

Bathing:

Dogs shouldn't be bathed more than once every two weeks unless directed by your veterinarian. Always use a shampoo labelled for dogs. Cats can be bathed with soap and water but most cats do not like water. It is easier to use a waterless shampoo to groom a cat.

