The Secrets To Easy Dog Grooming

The Owner’s Complete Grooming Manual
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AN INTRODUCTION TO GROOMING YOUR DOG AT HOME

Dogs have been the world’s favorite domestic animal for centuries and are an integral part of millions of family homes at the moment. Canine companions provide excellent friends that are loyal and loving providing that they have a place to sleep, regular meals and a few slippers to chew! However, you have to do your bit by providing for all of their needs, one of which is grooming.

Grooming is an essential element of owning a dog. Along with regular walks and balanced meals, it is vital to the health and well being of your dog and thus is a process that all owners should be aware of today.

The grooming of dogs goes back to the 19th Century, which is only as far back as it can be traced. It is reported that the French royal family kept Poodles at that time and the dogs were stylized in order to impress guests that visited their homes as much as to add a little extra to the courts of Louis XV and Louis XVI. This is where the term “French Poodle” came from, even though the breed was not native to the country.
The popularity of the Poodle is central to the spread of grooming in actual fact, which is hardly surprising given the magnificent nature and versatility of their coats. Their royal approval gave rise to grooming parlors for the rich and thus dog grooming professionals as well. This soon caught on in other countries and the concept of grooming dogs has gone from strength to strength since to the point at which it is now absolutely an essential part of taking care of your dog.

Now you have a brief history of grooming, or at least a little knowledge of the era that it can be traced to. However, this book is actually the only comprehensive resource you need to enhance your knowledge about the grooming process, why it is necessary and exactly how to groom your dog properly.

No matter what breed of dog you have, your knowledge of grooming or your experience in looking after dogs, this book can tell you everything you need to know to be able to groom your dog at home. There are numerous reasons why you should groom your dog yourself, some of which are covered in the next chapter, but there is a lot to learn about grooming including but not limited to the following:

• Grooming Tools
• Bathing
• Skin Care
• Your Dog’s Coat
• Brushing
• Drying
• Hair Clipping
• Nail Clipping
• Teeth
• Ears
• Eyes
• Anal Glands
• Puppies
• Diet
• Overcoming Resistance
• Grooming According To Breed
All of the above information can be found in various chapters of this book so it is effectively your one stop grooming guide. Whether you are grooming for the purpose of showing your dog or just to keep your furry friend happy and healthy, everything you need to know is right here.

This dog grooming book is designed for all dog owners, regardless of experience level and knowledge base. As such, even the most experienced of owners will find something of interest within this guide. On the other hand, beginners or individuals that are new dog owners will find everything they need to know here so read on and be sure to keep this eBook as your ultimate grooming reference!
CHAPTER ONE: WHY GROOM YOUR DOG?

“Why should I groom my dog?”

Believe it or not, even in this day and age, there are dog owners asking this question each and every single day. They do not believe that taking the time to groom their dog properly on a regular basis is necessary, despite all of the evidence to the contrary. After all, your dog cannot just stay clean on his or her own. In fact, although they are capable of cleaning themselves to a certain degree, they need more help than many owners often believe.

There are 8 reasons why you should take the time to groom your dog outlined below that highlight the benefits for both you and your dog. As such, they should give you an idea of the importance that should be placed on grooming by all dog owners today:

1. **It encourages the health of your dog’s skin and coat.** Regular brushing and grooming of your dog’s coat can encourage the health and vitality of your dog’s skin because it boosts the blood flow underneath the coat. This in turn ensures that the cells get everything they need via the bloodstream. Similarly, dogs need to wash much the same as humans do in order to keep toxins that may get caught in the fur at bay because they can also cause problems with the coat and skin.

2. **It enhances your dog’s overall health.** Grooming enhances your dog’s overall health in a number of ways. It can ensure that your dog is mentally and physically in top condition as a result of the attention. Furthermore, it can improve the circulation, boost muscle mass and reduce the possibility of infection. By pairing grooming with a good diet, you can also boost your dog’s immune system, meaning that he or she will be less likely to become ill anyway.

3. **It improves the cleanliness of your dog.** This is a major benefit for you as much as for your dog. If your dog is clean then your home will be cleaner too. There is nothing worse than rubbing your dog’s belly only to get a dirty film.
on your hands. Similarly, the cleaner your dog actually is, the better he or she will feel in terms of contentment.

4 *It eliminates the smell associated with dogs.* This point applies to both your dog and your home. Everyone knows that there is nothing worse than walking into a house and having your senses assaulted with the pungent odor of stale dog but you do not have to worry about that if you regularly groom your dog because it minimizes the smell. This applies to all breeds of dog, even those that have particularly long and thick coats.

5 *It highlights any problems as and when they arise.* This is not one of the more obvious reasons but it is a reason nevertheless because regular grooming enables you to notice changes in your dog’s body, which can be important in the diagnosis of many illnesses. For example, you will notice any cuts, grazes, lumps, swelling and even heat that occur. You may also notice slight differences in your dog’s general demeanor that may hint at depression or pain in some way. As such, if you notice these symptoms then you can seek help for your dog much quicker than would otherwise be possible.

6 *It can make your dog more comfortable and less irritable.* Dogs need to wash to keep comfortable much like we do. They feel more comfortable and less irritable because they are clean. As such, you may well notice that your dog’s temperament improves with regular grooming. Similarly, the personal attention that they are getting will also improve their outlook and their overall attitude.

7 *It can cut down on the overall cost of grooming.* If you pay for someone else to groom your dog, whether on a regular basis or for a six monthly coat trim. By regularly grooming your dog, you may not need to hire anyone else to provide personal attention for your dog in the first place. This will save you money and enhance the relationship between you and your dog.

8 *Finally, and most importantly, it enhances the bond between you and your dog.* As hinted at under the last point, grooming enhances the relationship between man and dog because it gives you a shared experience and one that is pleasurable for your canine companion. Dogs do enjoy grooming
because it means that they get attention from their owners. All dogs absolutely love the attention. As such, it is an activity that you will be able to laugh at and your dog will be able to enjoy.

All of the above reasons should be more than enough to give you a push in the right direction because now you can see exactly why you and your dog can benefit from the process. Grooming is an essential part of owning a dog so the sooner you integrate it into your routine the better. The information in the ensuing chapters will most definitely be able to give you an idea as to where to start.
CHAPTER TWO: HOME GROOMING Vs PROFESSIONAL GROOMING

Dog grooming is effectively the cleaning of a dog. It should be performed on a regular basis but may be done for various purposes. For example, show dogs are groomed to have a certain look that is designed specifically to ensure that they get as much attention as possible and thus a better result for individual shows. Most dogs are only groomed for their own health and hygiene though. Either way, there are two people that can groom your dog – you or a professional dog groomer.

A professional dog groomer is obviously an individual that is experienced in grooming dogs and an expert to the point at which he or she can make a very good living as a result of that. A professional dog groomer may have a shop from which he or she works but many actually go to the dogs these days.

It is easy to find reputable and experienced dog groomers out there at the moment thanks to the Internet. Many groomers offer their services online and are available at a reasonable rate. The Internet will also provide you with reviews from customers so you can decide for yourself whether or not you wish to hire them. However, before you make that decision you need to ask yourself one question – do you want a professional to groom your dog for you or do you want to do it yourself?

Before you make a decision as to who you want to groom your dog, be sure to read the information below and make an educated decision on the basis of the similarities, differences, advantages and disadvantages of each option. After all, this is your dog you need to put in someone else’s hands for a while so you have to decide on the basis of that as much as anything else.

**PROFESSIONAL GROOMING**

Professional groomers can provide you with the following advantages when it comes to grooming your beloved dog:
• Fully Qualified Grooming – All of the best professional dog groomers are fully qualified in a number of areas and should have various certificates to prove it. They should undertake training in order to practice so that they can provide the best services of the highest quality. Of course, you will not have those qualifications but some dog trainers do offer short courses to help you out. Obviously, professionals will have undertaken more training and that could give you better peace of mind.

• A Flat Expense – If you undertake grooming yourself then you will have to pay for shampoos, brushes and so on. However, if you choose to go to a professional dog groomer then the likelihood is that you will have to pay a flat fee for the services and will know exactly where you stand financially, which always helps!

• Experience With All Breeds – Certain breeds are renowned for being difficult when it comes to grooming. Various dogs of all breeds can object to it as well. No matter what breed your dog is, you can guarantee that experienced dog groomers have seen it all before and have techniques for putting dogs at ease. Furthermore, they have likely experienced all the bad reactions around from biting to howling to scratching. As such, they may be better to placed to handle difficult dogs than the owners.

• Able To Put Your Dog At Ease – Experienced professional dog groomers have a range of techniques at their disposal that allow them to put all dogs at ease. It may be that they have a soothing nature or a few toys up their sleeves. Either way, they can make a dog feel really comfortable and thus make it much easier to groom them.

However, in spite of all of the above advantages, there are some major disadvantages to hiring someone to groom your dog for you, some of which are outlined below:

• Grooming Can Be Expensive – It can cost you a lot more to have your dog groomed than you may be prepared to pay or at least able to afford. Many households do struggle to find extra cash so expenses like grooming may be too much, especially when you can do it yourself with a little bit of effort. The
basics do not cost as much to begin with as a professional groomer does and with a little practice your dog can look just as good if you do it.

• May Use Tranquilizers – Some professional groomers actually use tranquilizers to calm dogs down and this may not be what you want for your dog. Tranquilizers should not be given to any dog unless prescribed and they can have nasty side effects, such as seizures, heatstroke or hypothermia. You would probably not use them on your own dog unless prescribed so a groomer should not either.

• Unqualified Groomers Are Around – For every fully qualified groomer out there, there are more unqualified but practicing professional dog groomers. As such, you do have to make sure that you get the former and not the latter. This can be difficult because so many of the unqualified are great at implying that they are and fool owners every day. As such, it is worth asking your vet for a recommendation or double checking the qualifications but never leave it to chance.

• Can Be Difficult To Find One You Are Comfortable With – Dog owners do not often feel comfortable leaving their dogs with strangers and this may apply to you, especially when you do not know how those strangers will treat your dog. If this is the case then you have to ask yourself whether the stress is actually worth it because it can be a huge weight that you take on against your own peace of mind.

**HOME GROOMING**

Grooming your dog yourself at home has more advantages than hiring a professional dog groomer does and some of the main ones are outlined below for you:

• You Can Control The Environment – If you groom your dog then you will be doing so at home in a comfortable environment that your dog feels at home in. You can therefore control the way that he or she feels by using the safety and comfort of the environment. You can control the grooming experience as well so if your dog does not respond well to something the first time then you can
introduce it slowly. A professional groomer will not necessarily do that because they will be intent on providing exactly what you asked for.

• Enhancing Bonding - This is the main advantage of grooming your dog yourself. You can actively look to form a bond with your dog that goes above and beyond any other bond. The close personal attention that your dog gets does not come in any other form and the shared experience can really make you feel a connection to your dog that is founded on that.

• It Is Cheaper – It can be much cheaper to groom your dog yourself because you are paying for the equipment, time and effort of a professional dog groomer and yet will only pay for the former if you are doing it yourself. This can be a major expense saver that comes with so many other benefits that it really is value for money.

• The Familiar Environment – This point is slightly different to the first advantage because it relates to your dog rather than you. He or she will be used to the surroundings, smells and, most of all, the person doing the grooming. As such, your dog may be less likely to cause trouble or get distressed than if a complete stranger did it. Your dog will probably enjoy the comfort combined with the personal attention but you have to ensure that you are the boss otherwise that comfort could descend into chaos!

• You Notice Any Changes – This is another major advantage. You know your dog and will come to learn the layout and contours of your dog’s body as you groom him or her as well as fussing him or her on a daily basis. As such, you will be able to notice any bodily changes, such as lumps, bumps, irritable areas, red areas and anything else that may be of concern. If your professional dog groomer only spends an hour with your dog once every couple of months then they will not notice the changes. They see a lot of dogs and will not be able to memorize your dog’s body as you will. This is a major way in which grooming can help with canine health so make the most of it.

There are a few disadvantages as well:
• Have To Buy The Tools – The tools for grooming your dog do cost a bit to start with so there is an initial outlay. There are also ongoing costs that may be more or less depending on exactly what you need, what breed of dog you have and the wear and tear on your grooming tools. You have no way of knowing what your costs will be but here is a tip if you do decide to go for home grooming – invest in quality tools because they will last you longer and save you money in the long term. They are worth every penny.

• Easy To Make Excuses – The main pitfall of home grooming is this point and it can derail your plans to groom your dog at home. Owners are very concerned with their dogs’ moods and if they object too strenuously to being groomed then it is easy to make excuses and not continue. If your dog sees you hesitate then he or she will register that and take full advantage of your own ambivalence. As such, he or she is likely to play up again as and when you do something that does not meet doggy approval. This can of course lead to bigger behavioral issues and even undermines your authority. As such, you cannot give in and make excuses. Grooming has to be done and neglecting to do it is no way to move forwards.

• No Qualifications – You can take short courses in grooming and this book will tell you everything you need to know about dog grooming but professionals have years of experience behind them and are experts in the field. As such, you may feel more comfort having someone else do it.

As you can see, many of the advantages and disadvantages double up as an advantage for one and disadvantage for the other and vice versa but this information is most definitely worth stressing. Your decision to groom your dog yourself or get a professional to do so actively impacts upon your dog’s happiness. It is worth taking the time to think long and hard about it all.

If you have any lingering questions about whether or not you should groom your own dog then read all of the available information in this book so that you have the full facts before you make up your mind. Any lingering issues should then be addressed with a veterinarian or professional groomer if you cannot find an answer here.
Grooming is an essential element of the care of a dog. Every single owner should have a basic working knowledge of how to groom their dogs because it makes an awful lot of difference to not only how a dog looks but also to how he or she feels. A clean and well groomed dog is generally happier than a dirty and matted dog for a number of reasons. Firstly, groomed dogs have had personal attention from their owners and so are more contented as a result. They are also more secure in their position within a family as a result of the care and the bond that has been forged between owner and dog. Furthermore, well groomed dogs are often healthier because any health issues that arise can be spotted quickly and easily.

All of the above aside, it is an owner’s responsibility to look after a dog as well as possible and the basics of grooming do not require much effort to learn. However, you need to have a good basic knowledge of grooming tools and how they can be used to improve the overall appearance of your dogs.

There are numerous grooming tools available right now and the majority can be found in all good pet stores, with all of them being readily available online. Most of them are incredibly affordable so it is possible to invest in good tools no matter what your budget. However, a tip before you start. As with anything else these days, you get what you pay for. If you invest in quality grooming tools then they will last longer and work much better than the cheaper ones. Furthermore, if you take the time to look after them properly then they will take care of your dog.

You need at least the basics for grooming your dog, meaning a brush, comb, scissors and nail clippers. However, from the list below, you will be better able to assess exactly what you need for your dog. This is especially applicable given the fact that you will need different tools for the different types of coat:

**Boar’s Bristle Brush** – A boar’s bristle brush is not necessarily something that most owners have heard of but is generally used for removing the undercoat during shedding and when there are loose hairs. It can really help to remove matting and is generally associated with the grooming of long coated breeds.
**Bristle Brush** – Available in soft, medium, and stiff formats, bristle brushes are ideal for use with short coats. However, they can also be used on the undercoat of long coated breeds as well. Bristle brushes are ideal for regular brushing as they will not damage the skin.

![Bristle Brush Image]

**Large Pin Brush** – Ideal for regular brushing, the large pin brush should be used on long coated breeds and especially the larger breeds that come under that category. It should not be used on smooth coats because of the risk of damage.

**Small Pin Brush** – A smaller version of the large pin brush, it does exactly the same job but is more suited to smaller breeds within the long coated category.

**Rubber Brush** – The rubber brush is gentle on the skin and is not designed for coats with tangles. As such, it is designed for smooth and medium coated breeds.
**Slicker Brush** – The slicker brush is perfect for all breeds of dog, no matter what type of coat they have. It is designed to release dirt from all types of hair and is good for use with the undercoat as well as the guard hair. It will also help to pull loose hairs away from the coat but is not necessarily the best tool to use during shedding. Instead, it is better for regular use as part of a weekly routine.

![Slicker Brush Image](image)

**Chamois Cloth** – A chamois cloth is commonly associated with cleaning a car rather than a dog but it is perfect for use on smooth coated dogs because it can be used to polish the coats and really bring out a healthy shine without causing any harm to your dog.

**Comb** – Unlike the brushes available, there are very few combs to choose from and many experts simply recommend a regulation size steel comb. The comb should ideally have both fine and medium teeth for removing tangles and removing stray hairs that the brush has left behind. This comb is ideal for use with all coat types and thus all breeds.
**De-Matting Comb** – This is another comb that you may want to consider using but only with long coated breeds. It has wide teeth and is primarily used for removing matting rather than tangles.

![De-Matting Comb](image)

**Duplex Dresser** – This is a relatively little known tool that is used primarily on terriers and similar breeds that have thick and often wiry coats. It is a stripping tool but it has razor blades incorporated into the design and, as such, it can be dangerous. You should only ever use this tool if you have been taught to do so under strict supervision from a fully qualified professional.

**Cage Dryer** – A cage dryer is just what the name suggests. It is a tool that is attached to a cage if you choose that method of drying for your dog. It can easily be used at home to ensure that your dog can dry in comfort in his or her cage.
**Floor Dryer** – Another dryer option for home grooming of all breeds, this fluff drying tool has a long arm and thus the air can easily be directed at the coat. As such, it makes the drying of the undercoat and the guard hair much easier to accomplish if you want to do a thorough job. However, a few dogs may not be comfortable with this method of drying so assess him or her prior to use.

**Hand Held Dryer** – A hand held dryer is basically a hairdryer and so is readily available to everyone. A good model is affordable and can be used to dry most breeds of dog providing that bathing is only occasional because it can damage the fur if used on a regular basis. This should only ever be used on a cool or warm setting.

**High Speed Floor Dryer** – Similar to the regular floor dryer, the only difference is the fact that it is much more efficient and thus can dry your dog’s hair quicker as a result. It incorporates a high speed motor and can fluff dry breeds that are considered to be long coated.

**Electric Clipper Blades** – Electric clipper blades are effectively those made for clippers that are classified as A5 and A2. The blades are individually numbered for your reference with the higher numbers being designated as closer cuts and thus shorter hair.

**Electric Clipper** – Clippers are used to clip hair and there are models out there that are designed specifically for small animals. For example, the Oster A5 Clipper has been specifically designed for use with small animals and is a one piece clipper that comes complete with snap-on blades. Many expert groomers recommend this model because it is relatively quiet, easy to handle and even easier to operate. There is
another model that may be of use. The Oster A2 Model is also a good model to use but is a little more awkward because it requires interchangeable heads. As such, you have to change them yourself and this makes it more inconvenient to use, especially if you do not have a lot of time on your hands.

Electric Clipper Snap On Comb – The snap on comb is excellent when used for grooming. Each snap on comb can quickly and easily be fitted over the clipper blade to help guide you when clipping your dog. It can help you to speed up the whole clipping process because it effectively ensures that all hair cut with the blade is of a uniform length and thus helps you to avoid accidents. The snap on comb comes in six different sizes so you can choose the one that will best suit your dog during the clipping process.

Electric Clipper Spray Lube – As essential when grooming using clippers, this spray is a coolant that can help to lubricate the blades and cool them down when you want to prevent burning your dog. It is a fast and effective way of cooling the blade so that your grooming session can resume uninterrupted.

Grooming Post & Loop – This is one of the most underrated grooming tools out there because few owners believe that they need it. A grooming post should effectively be portable so that you can move it depending on where you want to groom your dog. It should also be easily attached to any table that you choose to use. The loop that is attached to the post should be placed around your dog’s neck to make sure that he or she is safe during the grooming process.

Grooming Table - The grooming table commonly comes in two sizes - 18' x 34" and 24" x 36". The former is the standard size of grooming table and is more often than
not a table that folds so it can be moved to another location as and when you want to. At around 30" high, it is fitted with ribbed rubber matting to ensure that your dog is completely safe during grooming. However, this table is generally used for small dogs because some of the larger dogs will not fit comfortably on it. The 24" x 36" on the other hand is designed to take large dogs as well as small dogs. This is also fitted with ribbed rubber matting, can be folded and transported wherever you need it to be. This is the average size of all tables out there.

**Hound Glove Or Hound Mitt** – This glove is designed to help cleanse and brush the coats of smooth coated dogs and can also be used on some medium coated dogs. It is ideal for quick grooming and is highly effective.

**Hydraulic Grooming Table** – The hydraulic grooming table is the best possible grooming table out there. It is 23" X 36" with a tailgate in position if you choose to make it 23" x 47". It can be lowered or raised depending on the size of your dog and your own height to ensure that you do not have to bend too much to groom your dog. As such, it is comfortable at between 29" and 35 ½". The 11" tailgate can easily be folded away but is there for your convenience and is fantastically easy to use. There is, of course, the ribbed rubber mat in place as well. The table is designed with large breeds in mind so if your dog is large, heavy or both then you should consider this. It is specialist equipment and so is a little expensive.

**Nail Clipper** – This is an essential piece of equipment for grooming your dog. There are three different sizes of nail clippers available – small, medium and large. Each type corresponds with the size of the dog you are grooming. You can choose the scissors clippers, which are suitable primarily for small dogs. The guillotine clippers
are primarily designed for use on medium dogs. The heavy duty clippers that resemble pliers are those for use with large dogs given that this size is well known for its strong and resistant nails.

Scissors – There are scissors that are designed for various sizes of dogs but they are pretty standard issue. They all have sharp blades and so you should buy them with the size of your own dog in mind in addition to considering left-handed scissors if you need them.

Curved Shears – Curved shears are used by professional groomers for fancy elements of grooming your dog, such as giving him or her a rounded effect on top-knots. These are mainly used for showing but you can find a use for these at home because they come in handy when trimming the coat around the feet.

Thinning Shears – Thinning shears are used primarily for use when you are clipping the hair in awkward places, such as around the eyes and ears. It is essential to use these shears to stop infections that are primarily caused by hair.
**Shedding Blade** – The shedding blade is a specialist tool that is used when a dog is shedding. It will remove the hairs shed in one swift motion to help prevent the build up of hair and thus increase of mess around your home.

**Silk Handkerchief** – Yes, a silk handkerchief is used during dog grooming. It is a professional tool that is used to polish the coats of certain breeds, primarily the white short coated breeds.

**Stripping Knives** – A stripping knife is used to do as the name suggests, strip hair. There are two types of knife – a fine knife that is used on sensitive areas of the body like the ears and head, and a coarse knife that can be used all over the body.

**Styptic Powder** – This is an essential substance to have on standby when clipping your dog’s nails. Nails that are clipped too short will bleed so this powder is essential if you want to stop the bleeding quickly and accelerate the healing process.

You will have noticed that various types of coat are mentioned above and you may not be clear as to which category your dog falls into. If this is the case then go to Chapter Six. There are numerous types of coat and various information you need to know before you start grooming your dog and the information in that chapter will be able to help you.

All of the above information relates directly to the tools that you can use to groom your dog but there is no mention of shampoo and other such tools there. However, you will need a good shampoo in order to correctly bathe your dog and ensure that all dirt is removed from his or her coat. As such, the next chapter is dedicated to bathing and has a section regarding the best choice of shampoos for your dog.
CHAPTER FOUR: BATHING

Every dog owner has seen all of the adverts for various pet products that feature a dog running through a body of water and then shaking himself off and drenching everything in sight. This is probably why every dog owner that has never bathed a dog before dreads it. With water up the walls, covering you and everything else that is not hidden away, it is easy to put it off and put it off until your dog absolutely stinks. However, bathing your dog is an essential element of grooming and one that you should get your dog used to immediately.

It is true that bathing your dog will more than likely be a messy job. However, it need not be a difficult one. It need only be as complex as you want it to be.

If you choose to use a range of shampoos, conditioners and various other products that would be at home in a spa then you are entitled to do so.

Some owners enjoy pampering their dogs in this way and many dogs enjoy it if they are introduced to it properly. After all, it is the attention that they crave from their owners after all!

However, if you do not want all the fuss and just want a simple bath and brush routine then you can do that too. It really is your prerogative. This chapter will tell you everything you need to know about bathing your dog, from the frequency required right through to the shampoo you should use!
PREPARATION FOR BATHING YOUR DOG

Bathing your dog is not something that you can just do. Imagine what your reaction would be if someone just came along and threw you into a pool of water without explaining why. You would be indignant, angry and frustrated at the very least and that is exactly how your dog will feel. He or she will also be a little bewildered and would react badly against any other attempt to do the same again so you have to prepare properly and get your dog used to the idea first.

Getting your dog used to the idea of a bath is not difficult but it may take a little time if you have an older dog. Puppies are much easier to deal with because they welcome new adventures. Even if they do not like water, it is relatively easy to get them used to it. Older dogs are different. They may have had bad grooming experiences in the past or have never encountered it at all. As such, you should assess their reaction to water and then introduce them to the bath slowly with plenty of encouragement… and giving them treats always helps too!

Try something as simple as filling a small paddling pool outside and splashing around in there a little yourself. If there is no fundamental hatred of water then you can encourage your dog to join in and maybe even bath them in it too! Alternatively, try sponging your dog a little so that the introduction to water is slow but regular.

When you feel that your dog is ready for a bath, or you are ready to take the leap and get it over and done with, then you should make sure that you are completely prepared in advance.

Firstly, you should brush your dog and then comb through the fur to ensure that it is completely tangle free. If you fail to do this then you may find that the process of lathering up your dog may hurt them. If your fingers get tangled in the fur then you may well put them off baths for life.

You also have to make sure that you have got absolutely everything you need on hand so that you are able to access it quickly and easily to make the process as smooth as possible. You need to have everything no more than arm’s length away. If you do not have all the supplies and equipment right there and have to leave your dog in the bath to fetch it then there is very little chance that your dog will stay where
put! Instead, your dog will soon find a way out of the bath and bound around your home shaking dirty water over absolutely everything in his or her path.

You need the following to hand prior to putting your dog in the bath:

- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Rinsing tool, which should be either a spraying tool or a large plastic cup or bowl
- Sponge or wash cloth
- A rubber bath mat (to be put in the bath prior to placing your dog in there)
- Old clothes or a plastic apron to protect you
- Heavy towels
- Scrubbing brushes

When you have all of the above in place then you are ready to start not only bathing your dog but also setting a routine in place.

**THE FREQUENCY OF BATHING**

As bathing is an essential part of your grooming routine, you need to pencil it into your schedule on a regular basis.

First things first, let us address the myth that is the bane of professional dog groomers’ lives – there is absolutely no suggestions whatsoever that bathing a dog too often is bad for your furry friend. In fact, you could bath your dog every week and it would not make any difference to the skin and fur.

This myth has been around for a very long time and has gotten firmly embedded in the psyche of dog owners everywhere. In fact, the myth does have a valid origin. Many owners use human shampoos or cheap shampoos on their dogs which are, of course, bad for their skin and fur because they are not formulated for them. This is definitely why the myth came about but is in no way connected to owners that choose a good quality shampoo that has been specially formulated for dogs.

In truth, you should bath your dog at regular intervals so that he or she gets into a routine and so knows what to expect. You may also bath your dog whenever he or
she is dirty or starts to smell but if you are just introducing your dog to grooming then it may be worth resisting the urge in favor of a good routine as far as possible.

However, you should be aware that it may not be wise to bath your dog every single day. Drying the fur can be a mission, especially if you have a long coated dog. If you subject your dog to a bath every day then you have to dry the fur every day and that can be time consuming. If you fail to dry it properly then you are leaving your dog susceptible to illness. Not only that, you will compromise the health of the coat itself because daily bathing will strip it of its natural essential oils. Natural oils provide warmth in winter, protection for the coat, and ensure that your dog’s body temperature remains constant throughout the year.

Bearing in mind all of the above, the frequency of bathing does depend on breed but once a month or so is fine for most breeds. There is an exception to this rule and that is if you have been told to bath your dog more frequently by a vet. If your dog has a skin disorder and has been given a medicated shampoo then you may be told to bath your dog once a week or every two weeks until it has cleared up. As this is based on veterinary advice, you should follow it to the best of your ability. However, if this is the case then you should ask your vet if there is a coat conditioner that is oil based available for you to use to restore the natural oils that the medical chemicals will strip away.

If you do think that your dog needs a little sprucing up prior to the monthly baths then try dry shampoos for an effective and very quick wash. They will absorb the odors and ensure that your dog is in a relatively clean condition all month long. Dry shampoos do not strip oils like wet ones do but they are nowhere near as good as
wet washes in terms of how clean they can get your dog. They make good quick solutions but not long term ones so be aware of that and you will find that you are far better off in the dog grooming department.

**SHAMPOOING YOUR DOG**

The world of dog shampoo is like the world of human shampoo at the moment – over saturated with more than enough choice to confuse any owner to the point at which it is just easier to grab the first one you see off the shelf. Of course, all the companies want to market their products but all you want to do is bath your dog!

It is important to choose the right shampoo because failing to do so could do just as much harm to your dog’s skin and coat as using human shampoo because it absolutely needs to be specifically formulated for your dog’s coat type. Being too harsh on the skin can cause serious problems in terms of encouraging infections, dry skin and any manner of other ailments. This can of course be expensive for you in terms of veterinary treatment and also painful and irritating for your dog. All of this hassle because of choosing the wrong shampoo is not uncommon.

There are several questions that you need to ask to determine the right type of shampoo for your dog’s needs. For example, is the coat shiny or dull? Does the dog scratch on a regular basis and if he does then do skin cells come away from the coat? Does your dog have allergies or has he or she has irritated skin in the past as a result of substances? You need to answer all of these questions before choosing a shampoo because no two dogs are the same. Like you, your dog is an individual so you have a choice of just a handful of products that suit him or her best.

Choosing the best shampoo is difficult because you have to take the time to read all of your labels, decipher which one will best suit your dog’s breed and coat type. However, the quick guide below will help you to narrow down your search for the right shampoo quickly and easily.

**Natural Ingredients** – If given the choice between natural shampoos and those that are based on chemicals then you have a difficult choice. The chemicals are obviously harsh and will undoubtedly damage your dog’s skin and coat in some way.
However, 100% natural and organic shampoos are always reported as failing to get a dog completely clean. They often focus largely on being gentle and harmless rather than formulated for cleanliness. As such, you have to get used to accepting a chemical or two in there to aid with the cleaning if need be. At least, until they formulate a 100% natural dog shampoo that cleans as well as it should.

**Considering Conditioning** – You should always consider the conditioning element of dog shampoos as well as the cleaning element because it will need to give a little back to the coat to ensure that it is completely healthy. For example, in wire haired dogs, you may want to add a little conditioning action to the shampooing process because it will help to keep the hairs crisp. Alternatively, there are conditioning shampoos that can make grooming after a bath a lot easier for breeds with long coats that are prone to tangling. Another element of conditioning that you need to consider is coloring of the coat. There are shampoos out there that can seriously enhance the natural highlights of the coat. This shampoo is easier to choose than most because you just pick one based on the color of your dog's coat!

**NOTE:** Bearing the two points above in mind is only a must for individual dogs that are completely healthy and have coats and skin that are in good condition. This does not apply to those dogs that have rashes, allergies, itching, dry skin, hives and their sensitive areas of the skin. You should use a medicated shampoo if your dog has any of the above and you need to bath him or her. However, you should always check with your vet first and possibly seek a recommendation as well because you never know how your dog will react. As the vet has seen it all before, his judgment may well be better than yours.

Similarly, if your dog does not have any of the above but there are fleas around in the area, although not necessarily on your dog, then you may want to consider shampoos with ingredients that are proven to repel fleas and thus help to keep them flea free for a little longer. These ingredients include but are not limited to neem oil, limonene and pyrethrin. Check out all the natural ingredients that are said to repel fleas before you head out to but a shampoo.
Of course, regardless of the shampoo you ultimately choose, you should never ever let your dog lick him or herself when covered in shampoo and should also avoid getting any shampoo on the face at all. You should clean the face in another way without shampoo, which is discussed in a later chapter. Shampoo should not be placed anywhere on the whiskers, eyes and ears.

Here is a quick introduction to all of the types of shampoo out there for you so you can make your own mind up right from the start:

• **Flea & Tick Shampoo** – Flea & tick shampoos come under a common myth at the moment. Most dog owners believe that they should flea shampoos when their dogs have fleas but this is not the case. They can actually be very useful for a number of breeds all year round. These shampoos are completely oil based and thus can add a little something extra to your dog’s coat in the way of conditioning. There are natural substances in them, like limonene, so you can make sure that they will not do any damage at all to your dog’s coat and skin. As flea & tick dog shampoos are safe and non-toxic, you can use them to prevent your dog getting fleas as well as for killing them after he or she does. All are effective but it is worth trying a few out to see which one suits your dog best. You should always read the label and use as directed though.

• **Medicated Shampoo** – If your dog is suffering from skin or coat irritations in any way then medicated shampoo is the only type of shampoo that you should even consider using on your dog. There are numerous different kinds of medicated shampoo but they are all designed to deal with certain skin complaints, such as itching, dry skin, dermatitis and so on. Of course, these
shampoos do help to clean the coat as well as heal the skin but it is essential that you ensure every last little bit of shampoo is removed after bathing because it can cause more problems than it solves if left there. However never use medicated shampoo unless you have been told to do so by a vet. Always get a prescription or recommendation first.

- **Tearless Shampoo** – Tearless shampoos are specially formulated to be incredibly mild and are for use on dogs that may otherwise be sensitive to shampoos. They should actually be used on the head and face of your dog alone but there are numerous owners that fully recommend using tearless shampoos on the whole coat because they are protein based and thus enhance the health and appearance of the coat.

- **Conditioning Shampoo** – Conditioning shampoo is designed to boost the condition of the hair and the skin in addition to cleaning your dog from top to toe. There are numerous conditioning shampoos available that can be used on all breeds but there are other forms of conditioning substances out there that should only be used on certain breeds. Take cream rinses for example. Cream rinses are ideal for conditioning double coated breeds, such as the Old English Sheepdog. However, they should never ever be used on dogs with silky hair or on wiry coated breeds.

- **Regular Shampoo** – This is of course the cheapest and most popular form of dog shampoo. When your dog is muddy after a long walk, smells like its been more than a year since the last bath and ensures that you have a dirt film on your hand after fusses then standard shampoo is perfect for breaking out once in a while. You can find them available for normal, oily or dry skinned dogs so you should select the best one for the skin rather than the coat.

- **Self Rinsing Shampoo** – Self rinsing shampoo is not a type of shampoo that you should use in lieu of bathing your dog because it is designed to be a stop gap just in case your dog needs freshening up in between baths. In fact, it was designed for use during dog shows when bathing dogs was just not possible. It is simple to use because there is no need for water. The liquid is sprayed onto the coat, you rub it in until it lathers up properly and then you
just a towel to get your coat clean and then it will have all the dirt removed so you can blow dry it as well.

- **Dry Shampoo** – This is very similar to self rinsing shampoo in that it works without any need for water but is actually a powder rather than a liquid. It contains various powder substances, such as talc, cornstarch, baking soda and boric acid, which will all absorb the excess oils on the skin. Again, it is not a viable substitute for actually bathing your dog but will serve its purpose as and when needed.

- **Coloring Shampoo** – As mentioned previously, coloring shampoos are available to enhance the colors of certain coats. These are largely only used by those owners that show their dogs and want them to look their best, although there is one exception to the rule. That exception is with the whitening shampoo, which is very effective in removing stains, such as urine and food, on all light colored coats and not just white coats. There are also brown, black and gold colored shampoos available as well, although they all tend to be quite expensive.

- **Hypoallergenic Shampoo** – Hypoallergenic pet shampoos are amongst the most popular out there at the moment because they are specifically designed for those dogs that are sensitive to other substances, such as perfumes, detergents and other shampoos that may have been used in the past. Your dog may have had symptoms consistent with scratching and rashes or hives. If this is the case then you should look into the many hypoallergenic shampoos on the market. All of them are formulated to be mild and tearless in addition to being gentle on the skin and the coat. However, some have anti-itch properties as well. Veterinarians may be able to recommend or even prescribe good hypoallergenic shampoos but always be sure that you have the right one for your dog.

So now you have the lowdown about the shampoos you should and should not use during dog grooming but it is essential to use them correctly if you want to get the full benefits from them. For example, you need to know exactly how to bathe your dog...
and that information can be found on a step by step basis as outlined in the section below.

**HOW TO BATHE YOUR DOG**

Bathing your dog is not an easy process the first time you do it, not if you do it properly. There are a number of steps that you should take and indeed get used to taking if you are going to continue grooming your dog yourself on a regular basis. It is essential to get the process down to a fine art so that it becomes second nature soon because that means that you are comfortable with it and your dog will feed on that. He or she will react accordingly and enjoy the bath far more if you are at ease with the process.

There are no hard and fast rules as to how you bathe your dog because every dog is an individual and so your dogs will react differently to your next door neighbor’s dog. Similarly, the breed and coat type will also have an impact on how you bathe your dog as well in addition to determining how often the optimal bath frequency is.

One important note is that if your dog is a house dog then he or she will have to be bathed more regularly than a dog that is kept in a kennel. This is obviously a result of the impact that a dirty and smelly dog has on your home.
So how exactly do you bath your dog? The step by step guide below will help you:

1. Brush your dog thoroughly prior to getting in the bath to ensure that all tangles are gone and any matting that was there is thoroughly removed.

2. Place a rubber mat in the bottom of the bath and ensure that you have everything you need to hand. Everything you need should be within an arm’s reach away. When the mat has been secured, check the temperature of the water in the showerhead or hose that you intend to use and adjust it to ensure that it is not too hot or too cold.

3. Lift your dog into the bath tub that you are using, ensure that he or she is secured fully and never leave him or her unattended. You can use a leash to do this if you think your dog may panic because it is a good tool to use to calm your pooch down if necessary. You can either hold the leash or secure it to the taps. Either way, it should ensure that your dog is not able to leap from the bath as soon as you are distracted shampooing him or her.

4. Use the showerhead to soak your dog’s coat thoroughly, leaving out the head and ears. Rub the water into your dog’s coat thoroughly and run the showerhead over it again to make sure that it is completely wet.

5. Apply the dog shampoo, following the instructions on the bottle. Begin to rub it into the coat and use a sponge if necessary to ensure that you get even coverage all over the guard hair and the undercoat, if your dog has one. Work the lather all over your dog and do not miss out any area below the head. You should make sure that you get the pads and the backend as well.

6. Leave the shampoo for no more than a minute before rinsing it off thoroughly with warm water. Ensure that every single soap sud has been rinsed off before you being the process all over again. The shampoo should be applied again in exactly the same way and then rinsed off again in exactly the same way to ensure that it is fully clean and all elements of dirty are removed.

7. Rinse it one more time to ensure that everything that should not be on your dog’s coat has been fully removed. Use your hand to wipe off any excess
water that may be left on the surface. This will help to remove spray when your dog inevitably shakes down afterwards.

8. When the body is done, wipe the face over with water and use cotton wool buds to remove dirt from the ears, as directed in Chapter Twelve. If you have missed any of the neck or chest then be sure to shampoo those areas now. You should also make sure that the belly has been done completely. Finally, check the groins to make sure that there is no lingering hint of soap there because that can cause soreness.

9. Turn the showerhead off and make sure that your dog is completely stable before running a dry wash cloth over the fur to remove any extra water that your hand did not manage to get off before. Press the fur firmly but not with too much pressure because you do not want to hurt your dog in any way. This can actually be done as if you were petting your dog to make sure that he or she has a positive experience. Finally, squeeze the tail and any excess fur hanging down off the body to make sure that it is damp and not wringing wet.

10. Before moving your dog out of the bath, cover him or her with as big and absorbent a towel as you have got. If you have used a leash to hook your dog to the taps then remove it so that your dog is now free to move. Slowly but surely lift your dog out of the bathtub and then, when he or she is placed on the floor, move the towel over the head to prevent shaking as far as possible. Talk to your dog throughout this bit because a little reassurance will go a long way.

11. Finally, rub your dog with the towel briskly, again avoiding putting any pressure on your dog’s back. You should make sure that the coat is only just a little damp when you finish. If you have thus far prevented your dog shaking then you have done well but a little shake now would let all of the last droplets fall off him or her so that blow drying will be much easier. If you need a second towel to absorb the water then use one because it will mean less time drying for your dog… and more fusses!

So there you have it – a quick and effective way to bath your dog that is incredibly simple. If you feel that you need another person there the first time then ask
someone you trust. However, you should never let a child bath your dog in case your dog gets too excited and hurts himself. A rubber mat and leash will do nothing to prevent injury if he or she gets too excited so always be responsible.

**TIPS FOR BATHING YOUR DOG**

There are a few tips available that can help you in bathing your dog and making the process more efficient and effective for you both. Some of them are outlined below for you:

- If your dog goes mad following a bath, rampaging through the house in an attempt to lose the water on his or her back, then try bathing in your garden. Using a paddling pool and a hose in an area that is completely secure and you will avoid the mess completely. Of course, you should only do this when the outdoor temperature is warm enough. In winter, you could try this in a confined area that is heated. For example, a heated garage or conservatory will work well.

- Try dealing with anxiety and nerves with toys if your dog displays any signs of either. Use your dog’s favorite toy or ball to keep him or her occupied during shampooing. This may take two people rather than one but it will soon ensure that your dog sees bathing as fun rather than something to be nervous about.

- Never bath your dog directly after a meal because the likelihood of being sick is incredibly high. This will only reinforce the idea that having a bath is a negative occurrence and ensure that he or she is reluctant to go through it all again. Leave at least 90 minutes to 2 hours either side of the bath for your dog to either digest food or calm down to help digestion afterwards.

- Do not concern yourself with the routine that show dogs have or any other information that may be given elsewhere. The grooming process for show dogs is completely different to that you will adopt when first starting out so do not worry about applying this shampoo, that conditioner and the whole range of products afterwards as well. The average dog does not need to be
groomed within an inch of his or her life, just enough to be clean, happy and healthy so KISS – keep it simple, stupid!

- Always double check the water before you put your dog in the bath. As with bathing a baby, the water needs to be a few degrees cooler than bath water that the average person has. It has to be luke warm and comfortable enough for them to stand in it or under it. Try putting a little water on his or her paw to begin with and watch for the reaction. If they are just concerned about being wet rather than the temperature then it is ready!

So there you have it – several tips that can help you to bathe your dog properly in addition to all of the information outlined above under the various sections. It is a lot to take in the first time around but the process is incredibly simple. You just have to take the time to get it right. Do bear in mind though that it will take your dog as long to get used to it as it takes you to get used to it so just take your time and come up with a routine to suit you. You will find it much easier after you do have that in place.
CHAPTER FIVE: SKIN CARE

So often when owners groom their dogs and look after their well being the canine coat is the focus. To a certain extent it should be because the coat plays a fundamental role in your dog’s life and health. It regulates temperature, protects from the elements and does so much more, which is why Chapter Six is dedicated to it. However, the coat is not the most easily damaged element that you need to consider during grooming. The skin is.

Much like in humans, the skin is a huge organ in its own right and is incredibly sensitive. Dogs can experience all sorts of problems relating to their skin and some of those issues can be incredibly hard to get rid of once they arrive. As such, paying particular attention to the skin during grooming is very important. Issues can arise at given time as a result of the impact that allergies, dryness, the use of products and common skin problems can have on your dog’s skin at any given time. This chapter will tell you everything you need to know about that.

Before getting into the issues that may arise and the basics of skin care, it is important to note that some breeds and individual dogs will have sensitive skin. For example, light and white colored coated dogs generally have skin that is far more sensitive than that of dogs with darker colored coats. They are more prone to dryness, sunburn, product irritation and allergies. As such, it is essential to pay attention to your dog if they fit this criterion. However, if you have never groomed your dog before and do not know whether he or she has a history of skin problems then the best piece of advice you can take is to treat his or her skin as if it were sensitive just in case. That way, you can confirm whether it is sensitive or not without harming your dog or causing any discomfort.

SKIN CARE DURING GROOMING

Skin care is especially important during the grooming process for two reasons. The first is because you have the opportunity to notice any skin problems during
grooming as a result of the close contact that you will have with your dog. However, the second is because of the nature of grooming itself.

Grooming can seriously harm your dog’s skin if it is not performed correctly. For example, it is easy to injure the skin during a grooming session with basic tools like brushes, clippers and scissors without even going into the more complex tools that have a greater risk of danger attached to them. For example, de-matting and duplex tools are very dangerous and can seriously cut your dog unless you take your time, apply care and seek proper training before you use them. Some damage caused by these tools can seriously and permanently harm your dog so grooming is not a process to take lightly. Instead, it is a process that you really have to respect and remain vigilant when carrying it out.

There are two particularly common injuries that occur during grooming but are totally avoidable to maintain the health and good condition of your dog’s skin. They are brush burn and clipper burn. As the names imply, both are particularly painful and needless in equal measure. Brush burn is caused by brushing too hard and clipper burn is caused by the clippers getting too hot and yet continuing to be used.

To avoid brush burn, all you have to do is be careful and avoid pressing too hard on the skin and using rough strokes to remove tangles and mats. It really is that simple. If you are brushing down to the skin then be sure to use a bristle brush because this works well with the skin and is relatively gentle. Of course, you still have to be gentle too. Use a wire or slicker brush for tangles and mats but stay well away from the skin. Instead, use it only on the guard hair with short and gentle strokes. Pin brushes can be just as painful so avoid using them on the undercoat and also on smooth coated dogs.

To avoid clipper burn, all you have to do is make sure that the blade does not get too hot and there are many ways that you can do that. Switching them off frequently and checking whether the blade is hot to the touch is a good way, as is applying cooling spray or lubricant frequently to the blade to ensure that it remains cool throughout the clipping process. Alternatively, you can switch blades when one gets hot. You should also take the time to choose the correct blade or use snap on combs to minimize the need for clipping and the duration that you use the clippers for. More
than anything else though, always be aware of sensitive areas and never run the clippers around those areas more than once at a time or else you risk irritating the skin.

**COMMON SKIN PROBLEMS**

Skin care during grooming is very important but being vigilant enough to identify common skin problems as and when they occur is also of the utmost importance. In fact, it is essential because skin conditions should not be treated by you or a professional groomer. Instead, as soon as you notice a condition you should take your dog to see your vet in order to get the proper treatment and medication for him or her.

There are numerous ways that a skin condition can manifest itself. The following represent just a few of those ways so you are able to get a good idea of what to look out for:

**Dry Skin** – Dry skin is a common problem for dogs of all breeds because there are a number of causes of it. Most are atmospheric causes, but there are one or two others that you should know about. Firstly, the most common cause of dry skin in dogs is the temperature change during winter. Cold temperatures cause dog skin to flake just as ours does. As it is seasonal and largely down to low temperatures, you may find that using a humidifier works within the home and giving smooth coated dogs an extra coat on a walk.

Another common cause of dry skin is the use of harsh human or poor quality shampoos during grooming. Shampoos that are of a high quality and are specially formulated for dogs are designed to work in harmony with the skin but human and cheap shampoos are not and so will often strip the natural oils from your dog’s skin and coat. This causes irritation and dries out the skin as well.

If your dog’s skin does not improve when you are using a proper dog shampoo or a humidifier then you should take your dog to a vet to check whether or not there is some sort of underlying issue that needs to be addressed.
**Allergies** – Allergies are just as common in dogs as they are in humans today and have the same sources – foods, external environmental factors and substances that can be inhaled. All three can cause a bad reaction, which will manifest itself in one of several ways and almost always appear on the skin. Rashes, hives, itching, baldness and irritability are all common reactions and any one or a combination of them can be observed as soon as your dog has had the reaction.

If left untreated, all of these elements will lead to one unhappy dog but it is possible to catch all of them early, especially if you regularly groom your dog. Catching them early many actually be a godsend because, when left to develop, they all cause a cycle of irritation that is difficult to get your dog out of. For example, a rash will cause itching. That will of course irritate your dog and encourage him or her to scratch. That will cause further irritation, which leads to licking the wound. Licking can cause the spreading of any infection that has got into the sores that have been opened by the scratching and then the whole process begins again. As such, it can be difficult to get rid of this entire cycle once it has started and even then it may leave lasting and wholly negative effects on the skin for a number of months or even years.

The most common of all dog allergies is a reaction to the saliva of fleas, which occurs after your dog has picked the little critters up and they have bitten through the skin. Grooming also comes in handy because it allows you to notice any fleas that are present in your dog’s coat and get rid of them all in one sweep. However, when you are removing the fleas by applying flea shampoo or insecticides, ensure that you keep them away from your dog’s eyes and, following the removal of the shampoo, be sure to locate the hives and rash to ensure that you avoid brushing over it. You can get rid of matting with a comb instead.

Another form of allergic reaction is also relatively common and that is a result of various products that you use on your dog’s skin. Shampoos, conditioners, sprays, chemicals for treating fleas and other similar substances can all cause reactions. Similarly, if you change your current grooming products then you should keep an eye on your dog to make sure that there is no reaction before using them again. Foods can also cause similar reactions. As such, if you change your dog’s regular dietary habits then you should also monitor the situation.
If in doubt over allergies then always seek veterinary help because you never know when it may turn out to be something more serious.

**Hot Spots** – Hot spots are areas that have wounds that are moist and hot to the touch that have the ability to spread like wildfire and can make your dog’s life an absolute misery. They are effectively areas of moist dermatitis that are initially caused by any one of a number of triggers. It may be fleas, an allergic reaction, poor grooming, an irritant or an infection. Whichever trigger it is leaves a small wound, which is then licked and scratched by your dog until it gets infected and thus worse. When the infection hits the wound it turns into a hot spot and is incredibly difficult to sort out. Your vet will need to remove all hair from the area and treat it directly because this is the only way to draw the infection out. You need to ensure that your dog does not lick it after treatment and there are products for this, which are often prescribed along with an antihistamine.

**Diseases And Infection** – There are so many different skin diseases and infections that dogs can pick up that it is difficult to know where to start. If your dog does have a skin disease or infection then you first stop should always be the vet because he will be able to advise you about the course of action you can take. This includes advice about medication and grooming practices that should be employed until your dog is better.

Diseases can be anything from oily seborrhea, which is simply from the production of too much natural oil, right through to the far more serious skin cancer. As such, you can see the range in severity but the sooner you get your dog treated the sooner he or she will feel comfortable again. Infections, on the other hand, are often cause by bacteria entering wounds or poor grooming techniques. Some are common, such as impetigo in puppies, whereas others are breed specific, such as skin fold pyoderma in Shar Pei dogs. All can be treated with antibiotics and ceasing grooming until the area is completely clear. Although the hair should be removed from the area to allow the air to get to the wounds caused, further grooming will actually cause a spread of the infection.
In addition to all of the above, another cause of problems can come from a dog’s own dander. It is the dander that causes allergic reactions to dogs in humans but it can also cause issues for dogs. Irritation, itching, redness and sore spots can all arise as a result of dander. However, this is not included in the list above because it is not a vet’s responsibility to help to treat it but an owner’s to prevent it.

It is possible to prevent reactions to dander by simply keeping your home and your dog’s bedding in particular clean. Washing bedding once every two weeks and thoroughly cleaning your home once a week is enough to keep dander reactions at bay.

Another element that you need to consider is the skin care you need to employ when your dog is in the sun. All dogs can get sunburned and it is just as uncomfortable for them as it is for us. Although making sure that they avoid this is not strictly an area involved in the grooming process, it is no less important than anything else outlined in this book. Always make sure that your dog has plenty of water and access to shade, as well as sunscreen on. This is especially important in cases of white and light colored dogs that have short to medium coats.

As you can see, skin care is of vital importance for your dog. However, you should also ensure that your dog’s coat also gets more than enough attention.
CHAPTER SIX: YOUR DOG’S COAT

Dogs have coats. That much goes without saying but just how much do you know about your dog’s coat? Most owners know very little and this is why the grooming process is often actually not carried out as effectively and efficiently as it could be. Bathing and skin care are common elements of the grooming process for all dogs but elements like drying and brushing largely depend on the type of coat that your dog has, which is why it is important.

There are also elements that all dogs have in common in terms of their coats, such as removing stains, eliminating the smell and making it look healthy. As such, it is important to look at all of the factors necessary for you to have a good enough knowledge for you to take care of your dog’s coat effectively. All of the information you need is right here so read on to find out everything you need to know.

AN INTRODUCTION TO DOG COATS

This section is effectively a basic introduction to dog coats, including what they are made of, what to look out for in specific breeds and the difference between single and double coats.

Firstly, a dog’s coat is essentially made of the same elements that our hair is made of, or the same as every other mammal for that matter! It is made of proteins, largely keratin and dead skin cells. It grows from follicles that are located just underneath the surface of the skin, much like our hair. However, unlike our hair, each one of a dog’s follicles actually has several different hairs growing out of it. This is because the coat serves to regulate body temperature. Dogs’ follicles also have oil glands attached to them, which have developed to produce enough oil to suit the breed’s purpose as well as keeping the coat healthy. For example, dogs that are primarily bred to swim actually have more oil glands so as to waterproof their coats.

There are actually two general kinds of coat that are found in dogs – the single coat and the double coat.
The single coat is commonly found in short haired breeds like Greyhounds, Whippets, Weimaraners and other similar breeds. The single coated dog has two types of hair growing, the guard hair and the whiskers. Double coated dogs have three types of hair – whiskers, guard hair and undercoat. Numerous breeds have double coats, such as the Collie, German Shepherd and most terriers.

Before we go into the differences between the two, it is necessary to define exactly what the guard hair and undercoat are and how they differ. The undercoat is the layer of the coat that lies closest to the skin if it is present. It is fluffy, downy and grows in short clusters so as to provide a little insulation against the elements. Conversely, the guard hair is thicker and much longer. It is the level of the coat that is visible to the naked eye and is designed to prevent superficial injuries to the skin primarily, thus only offering insulation as a secondary function.

Now that we have the two straight, it is necessary to highlight the main differences between double and single coats:

- A double coat has two layers (undercoat and guard hair), whereas the single coated dog only has one (the guard hair). The former can therefore look harsher and wirier whereas the latter generally has an even sheen to it.

- Single coated dogs tend to shed less and smell less because the hair turnover, so to speak, is drastically reduced. Double coated dogs have two lots of fur to shed, which is why they largely tend to smell more as well. The shedding section of this chapter shines a little more light on this topic.

- Double coats are designed to protect the dogs that have them from the elements, meaning that they are more equipped to deal with the cold. On the other hand, single coated dogs are more susceptible to the cold and thus are more likely to feel any fluctuations in temperature as a result of the lack of insulation.

- As a general rule, people that are allergic to dogs have a much stronger reaction to double coated dogs than to single coated dogs. It is generally the insulating undercoat that causes allergies as opposed to the guard hair.
• Single coated dogs require less grooming and less cosmetic attention than single coated dogs because double coats tend to get matted easier and retain dirt far more readily than guard hair. As such, more baths, brushing and drying is required for them.

• Double coated dogs also tend to stay cooler in the summer because the insulating layer also protects against heat. Single coated dogs are just as prone to heatstroke in summer as they are to hypothermia in winter so it is important to maintain a steady house temperature for them and groom accordingly.

• Single coats rarely experience any mats and tangles in their coats and so are generally easier to groom.

The general rule on remembering the difference between the two is that the single coat is decorative and the double coat is functional. The former is easily broken and damaged if care is not taken whereas the latter is very different.

Of course, all dogs have the third type of hair – the whiskers. Whiskers are deeply rooted and are to be found on the muzzle as well as the eyelid. They have a unique function when compared to the undercoat and guard hair. Instead of being
decorative, insulation or protective, the whiskers are effectively there for sensory reasons. They are thick enough to register any slight movement near them or touch. As such, they alert the dog to the proximity of threats and send the instruction to react accordingly.

There are different types of coat within the double and single coated categories and it is worth looking at these types because it can help to define your dog’s coat and thus how you groom it much more effectively. The types of coat are outlined below for your reference.

**TYPES OF COAT**

Most experts assert that there are five different types of dog coats out there, all of which provide various hints as to how to provide the best possible care for your dog. It is necessary to classify your dog’s coat type first so the quick guide to the coat types are outlined for you below so you can do just that:

- **Smooth Coat** – Breeds like the Basset Hound, Beagle, Boston Terrier, Boxer, Bulldog, Dalmatian, Great Dane, Greyhound, Labrador Retriever, Miniature Pinscher, Pug, Rottweiler and Weimeraner all have smooth coats. The fur is sleek, shiny and very short as a general rule and thus do not need as much grooming as most other dogs. The general grooming routine for smooth coated dogs should contain regular brushing and occasional baths. Brushing is necessary to ensure that the natural oils produced by the coats are spread evenly across the surface of the fur in addition to ensuring that all stray hairs are removed.

- **Medium Coat** – The breeds that fall under this category include the Akita, Australian Shepherd, Border Collie, Brittany, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, German Shepherd Dog, Golden Retriever, Great Pyrenees, Pembroke Welsh Corgi, Saint Bernard and Siberian Husky. These breeds have coats that exceed an inch thick but still appear to be relatively short and are easy to groom. These coats do not typically get tangled or matted and tend to retain little in the way of dirt. Although you may have to incorporate a trim into your
grooming routine, experts recommend a brush once a week and a bath once a month for these dogs. Although these breeds generally have an undercoat as well as guard hair, they do not tend to shed as much as heavier coated breeds. However, you should still take care to ensure that they are dry following baths because any lingering dampness can cause illness.

• Long Coat – Although smooth and medium coated dogs are easy to classify, long coated dogs fall into three distinct categories. There are long parted coats, long coated small dogs and long coated large dogs. The grooming of each is different because of the nature of the coat:

  o Long Parted Coats – These dog coats are incredibly distinctive because the long hair actually has a parting that runs straight down their backs. It is actually rather rare because only eight breeds (Afghan Hound, Lhasa Apso, Maltese, Skye Terrier, Shih Tzu, Silky Terrier, Tibetan Terrier and Yorkshire Terrier) have been identified. This can hinder the grooming process because it tends to tangle and has to be set following a monthly bath. It should be brushed regularly to prevent matting and the brush should follow the parting, much as a hairdresser would when dealing with human hair. If you adhere to the same principles then it will make life easier!

  o Long Coated Small Dogs – Long haired small dogs have no parting at all but can be just as difficult to groom because, again, these dogs are prone to the matting and tangling of fur. The Havanese, Chinese Crested, Pekingese and Pomeranian breeds are the most common under this heading. Regular brushing, bathing and trimming is essential, although some of these types of coat do not have an undercoat so you have to pick the right time of year to do so.

  o Long Coated Large Dogs – The Bearded Collie, Chow Chow, Cocker Spaniel, Irish Setter, Newfoundland, Old English Sheepdog, Saint Bernard and Samoyed breeds are all long coated large dogs. They obviously take a lot of time to groom if you want to keep them clean and smelling fresh. They are prone to matting, tangling and picking up
dirt so it is essential to groom your dog via brushing, bathing and clippings on a regular basis to maintain the health of the coat.

- Wire Coat – The wire coat is relatively common because it can be found on a number of popular breeds, including the Affenpinscher, Border Terrier, Brussels Griffon, Dandie Dinmont Terrier, Irish Terrier, Otterhound, Scottish Terrier and West Highland White Terrier. Wire coats differ from most other types of coats because they do not look or feel smooth and silky. Instead, they are rough and tend to feel a little like the bristles on a brush. However, there are benefits to this type of coat because these dogs do not shed. This does make your job of grooming wire coats a little harder though. You have to pluck out older hairs that are a little wild so that new hairs can grow and this takes a lot of time. Baths are also essential to ensure that all dirt is removed and brushing is essential to ensure the even distribution of oils. Make sure that you have a regular routine when you have time to spare.

- Wavy Coat – The wavy coat is one of the more unusual types of coat out there because it is characterized by curls. As such, you may know the wavy coat as the curly coat. The coat can get tangled with even the slightest of movements and knots are relatively common. Furthermore, the coat is also characterized by dryness. As such, it will break easily and so grooming is a very sensitive process. There are conditioning sprays available and the regular brushing required for this type of coat should only be done when the coat has been sprayed with this substance. There are numerous ways and means to groom a wavy coat, which is a good job considering the common breeds are often associated with water – Bichon Frise, Curly Coated Retriever, Irish Water Spaniel, Komondor, Poodle and Portuguese Water Dog being just a few of them. Monthly clipping is essential, as is weekly brushing and monthly baths. However, unless you plan to show your dog then you can cut a few corners and still do a good job on wavy coats.

More about some of the individual breeds mentioned above can be found in Chapter 18 so you can see examples of how to groom dogs with the various types of coats yourself for illustrative purposes.
**SHEDDING AND ELIMINATING THE SMELL**

Shedding is a cyclical event in the life of a dog. Single coated and double coated dogs both shed their fur twice a year because it tends to grow in seasonal cycles. However, single coated dogs shed far less than double coated dogs in both amount and duration for reasons that we will examine in a little while.

It is worth noting, though, that some breeds of dog do not shed at all. The following are all breeds that do not shed, but all of those not included in the following list shed to varying degrees: Airedale Terrier, Basenji, Bedlington Terrier, Bichon Frise, Bolognese, Border Terrier, Brussels Griffon, Cairn Terrier, Chinese Crested, Cockapoodle, Coton de Tulear, Havanese, Irish Water Spaniel, Kerry Blue Terrier, Labradoodle, Lowchen, Maltese, Poodle, Portuguese Water Dog, Puli, Schnauzer, Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier, Tibetan Terrier, West Highland White Terrier, Wirehaired Fox Terrier and Yorkshire Terrier.

So why do dogs shed their fur? Well, it effectively grows to a genetically predetermined length and then falls out so the growth cycle can begin again. It is affected by the hours of sunlight and the atmospheric temperature so the exact time of shedding can vary from season to season and year to year. However, the general rule is that double coated dogs tend to shed their undercoats when the temperatures are warmer. This allows them to get rid of enough of their undercoat for it to be able to cool instead of heat their bodies, which is appropriate given the fact that their sweat glands are located in their feet and not anywhere else on the body! They also shed the lighter undercoat that grows during summer as the temperatures start to drop again so that they can re-grow their insulating thick winter coat.

Shedding does happen in other circumstances that are related to the female’s hormones as well. For example, if a female dog has had a little of puppies or happens to be heading out of heat then this can cause shedding too. However, the general rule is that dogs usually shed twice a year and this means that a female that sheds as a result of hormonal imbalances will only shed once more that year.
As with anything else, there are exceptions to the rule and some dogs may shed all year round as a result of the climate and lack of environmental changes. For example, in temperate climates, some dogs may continuously shed in order to keep the right balance in terms of the body temperature. Of course, some dogs do not shed at all. This is primarily in cold climates and in certain breeds, such as the Poodle. Poodles never shed but instead have coats that continuously grow unless the owner trims it.

When shedding occurs, it does not just happen overnight. Instead, you will notice that small tufts of the undercoat hair begin to push through the guard hair. You should pick this up as soon as possible so that you can take action because if you miss the early signs then you will find that there are hairs all over the place.

Grooming through shedding is as difficult as it is frustrating. The amount of hair shed depends on the breed and the dog so you may more or less hair to deal with accordingly. However, you will have to brush your dog every single day until the shedding subsides. There is another tool that you can use through – the shedding blade. The shedding blade is the only option when it comes to handling your dog’s hair effectively. It works by pulling the hair away from your dog’s coat and is worth every penny as a result. The hair is pulled away and moved into a pile on the floor. As such, all of the loose hairs are removed at one time and move to one place, which makes cleaning up an awful lot easier as well! Another function of the shedding blade is to remove the hair that is effectively dead and will leave a bad smell around.
Speaking of which, it is essential to look after your dog’s coat in order to eliminate the smell. If you do not bath, brush and generally groom your dog then the likelihood is that your dog’s coat will seriously begin to smell. This applies to single and double coated dogs so you have to get into a routine as soon as possible if you want to keep the smell at bay. The only way to eliminate the smell is to wash it away thoroughly on a regular basis and make sure that your dog is fully and effectively groomed.

**A Picture Of Health**

It is true that all dogs, whether they shed or not and regardless of coat type, can be measured by their coat in relation to their health. It does not matter what colour it is, what patterns are on the coat or what texture is present, a dull and lifeless coat always highlights a degradation of health. It may be that your dog is not getting the right nutrients in his or her diet is that is the case. Alternatively, it may be that he or she is depressed. If the coat is itchy and makes your dog irritable then the likelihood is that he or she has an issue with fleas, other parasites, a hormone imbalance, thyroid issues or even other illnesses that are causing problems for them on the inside.

There are things that you can do to ensure that your dog is healthy and his or her coat demonstrates that effectively. The first is to get your dog’s diet right. He or she should have all the nutrients required to ensure health in any active dog. Plenty of exercise is also a key element of maintaining the health of your dog. If your dog gets good food and good exercise then this will show up in his or her coat. A shiny coat is achievable via these means providing that there are no underlying health issues. If your dog does have a good diet and plenty of exercise and yet the coat is still dull and lifeless then you may want to seek veterinary advice to see if there is an underlying issue that needs to be dealt with.

There are superficial issues that may occur with a dog’s coat as well as those that relate to his or her inner health. For example, dogs love to play in wet and muddy areas of the park, which would explain how light colored dogs tend to pick up stains relatively easily. As such, to maintain the health of the coat the stains need to be
removed. There are plenty of solutions available that are not harmful to the coat or to the skin of your dog and can remove the stain quickly and effectively.
You cannot brush your dog without a brush so the first thing that you need to do is take the time to make sure that you choose the right one. You have to take a lot of factors into account when trying to choose the right ones. For example, the coat plays a big part because longer and coarser coats will be more prone to matting and tangling than shorter coats. Similarly, harsh brushes are likely to damage the skin on shorter coats because there is no real furry protection available. As such, brush selection is a little difficult but it is an important decision to make so it is essential to ensure that you take your time and make the right choice.

As outlined in the grooming tools section, there are numerous brushes that you can choose from. To recap though, there are perhaps five that you have to choose from:

* Bristle Brush – The most common of brush types, natural bristles are designed to work in harmony with the skin and the coat in order to get the
best possible results. There are various sizes available so you should choose one that suits your dog size and not focus on the coat. The larger the dog, the larger the bristle brush should be. However, there are certain bristles that suit certain coats as well. If your dog has a long coat then wide spaced and longer bristles would suit it best. Tighter bristles are better for short haired coats.

• Wire Pin Brush – Pin brushes and wire brushes are ideal for longer coats as well as coats that are curly because they tend to be much stronger than bristle brushes and push through tangles really well. However, they will hurt smooth coated dogs and thus damage the skin so they are best avoided for those dogs.

• Slicker Brush – A slicker brush should be used in conjunction with a wire pin brush because it should be used afterwards to smooth the coats of longer haired dogs. Slicker brushes are renowned for removing mats and tangles and so are ideal for double coated dogs but again should be avoided on single coated dogs.

• Undercoat Rake – The undercoat rake is pretty self explanatory. If your dog has a double coat then you should use one to remove any dead and loose hairs from the undercoat of double coated dogs. It may be that you have a medium or long haired dog, a small or large dog… It really does not matter what they look like or what breed they are. If you have a double coated dog then you need this brush.

• Dog Comb – Every single breed needs a comb because it is essential for getting out tangles, smoothing the fur down after a bath and even to take care of fleas as well. It is the one piece of equipment that is not dependent on coat at all so invest in a god brush.

The ideal combinations for all coat types vary from dog to dog but most owners will only need a bristle brush and a comb. However, you may want to consider having a wire pin brush as well if you have a long coated breed. After all, you can chop and change as and when required. This will be explained in the matting section a little later on in this chapter.
THE FREQUENCY OF BRUSHING

Before addressing how to brush your dog and sorting out the problem of matting, it is necessary to figure out exactly how often you should brush your dog and when you should do so.

There are so many rumors and myths around grooming practices that it really does get confusing from time to time about what you are supposed to be doing with your dog and this especially applies to brushing. Some say that you should only brush your dog once a week or so but in actual fact you can brush them as often as you like. Brushing does not strip anything from the skin at all. In fact, it helps it to evenly redistribute the natural oils produced to keep your dog’s coat in top condition. Regular brushing also prevents tangles and matting, removing dirt and making the rest of the grooming process a whole lot easier. Furthermore, it can help to boost your dog’s blood circulation and that can only be a good thing.

There are so many benefits of brushing your dog that it is hard to keep up with all of them but it is easy to figure out how often you should brush your dog with a little help. For example, a dog that is used to grooming and has a smooth coat may only need brushing once a week. However, a long coated dog that is prone to tangles should be brushed at least once every other day. Again, it is all dependent on the coat type in terms of the minimum brushing requirements but if you want to brush more often then that is completely your decision.
When you are trying to get your dog used to brushing then it should be a part of a daily routine. It is first necessary to introduce your dog to the brush by showing it and then rewarding your dog for not attacking it. This should occur regularly over the course of a couple of days. After that, you should brush your dog daily, especially if you have a puppy. The sooner your dog gets used to it and accepts it as an essential part of the daily routine, the sooner he or she will begin to like it and see it as time spent petting and fussing with you. It has to be a positive experience but you must be firm with your dog because the longer brushing is left alone, the more likely it is to hurt and come across as a negative experience.

There are some general brushing recommendations when your dog is used to brushing every day and they are as follows:

- Short haired dogs – Once a week
- Thick or coarse coated dogs – Two to three times a week
- Long coated dogs – Once a day or every other day
- Shedding dogs – Daily to remove loose hair and minimize shedding
There is one incidence in which you should break the above guidelines and brush more than once a day. You should be sure to brush your dog both before and after having a bath. There are many reasons for that but the main one is to save your dog unnecessary pain. If you remove tangles before the bath then your fingers will not pull them during the bath. Brushing after will remove any that occurred during bathing and improve the condition of the coat.

**HOW TO BRUSH YOUR DOG**

Brushing your dog is not as difficult as many inexperienced owners think it is. It is all a matter of confidence. Think about how you brush your own hair. You may wince when you hit a tangle but you know it has to be done. The same applies when you are doing your children’s hair so why it is so different when grooming your pet? Most people do not like the idea of hurting their dogs because there is no way to explain that you do not mean to hurt them but it is far worse if you leave it until a later date. It must be done so you have to get used to it as much as your dog does.

You can choose to brush your dog on the floor or on a grooming table. Whatever feels more comfortable for you is fine, but if you would prefer a little more control the first couple of brushing sessions then you may want to put a collar and leash on your dog as well. The more relaxed the setting though, the better your dog will react to the situation.

Brushing your dog is actually really easy because there really is nothing to it at all. There are just two actions that you need to remember if your dog does not have matting that you need to deal with. Of course, this applies to dogs in general rather than specific breeds, but there is information about several specific breeds that have certain requirements in Chapter Eighteen.

Firstly, start at the front end of your dog and move backwards, brushing the hair against the direction of growth. You should take one side of your dog and the work your way down the other afterwards so you can ensure that every single section of your dog’s hair is groomed thoroughly. Separate the hair into rough sections and
brush against the growth. This effectively removes all tangles from the underside of the hair.

Next, brush from the back end to the front section by section, brushing in the direction of growth. This smoothes all of the hair down and removes any lingering tangles from the topside of the coat. As such, you should be left with a lovely shiny and health coat and your dog should be left with a good impression of brushing so that he or she eventually welcomes it.

DEALING WITH MATTING OR EXCESSIVE TANGLES

The ordinary brushing process, as outlined above, is fine for dogs that do not have matted fur of any kind to deal with. However, if your dog’s fur is matted then that can cause major issues. For starters, it is likely to hurt your dog and this will make them run and hide in a convenient place whenever you pull out the brush. As such, you have to be sure that you can go about dealing with them in the right way prior to actually getting your hands on the mats.

Getting rid of matted fur is an absolute nightmare but if you know the correct procedure then it can be much easier than you may think. If you follow the steps as
outlined below then you will find the whole process a lot easier than you may think possible.

1. First of all, you need to plan the de-matting process out well depending on the size of your dog. A small dog will be fine to sit on your lap or on a cushion next to you on a sofa or on the floor if that is where you are sitting. Alternatively, you can get a large dog to lie at your feet, or again sit on the floor next to him. Above all else, you should be comfortable and settled because your dog will mimic your behavior. It may be that you want someone else there as well just to be on the safe side and for reassurance.

2. As soon as your dog is settled, begin to fuss him or her and reassure verbally as well as with a little petting. Slowly start brushing your dog in areas that are not matted to get him or her used to the feel of the brush and the fur.

3. After a while, zero in on the matting and divide it into small sections as far as possible. Begin to untangle the matting with your fingers at first and then use a comb to remove any loose knots that remain on the hair. Be as gentle as possible and move on if your dog flinches at all, going back to the knots when you have untangled another area.

4. Use the comb to rake through an area of hair that has been completely cleared of mats because the area will be a little wiry and a little shorter as well with the knots missing. Be sure to grasp the roots if you can to limit the amount of pulling that occurs. Slowly release them as the hair starts to give a little.

5. Repeat this in an adjacent section until there is a larger area of hair ready for combing through.

6. Run your fingers through the remaining matting when it has thinned out enough to give it a little more separation that it had previously. Then use the comb to move from the roots upwards over the hair to get rid of any remaining mats when a larger section is ready.

7. Combat any and all mats that you can in one session. Your dog will eventually get bored or restless and want to move. If that happens before you
are done then just go back to it the next day, repeating the same performance to ensure that he or she is mat free within a couple of days.

8. Give treats regularly when removing tangles from the fur because this not only acts as an incentive but also reinforces it as a positive experience. As such, your dog will probably let you do it all over again.

The above will give you a very effective and efficient method of removing mats. However, there will be occasions when you cannot remove the matting with a comb and your fingers. As such, you may have to cut some of the mats out. If this is the case then be sure that there is no other alternative. After all, cutting the fur leaves your dog’s skin vulnerable in places and this is not advisable.

If you do have to cut out a little matting then use sharp scissors to do so. Carefully separate the blades and use only one to do it rather than snipping it out. Grasp the matting firmly and gently pull it up. Slide the scissor blade into the matting and move it gently up and down to loosen the strands and remove the mat from the bottom. Never actively sip at the hair because you may actually cut your dog that way. If you use one blade then it may be possible to leave a little hair in place as well.

However, if you think that there is a chance that you will be able to save your dog’s hair and separate the matting if it were in smaller areas then use the scissors to separate it instead of removing it. You can then use the step by step guide to get rid of it manually.
Finally, when the matting has been removed, treat your dog with a huge bone or a long walk. This will reinforce the positive nature of it all and encourage your dog to look forward to the close personal attention in the future.

After all matting is gone, remind yourself never to let it get that far again and brush your dog every day. This will help to prevent it a little in the future because your dog may well be prone to it occurring. Pay particular attention to the stomach, groin, arm pits and chest to prevent really painful matting in the future.

There are certain tips that may well help you to remove any matting a little more efficiently than would otherwise be possible. Some of the best tips around are outlined below:

- You can avoid matting by brushing your dog’s coat before and after a bath in addition to applying conditioner to the coat during the bathing process. Combing the conditioner through the coat will remove any tangles and make the coat smooth at the same time.

- Never use a brush to iron out knots present in the undercoat or at the roots of the hair because it has the potential to damage the skin as well as the coat and thus cause irritation. A metal comb will work wonders on those knots and help to avoid knots in the future.

- Always be careful during petting because rubbing the fur the wrong way can cause matting. Instead, always stroke your dog with the growth pattern instead of against it and avoid ruffling the fur.

- Anything you can do to prevent your dog from scratching should be done, and this includes regular flea treatments. Excessive scratching in a long coated dog can and will cause extensive matting to the fur. As such, this proves to be a double pain for them and takes up a lot of your time as well.

- Finally, be sure to use metal brushes and combs when de-matting your dog’s coat because it will not bend or break like natural bristles can. Neither will it make the matting worse as natural bristles can. Metal will easily sweep through a dog’s hair and highlight any matting.
In conclusion to this chapter, you should always avoid dragging or forcing any form of brush through your dog’s hair because that can cause the matting that you are so desperate to avoid. Instead, use short strokes that will not only help to avoid matting but can also help to make your job a whole lot easier. Short strokes like that can please your dog because it feels good to them. It is how they groom each other, albeit with their teeth and not a brush. You will soon get the seal of approval!
CHAPTER EIGHT: DRYING

So now you have bathed your dog and probably have a bathroom that is dripping with the excess water that he or she shook off as soon as you switched off the showerhead. That is par for the course but whilst you will have to wait for your bathroom to dry out, you have several options when it comes to drying your dog.

After you have given your dog a bath it is essential to ensure that he or she is completely dry. This applies regardless of what type of coat your dog has because lingering dampness can cause infections, hypothermia and other ailments that are needless. All you need to do is add an extra five minutes onto the grooming session and make sure that the guard hair and undercoat are both completely dry.

Obviously, before you do attempt to dry your dog, you should run a brush through his or her hair to smooth out any mats and tangles that the water has left behind. This has the added advantage of removing any excess water before the drying process begins.

There are three main methods of drying your dog once he or she is out of the bath and it is your decision as to which one you use. Some suit certain types of coat or breed so take the time to read through all three before you decide. All are outlined below for you to choose from:
Fluff drying is another term for blow drying so you effectively use a hairdryer of some sort to dry your dog. You can use a handheld dryer that you already have in your home or you can use one of the many specialist tools available – the floor dryer. Floor dryers are used to fluff dry dogs by professional dog groomers and are becoming increasingly popular amongst owners as well. There are many available in pet stores and on the Internet today, some of which have high speed motors to make your dog extra fluffy, but just how can you do it?

Well, fluff drying is an effective mode of drying specific breeds, namely those that are meant to be fluffy according to the breed standard – the Poodle, Afghan Hound, Maltese and Old English Sheepdog to name just four.

Firstly, you have to separate the coat into sections and dry each one individually, using a brush to straighten the coat section that the warm air is directed at. When drying it, you must use the brush to move the fur upwards in a quick but efficient way so as to ensure that all strokes are even. You have to make sure that each individual section is completely dry before moving onto the next one. You should literally repeat this process until every square inch of your dog’s coat is completely dry.

There is actually a technique that applies to fluff drying if you want to do it properly. If you do not do it properly then your dog may look cute but the final grooming job will...
not look professional. For example, if your Poodle is supposed to have pom poms then he or she will have them if you do it properly. If you do not do the fluff dry properly then you will not be able to create them.

When you are fluff drying any dog then you should make sure to pay attention to the sensitive areas of the body. For example, the dryer should not go anywhere near the eyes because it will dry them out. Similarly, you should take care when drying around the ears and head because it can startle your dog and thus cause a hatred of grooming that can ruin al future attempts! Make sure that all crevices are dry, especially those around the tail and legs as well.

Most importantly though, when using this method always make sure that the dryer is not on a hot setting because the last thing you want to do is burn your dog. It should be cool or warm but never hot.

**Cage Drying**

Cage drying is not the most popular method of drying out there but it is one of those that should be because it is perfect for short or smooth coated dogs as well as those that do not need to have straight fur in order to conform to breed standard. Also known as kennel drying, it simply requires a good sized cage and a cage dryer. The latter is effectively attached to the former so that it can effectively dry your dog as he or she relaxes after the exertion of grooming.

Again, you should brush your dog before drying and again afterwards to remove any tangles but that is the extent of your involvement. The cage dryer does all the work for you so there is no fluffing and brushing during the drying process.

You can purchase cages and cage dryers at all good pet stores and most are reasonably priced. The only other piece of equipment you need is a towel on which your dog can lay down during the drying process. However, you need to make sure that your cage allows for proper ventilation because the dryer could otherwise overheat or suffocate your dog. That, of course, can ultimately lead to death, which is never something that should be able to happen during grooming. It must be ventilated at the top and to the sides.
Small and large dogs alike can be cage dried but large dogs can be difficult to find a cage big enough for. As such, you may like to use a floor dryer whilst your dog is laying on a grooming table for larger breeds. Either way, ensure that your dog is completely dry prior to stopping the dryer and try to avoid the eyes as far as possible.

**Towel Drying**

This is the third and final method of drying and one of the most popular amongst owners because all you need is a towel to get your dog dried off after a bath. This is not suitable for large breeds because it is almost impossible to ensure that your dog is fully dry. With so much hair to see to, it would take you hours to dry it all by hand. As such, it is best suited for small dogs that have short hair. For example, if you have a Toy Manchester Terrier, Chihuahua, Miniature Pinscher or any other small breed of that size then you can use this method. It is suitable for all terriers and some of the smooth coated hounds as well.

All you have to do is get a towel and briskly run your dog’s coat until it is completely dry. You may need a hand held hairdryer to finish off the job if some areas are still damp. However, changing to a dry towel when your towel is damp is a good idea as well that can remove the need for a hairdryer. This is good for some dogs that are easily started by loud noises and would not enjoy being under a dryer of any kind in any circumstances.
As you can see, all of the methods of drying have their advantages and disadvantages but whatever you do, do not let your dog outside until he or she is completely dry because this can lead to illness. Choose the one that is best for you and your dog.
CHAPTER NINE: HAIR CLIPPING

Hair clipping is an aspect of grooming that is most commonly associated with the grooming of Poodles and other similar breeds that, as outlined in previous chapters, either do not shed or shed very little and thus need our help to maintain a manageable and healthy coat. However, it is possible to clip all breeds to ensure that their coats remain healthy.

No matter what breed your dog is, you should consider clipping him or her to ensure that the hair is manageable and at a comfortable length for them. For example, an excessive coat in summer can cause heatstroke but too light a coat in winter can encourage the onset of hypothermia. You should consider this in line with how short to clip your dog's hair. As a general rule, the breed standard for your dog will give you the ideal length for his or her coat. Experts have formulated those standards after years of looking after the breed so they know exactly what they are talking about and are fully qualified to offer advice.

There is one point worth noting in relation to the breed that needs to be said before going any further. If you dog has a double coat then you should not clip him or her
during the summer months because the undercoat actively cools the skin, just as it insulates against the cold in winter. However, spring or fall clipping is advised to ensure that the coat stays trim. Single coated dogs, on the other hand, should be clipped as and when necessary with absolutely no worries about the season. Their cuts can be given on an as and when needed basis.

Before you start to even considering clipping your dog though, there are certain elements of this area of grooming that you should think about before starting. Some of those elements are outlined below:

• **Age** – You should start clipping your dog as early as possible because puppies will react better to clipping than older dogs. Puppies are far more open to new situations and are naturally inquisitive so it is much easier to get your puppy used to noisy clippers than it is to get your older dog used to noisy clippers. Of course, no matter what age your dog is, you have to get them used to the idea of clipping slowly but you will find it easier if you introduce your dog to it at a young age.

• **The Clippers** – There are so many types and brands of clippers out there that it is easy to choose one if you just wander into the shop and pick some up. However, this is not the best idea because you should do a little homework first. You have to choose the quietest clippers available and the smoothest as well. Both the noise level and the ease of use will not only affect your experience of clipping but also your dog’s experience. The more pleasant your dog’s experience, the more open they will be to a repeat experience at a later date.

• **Breed** – The breed of your dog is not only important as a result of the breed standard but also as a result of the type of cut that you give. Poodles, terriers and other breeds all have specific cuts that are designed for that breed. As such, you should do plenty of homework in advance rather than just attacking your dog with the clippers!

Another element to consider is whether or not you are brave enough and feel confident enough to be able to clip your dog properly. Even if you make a mistake first time it is no big deal because it will grow out. However, if you feel tense and are
nervous then that will rub off on your dog, who will in turn have a worse reaction that
you. Always remember that your attitude will rub off on your dog and this will of
course cause issues if you are nervous.

**USING THE CLIPPERS**

If you have decided that you are going to clip your dog then you will now need to
know exactly how to use the clippers. It is a little different from shaving someone’s
head for a number of reasons so even if you have experience of using them, you will
need to start completely from scratch when clipping your dog. There are so many
things to take into consideration so that you can use clippers safely that you need a
checklist. Providing that you have already invested in quiet and efficient clippers, there
is a quick checklist below for ease of use:

- Make sure that the blade on your clipper is very sharp so that it can run well
  through your dog’s coat without pulling it. Dull blades will always pull and
  cause discomfort and pain for your dog. The smoother the cut, the better he
  or she will feel about it.

- Look at the range of clippers that you can choose from and choose the one
  best suited to your breed. A clipper suitable for short hair, for example, cannot
  be used for a dog with a long and wiry coat because it will soon become
  obvious that you will hurt your dog.

- If you are a little apprehensive about getting the length right then use a snap
  on guide. There are numerous guides available to give you the right idea as to
  how short to cut the coat. This helps to keep it at a uniform length and also
  helps you to avoid mistakes.

- Make sure that you have a lubricant or coolant to hand for use on the clippers
  because they will otherwise soon get too hot and burn your dog. The last thing
  clipping should do is cause your dog pain and there is no reason for you to do
  so because there are plenty of lubricants available today. You will obviously
  have to use clippers for a sustained period of time to get their whole coat
  clipped so this is definitely a must. If you burn your dog once then you have
  no chance of getting the clippers near him or her again.
• Make sure that you have plenty of time to clip your dog because you will have to keep switching the clippers off in order to ensure that they are not too hot to continue. If they do become too hot then switch the blades or use coolant to reduce the overall heat of the clippers before you continue.

HOW TO CLIP YOUR DOG

Clipping your dog for the first time is not an easy task. As such, there are some guidelines that you should follow to ensure that you get it right first time. Obviously, you should get your dog used to the clippers in advance, both turned off and turned on. If you clip your dog the first time that you introduce him or her to the clippers then the likelihood is that you will have a wriggling and uncooperative dog to tend to as well as an unfamiliar experience.

Get used to holding the clippers as well and try running them over your dog’s body without switching them on so that you can get used to the motion you will need to employ to clip your dog successfully.

You should also brush your dog prior to starting the clipping process because you will have to ensure that there are no tangles in the coat. If there are then your dog will have an unpleasant experience, which will make life difficult when trying to do the same thing again in the future. There should be no tangles in the fur and no matting when you start. If you need to, do not be afraid to stop clipping regularly in order to brush the fur again. After all, it does not matter how long it takes to clip your dog as long as you get it right.
When you are ready to start clipping, do not start on an area that will stand out in case you get the blade wrong or find that you need more time to get used to the clippers. It is worth starting out by clipping hair under the belly or right under the neck because you can easily test out the clippers and the blade to see how much it will take off the fur. If you find that it takes off too much or not enough then it is easy to change the blade and try again without making a complete mess of your dog. Practice makes perfect after all!

In terms of the blade, you should remember the one golden rule – the higher the blade number the shorter the cut will be. As such, if you are in doubt then choose a lower number first. You can always change it a little later on and refine the cut.

To make the whole process easier, follow the step by step guide to clipping your dog below:

1. Firstly, inspect your dog’s coat for matting, tangles and foreign objects like dirt. Remove them all before proceeding. The techniques can be found in previous chapters. Your dog should be brushed well before even attempting to clip him or her because there is nothing worse than trying to clip your dog after he or she has had a bad previous experience of clipping.

2. Take your time to choose the trimming attachment and snap on comb that you want to use. The number of the attachment should suit your dog’s breed standards because clipping too short can leave your dog vulnerable to the elements. If you are unsure then err on the side of an attachment that may leave the fur too long instead because you can always remedy that.

3. Turn the clippers onto the correct setting and begin at the front end of your dog. Move towards the back with gentle strokes that move along the coat in the direction in which it grows. You can actually trim your dog in any way you like and should indeed look at the breed standard and advice that is specific to it. Ideally, you may want to start at the base of the neck, moving towards the back legs and leaving awkward areas like the tail and ears until last.

4. When it comes to doing the ears, lay one of them flat against the palm of your hand. This will help you to avoid cutting or hurting your dog in any way. Move
the clippers gently along the ear, moving away from the head. Repeat this step on the other ear and indeed on the tail. You should always move with the growth and thus away from the body whenever you clip your dog.

5. Finally, use a good pair of sharp scissors to tidy up any stray hairs that you may see in addition to trimming the areas of your dog’s body that should never be subjected to the clippers. These areas are the anal region, the mouth and the eyes. Always be careful not to snip the whiskers because you essentially damage sensory perception should you do that.

6. When all of the above tasks are complete, brush your dog from head to toe, ensuring that all hairs are removed. It is at this point that you apply conditioner if need be, according to breed standards of course. Then give your dog a treat and tell him or her how good they were!

No matter what, hold your nerve and take your time. Always reward your dog if he or she is good through the clipping process and ensure that he or she is happy. If you adhere to the rest of the information here then the clipping element of grooming need not be difficult. In fact, you may well find it easier than you would otherwise have thought.
Nail clipping has to be one of the most feared elements of grooming around. Neither owners nor dogs particularly like doing it or having it done but this is for very different reasons. Dogs do not like having their nails clipped because it feels strange. If you think about having your own nails cut, the sensation is more than a little odd. However, owners do not like clipping their dogs’ nails purely and simply because they know the risks. If you know what they are though and find out exactly how to clip nails then you will find that it becomes second nature within just a few grooming sessions.

Knowing exactly how to cut your dog’s nails is an absolute must and getting the technique right is incredibly important. This is why a complete step by step guide must be adhered to at all times. However, you might want to know a little more about the nails before you clip them. Not only will this knowledge help you to understand how to clip nails but it will also reinforce why you should because there are serious consequences if you do not do so.

Much like our nails, a dog’s nails grow constantly and so will keep on growing until they are brought under control. If you leave them and expect granite sidewalks to wear them down naturally then this will happen to a degree but not to enough of an extent that your dog’s nails will not be a problem. If your dog does walk on such surfaces often then it may reduce the regularity at which you need to cut the nails but
it will not eliminate the need completely. Think of it as a nail file – it can only go so far in wearing the down and the rest is up to you!

Failing to clip a dog’s nails can actually cause crippling, arthritic type pains in your dog’s paws, which in turn can actually lead to malformation of the paws and thus permanent damage and pain. This can occur naturally anyway in certain breeds but you do not want the nails to add to it at all.

If all else fails then you could always ask a vet or professional dog groomer to do it because they will have extensive experience and know full well how to do it without causing any harm at all to your dog. However, you should try to do it first as a part of the grooming process.

**Preparing To Clip Your Dog’s Nails**

Preparing to clip your dog’s nails is an easy process but it can be even easier if you get the timing right. The earlier you clip your dog’s nails the better. Clipping a puppy’s nails may be a chore because of the inevitable reaction that you have when doing any element of grooming to your puppy. However, getting him or her used to having nails clipped early on will really help to give the process a little acceptance, which can turn into an offering of the paw at a later date!

Regardless of how old your dog is, the first thing you need to do to get your dog used to having his or her paws touched. It is true that most dogs hate that but there is no way around holding his or her paws when you trim the nails. Try stroking the paws after asking your dog for them. Most dogs can be taught to give you their paw quickly and easily with a few treats and this will help to secure acceptance. When you can touch the paws freely without any resistance, start to squeeze the individual toes and nails lightly so they get used to that feeling. Again, be sure to reward them for their good behavior and acceptance.

Your demeanor will undoubtedly help to make the process that little bit easier. You can actively relax into the process if you have faith in yourself and your dog will give you exactly the same thing back. However, if you still feel a little ill at ease with the process then ask a professional dog groomer or vet if you can sit in on a nail clipping
session to see how it should be done. This is also a good idea for safety purposes as well as your own peace of mind.

When you are comfortable with the idea of clipping your dog’s nails then you may want to get all of the equipment that you will need for this element of grooming together. Believe it or not, there are so many types of clippers available out there that it is very difficult to choose between them. There are three main types available and they come in an array of sizes so that you can choose the right one for the breed and nail type that comes along with it. You can choose the scissors clippers, which are suitable primarily for small dogs. The guillotine clippers are primarily designed for use on medium dogs. The heavy duty clippers that resemble pliers are those for use with large dogs given that this size is well known for its strong and resistant nails.

You may actually want to add to the pair of clippers you choose with a dremel tool, which is essentially a nail file for dogs. It is commonly used to file any rough edges that are left after clipping is finished. This is an extremely good idea because your dog uses those nails for scratching and may well cause harm to him or herself afterwards. However, another way of doing this may well prove to be more popular – taking your dog for a walk on a hard surface like the sidewalk afterwards. This will also get rid of any rough edges quickly and easily.

The final piece of equipment you need is there just in case you ever cut your dog’s nails a little too close for comfort. You may need a styptic pen or powder to hand to stop any bleeding if you cut the quick. There will be a little more about that in a moment but you should always have this tool to hand just in case.

**Getting To Know Your Dog’s Nails**

Many dog owners feel a little apprehensive about cutting their dog’s nails because they have absolutely no idea of what the nail is made of. As such, they have no idea how to treat the nail and handle it. Getting to know a little about the anatomy can really put you at your ease.

This all begins will familiarizing yourself with the hard outer nail and the soft inner nail as well. The hard outer nail makes it difficult to cut through the nail at all when
you have the clippers positioned properly. That is not cause for cringing at all because it is effectively doing its job, which is actively protecting the inner nail. The inner nail is much softer and has a blood vessel through each and every single one of them. This blood supply ensures that the nail remains healthy. You can actually see it in the claws of some lighter dogs but it is impossible to see in dogs with dark nails, although it is guaranteed to be there. There are also some nerve endings in the nails too, and you have to be careful of them when you do cut them down to size.

![Image of a person clipping a dog's nails]

As mentioned, you cannot see the blood vessels in dark nails at all and so this is why it is essential not to take big chunks out of the nail at all but a little off the end to make walking that little bit more comfortable. When you are feeling more confident then you can take a closer look at your dog’s nail. There is always a little dark spot right in the center of the nail and this is the location of the blood vessel. You should never cut too deeply into that at all or else you will find that your dog begins to yowl and bleed!

Your dogs have five claws in total – four on the pads and a further claw a little up the leg. This is known as the dew claw and also needs cutting. There are myths floating around that you should never cut these but that is not the case. As they never come into contact with the floor, they are never worn down and so you have to cut them to prevent them from curling over. This would be very painful for your dog because they run the risk of catching them everywhere.

Now you know all about the anatomy of the nails, you are just about ready to start clipping your dog’s nails. One last thing though – always make sure that you read the
instructions on the clippers you buy and know how to use them. All clippers are different and so it is essential that you take manufacturers advice just in case.

**CLIPPING YOUR DOG’S NAILS: THE PROCESS**

There is only one golden rule when clipping your dog’s nails and that is always make sure that they are not touching the ground when your dog stands up. Nails should never touch the ground. As such, you should look at where the nails need to be cut to for this to occur when you clip them for the very first time and go from there.

The step by step nail clipping process is outlined for you right here so you can follow it perfectly and ensure that you clip your dog’s nails properly first time, every time!

1. Always sit on the floor with your dog when you are clipping his or her nails because this will give you the best viewpoint to take a look at the nails properly and give you a little leverage so that you cannot be thrown off balance if your dog does decide to struggle for whatever reason.

2. When you are ready to trim, grasp your dog’s paw in your hand and wait until any struggling subsides. Place your trimmer around the nail and the cut at a 45 degree angle. Make sure that the trimmer is well below the quick when you do so, trimming off a little at a time right on the end of the nail. If you do it little by little then it will be easier to control. Keep an eye on the quick and ensure that you are not going to cut it for each and every little piece that you take out of the nail.

3. If the nail seems to splinter when you cut it, do not panic because it is not your fault. Nails do get brittle from time to time and splintering of the nail is relatively normal. Use a file to take the edge off any rough splinters that remain on the nail, sweeping downwards with each stroke and following the curve on the back of the nail.

4. Do one paw at a time and gage your dog’s mood each time you have finished a paw. He or she may let you do all four at the same time but if you do not
then you should take a break and come back to those not done a little later on.

5. When all four paws are done, move on to the dew claws. If you do not then it is the dog’s equivalent of an in-growing toe nail. Trim those in much the same way as you have done the other nails ad ensure that the edge is not too sharp so as to cut your dog when or she scratches around the eye.

There is one point of note that you will be able to benefit from in the future when you are used to cutting your dog’s nails though – as you start clipping your dog’s nails more and more, the quick will begin to recede. In this way, dog claws are like human nails. As such, eventually your dog will not need his or her nails clipping because the blood supply receding will ensure that they do not grow as long as they used to. No matter how much you love or hate clipping nails in the meantime, just remember that it is what is best for your dog that counts.

It really is that easy! All you have to do is take your time and not panic. Just be sure to trim the nails little and often to ensure that they stay short and are in the best condition possible. You should also make sure that your clippers are sharp. After all, if they are blunt then they are far more likely to hurt your dog and put him or her off the process for life. Furthermore, if they are of a high quality then they will last for years so take care of them and they will take care of your dog.

**Cutting The Quick**

Cutting the quick is an owner’s worst grooming nightmare because it can hurt your dog and thus make you feel awful for months to come. However, it happens to the
best of us no matter how long grooming a dog has been a weekly or monthly routine. As such, if it does happen the key is not to panic but just to deal with it.

Clipping the quick as well as the nail will hurt your dog and it will most definitely bleed. As such, you just have to be prepared to cope with the occurrence as and when it happens. Providing that you have everything you need to hand then it will not be as much of a big deal as you expect and the bleeding will stop within just a few moments. The only exception to this is if you take too much off the quick and then have to take your dog to a vet to stem the bleeding. The vet will be able to help you but it will be so much better if you can help yourself so that your dog sees it as no big deal.

You have three different options when it comes to cutting the quick, and the one you decide on is completely up to you. However, before going through them, taking a proactive approach is the best way because then your dog will feel your calm and respond accordingly.

The first option is to just let the quick bleed and wait until it clots and stops bleeding naturally. This can take up to 5 minutes or so and that can seem like forever when your dog is bleeding. However, there are drawbacks to this method. Your dog will try to lick the wound and this can prolong the bleeding and cause infection. Your dog will also probably refuse to sit still and so you get blood all over your home. Furthermore, if the bleeding last for longer than 7 minutes then you will have to go see a vet immediately to get a little help.

The second method is to simply cover the wound with a little tissue and then apply a little corn flour to the area to help stop the bleeding. Again, that can cause a lot of mess. However, the third option is much the same except it requires that you use a styptic pen to stop the bleeding. This will stop it instantly and does not harm or even cause your dog pain in any way at all. As such, this is easily the best method around at the moment.

Finally, just one last tip to help you during grooming. Always check your dog’s paws out thoroughly when you are cutting the nails. You need to check the pads to make
sure that they are intact and not stuck with thorns, glass or other foreign objects. Make sure that your dog has healthy paws and then you will happily be able to leave them alone until trim time rolls around again.
Did you know that over 80% of all dogs under the age of three have some sort of oral disease? This fact comes courtesy of the American Veterinary Dental Society (AVDS). It also makes it the most common problem amongst young and old dogs alike. Why? Well, there are any number of suggested reasons as to why teeth are amongst the biggest problems out there for dogs of all ages with the biggest one being the lack of care and attention that owners pay to their dogs’ oral health.

Looking after your dog’s teeth is an essential element of grooming because it should be done on regular basis so that you can prevent oral problems that afflict so many other dogs from affecting your dog.

There are plenty of elements of grooming to consider when it comes to teeth because there are so many problems associated with teeth, but the irony is that owners should be very familiar with these issues and know how to prevent them to a certain degree because dog teeth are prone to the same problems as human teeth.

Human and canine teeth both suffer as a result of the build up of plaque. The main difference is that humans clean their teeth often and so avoid having residual food and saliva build up in gaps, thus also avoiding the plaque turning into tartar. This can lead to a whole range of complications in dogs, which is why it is incredibly important to ensure that your dog has his or her teeth cleaned regularly.
One of the most common teeth problems in dogs is gingivitis. You may recognize this as the problem that makes your dog’s breath smell. However, it goes above and beyond that. It is actually the inflammation of the gums because of food not being removed effectively from between the teeth. The gums will bleed in turn and you may notice that your dog stops eating. This is not because of a loss of appetite but rather because it is painful to chew. Unfortunately for your dog, it does not end with gingivitis but instead ends only with peritonitis, which is far more serious.

Peritonitis is actually an infection that affects the tissue and jaw bone, before actually moving onto more serious health problems that can affect your dog’s long term well being. It is irreversible so you have to stay on top of your dog’s oral health from the start. After all, any dog affected may just lose more than their teeth.

Of course, broken teeth are also a major problem for many dogs because they insist on chewing hard objects, such as bones. As with human teeth, canine teeth have a breaking point and will snap if caught slightly off on a bone. They need to chew such objects to maintain teeth and jaw strength so you cannot prevent this but you do need to be vigilant.

So broken teeth aside, how can you spot issues with oral health in your dog? There are actually some common signs to look for:

- Tartar, which may be either yellow or brown in nature
- Bleeding gums
- Bad breath
- Red and inflamed gums, especially around the teeth rather than above them
- Difficulty in chewing food
- Changing the eating habits to accommodate the pain
- Pawing and scratching at the mouth area

With all these signs in mind, it is essential that you do your best to prevent issues with the teeth at home.
HOME DENTAL CARE

The dental care of dogs that should be performed at home is quick and easy so there is absolutely no need at all to make excuses about not doing it. There are only three things to do to keep your dog’s teeth healthy and make sure that are in the 20% rather than the 80%. They are as follows:

• Ensure that your dog is booked into the veterinarian clinic regularly for a check up, which will be discussed more in detail a little later on.

• Regularly scheduling the brushing of your dog’s teeth. This is a major part of canine dental care and it should be carried out on a daily basis. Many older dogs are resistant to this, especially if they already have oral problems. However, if you have a puppy then it should be easy to get him or her used to having the teeth brushed. You should use toothpaste and a specialist dog toothbrush rather than the human variety. Dog toothpaste is specially formulated to ensure that it provides the teeth with everything they need to remain in good health. However, using human toothpaste may make your pooch ill and so is best avoided.

• Finally, make sure that you optimize your dog’s diet so that it is better for the teeth. There are pet foods that are designed specifically for maintaining and optimizing oral health. They should be incorporated into the diet on a regular basis to help avoid future issues, as should dental chews because they can also help.

Dental chews for dogs have been made specifically to enhance their oral health but there are a few points worth noting. They are only designed for your dog to have on a day because they can actually leave your dog with an upset stomach. They are designed for chewing because this is how they remove plaque and tartar around the teeth. However, as a result of this they are sometimes hard to digest and have been known to increase the gas in a dog’s stomach to uncomfortable levels.
Dog chews can also help dental hygiene but are not to be relied upon for this purpose. They are designed to supplement tooth brushing but not take its place completely so do not be tempted to do what so many other owners do and neglect to brush them, thinking that a chew is a good replacement. It is not.

If you are going to supplement your teeth cleaning routine, as outlined in the next section, then there are several to choose from. For example, Bright Bites, Ark Natural, Greenies and Nylabone are all chews that are completely safe and have been rigorously tested to ensure that they can be given to your dog whilst giving you peace of mind.

**HOW TO CLEAN YOUR DOG’S TEETH**

Cleaning your dog’s teeth is relatively simple when you know how. You literally only need toothpaste and a toothbrush that have been specifically designed for your dog. When you have both to hand and your dog is relaxed then it is time to clean the teeth:

1. Apply a little toothpaste to the toothbrush, but only as much as the directions on the tube stipulate because too much can cause harm.

2. Encourage your dog to sit or lie down as you sit on the floor next to him or her. Begin by petting your dog to further encourage that relaxation and then slowly
begin to lift your dog’s top lip up a little. You should always have a look at the
teeth and gums before you clean them to ensure that there are no bleeding
areas, major problems or other issues that your vet should deal with.

3. After you have had a look at the gums, pull your dog’s top lip upwards very
gently on one side and begin to brush the back teeth in a circular motion, as
you would do your own teeth. Concentrate on the teeth initially and then move
your brush to the gum line. You need to ensure that you brush where the teeth
meet the gums because failing to do so would encourage the onset of various
issues for your dog.

4. Work your way around the mouth, from one side to the other, ensuring that
you clean every tooth thoroughly including those at the back of the mouth.
When the top of the mouth is done, move on to the lower jaw to ensure that
you have provided your dog with the best clean possible.

Repeat this process at least once a week, preferably twice. The earlier you start
cleaning your dog’s teeth the better because the more damage you can avoid in the
future. However, despite cleaning your dog’s teeth at home, you will have to ensure
that you get them checked by a professional regularly.

**PROFESSIONAL TOOTH CARE**

Professional tooth care should only be used to supplement home dental care for
dogs. Although the area of teeth cleaning belongs firmly in grooming, it is essential
that a professional get involved regularly to help identify any problems before they
actually occur.

The dental care available for dogs has increased in recent years and now it is
absolutely fantastic. There is all sorts of technology out there for you to take
advantage of so that dogs can now have human standard check ups and work done,
such as a scale and polish, root canals, braces and much more! Even if you just
want basic dental care for your dog it is out there for the taking today so make the
most of it and ensure that you stick to the following regularity advice as far as
possible:
• Puppies – The mouth of a puppy should be looked at as soon as you get him or her and then every time that he or she is scheduled for a vaccination. Finally, an exam should be booked in for 6 months old to check the bite and ensure that the dental health is good. This one can identify potential problematic areas so that you can have it treated as soon as your dog stops growing.

• Aged 1 to 3 years old – During this phase of a dog’s life, the dental examination should be performed annually. The exception to this rule is of course if your dog does have an identified issue. If this is the case then simply follow veterinarian advice.

• Aged 4 to 6 years old – At this age phase, annual exams may well be enough providing that you take daily care of your dog’s teeth. However, most dogs actually need a six monthly check because the teeth will begin to degrade. That means that any issues that your dog may develop later in life are visible at this stage and can be treated in order to prevent further issues for them and expense for you later on.

• Aged 7 years and up – All dental exams should be set at every six months at this point in time because any issues that arise, like toothache, can come on quickly and cause your dog intense pain.

If you have never booked your dog in for a dental exam before then do not worry about it. It is just as routine as any other examination with the difference being that your dog will not have the same fear of the dentist as most people have! In many cases, a probe used to just poke at the teeth to identify areas of weakness and a good look with the naked eye will identify potential issues.

You vet may think that it is appropriate to take an x-ray because 70% of your dog’s teeth are located beneath the gum surface. If he or she wants to do this then it is completely up to you to consent. However, the x-ray is a valuable tool for detecting any issues so bear that in mind in advance so that you are open to suggestions that may save your dog a lot of pain in the long term.
The ears are amongst the most difficult elements of grooming your dog. They may not look like it after reading through sections like clipping your dog's nails and cleaning the eyes, but you would be surprised at just how many dogs hate having their ears cleaned. The reason? Because the sounds that close to their ears are actually unnatural. The whiskers and sensory perception often stop most things getting that close to the ears. As such, you should expect a fight on your hands but should not give in because your dog's hearing may well be on the line, especially in years to come.

**SAFEGUARDING YOUR DOG’S EAR HEALTH!**

It is essential that you safeguard your dog’s ear health because if you fail to do so then you may well be a little responsible for failing hearing later in his or her life. Your dog’s inner ear should be healthy at all times, and this is characterized by a pink sheen to the skin. Although a little black discharge is normal from time to time, you need to watch out for all of the following signs that are not symbolic of health:

- Redness
- Blood blisters placed on the ear flap
- Tumors
- Swelling
- Ears being sensitive to the touch
- Yellow, green or brown discharges
- Bad odors
- Excessive ear scratching and the rubbing of the ears on various surfaces

Any one or combination of these signs can easily be picked up if you clean your dog’s ears regularly but all too many dog owners fail to do so because they believe that the ear flaps protect them. They do to a certain extent but not enough for an owner to ignore the ears completely. After all, bacteria can still climb under the ear flaps and cause serious problems.
The ears should definitely be cleaned at least once a week, whether by a professional dog groomer or the owner, to ensure that any signs of poor ear health are noticed and dealt with as soon as possible. Of course, if any signs are noticed then it is essential to go to the veterinarian for an ear drop prescription. However, with proper ear care and regular cleaning and deodorizing, it is possible to avoid this outcome and the expense that comes with it.

Before we look at how to clean your dog’s ears properly, it is essential to grasp a few facts. Dogs do actually grow hair in the ears as well as outside of them. They grow in the ear canals in varying amounts, although this largely varies from breed to breed. For example, Poodles and some terriers have copious amounts in the ears but other dogs, such as Greyhounds, will only have a few here and there. The hairs have a tendency to attract and attach to wax, discharge, bacteria and anything else that may get in the ear and this can cause serious issues.

The ears happen to be a haven for bacteria, especially because the ear canal is so damp and warm. This encourages their growth, especially when water enters the area and brings with it the best environment for fungus to spread as well. This can all lead to irritation, infection, sensitivity and any number of other issues. Funnily enough, the ear flaps only serve to make matters worse because they prevent air circulating in the ear canal and thus helps to make conditions better for bacteria instead of worse.
The ear flaps can also trap organic materials down there, such as grasses, weeds, seeds and even soil. These will not break down easily and can indeed cause problems whilst they do. However, some organic substances bring diseases and infections with them so it is important to check your dog’s ears whenever you have taken him or her on a walk to make sure that nothing has gotten in there during that time.

Your dog’s ear wax may also cause issues because it is not unheard of for mites to take up residence in the wax. A waxy build up will then provide them with the perfect home to multiply. Again, this will cause serious irritation and, worse still, the mites are contagious. As such, the dog affected and any other dogs that you may have will have to be treated with a medicated ear powder for at least three weeks, depending on the severity of the problem.

The build up of wax is not only an issue concerning mites but also with other problems like ear canker. Canker also needs to be treated by a vet because it causes a dark discharge that seriously irritates the ears and also causes a seriously bad smell, which is how many dog owners notice it.

Now you know a little about some of the dangers, it is essential that you look at how to look after your dog’s ears and incorporate that into your grooming regime.

**Ear Cleaning Practices**

When it comes to ear cleaning, practice makes perfect. It can be a little daunting for owners that are new to grooming because the ears are so sensitive and it is common to be scared that you will mess up. However, it is an absolute must so the sooner you get used to the idea and then the process the better.

The first thing you need to do before anything else is to thoroughly inspect your dog’s ears just to see if you will face any issues with cleaning his or her ears that day. It may be that you can see a little grass in there and need the tweezers or that you need to remove a few hairs. You need to know this in advance so that you can get the right equipment or, if necessary, take your dog to the vet for a quick
examination. The likelihood is that you will face nothing more taxing than removing wax and dirt but it is worth checking in advance.

It is worth stressing in advance that if your dog shows any signs of distress then it is essential that you stop cleaning the ears right away and visit the vet. All dogs are uncomfortable with the process and may wriggle but real flinching, howling and general panic should be investigated further.

Before you start the grooming process, it is essential to get everything you need together in the one place and also sterilize any equipment that you use. You can find most of the equipment at good pet stores. Most is affordable but you cannot put a price on your dog’s health so it is worth every penny. You will need the following:

- Medicated ear powder
- Hemostat
- Cotton balls (sterile)
- Tweezers
- Ear cleaning solution

When you have all of this together, it is time to start cleaning your dog’s ears. The step by step process is relatively simple but you should ensure that you follow it perfectly because it is perfectly designed to help prevent any issues with your dog’s ears that may occur in the future.

The weekly process should occur to the following plan:

1. Firstly, lift the ear flap up so that you can see all of the inner ear. Using your index finger, gently remove any hair that appears to be blocking the ear canal. It may be wise to dampen your finger slightly to ensure that the hair remains out of the way.

2. Take a look into the ear canal and use ear powder to bind excess wax ready for removal.

3. Prepare to remove excess hair that is from the entry of the ear canal to around half an inch into it. If there is anything further down then a vet will be able to help you. However, from half an inch depth upwards, you should
remove anything that stands in your way. Remove all wax and hair from there to remove any issues that could cause problems later in life.

4. Clean the ear canal with a piece of cotton soaked in ear cleaning solution. It should be immersed in the solution and then have any excess solution squeezed out. Always make sure that all dirt is removed. Again, if there is anything below the half inch then seek veterinary help.

5. Finally, when you are finished, sterilize all of the tools that you have used to ensure that they remain bacteria free.

**Removing Hair From The Ears**

As you can see above, the process by which you should clean your dog’s ears is easy enough. In fact, when you get used to it you can actually do it within five minutes flat and so incorporate it into any busy routine. However, it may take you a little longer to complete ear grooming if there are excess hairs present just inside the ear. All dogs have hairs growing inside the ear canal and you have to remove it to ensure ear health, as mentioned in step 3 of the ear cleaning process. However, you may want to know how to do it.

As previously stated, you should remove all hairs up to half an inch into the ear canal. However, if there are hairs deeper than that, it should be a vet that removes them because of the risk of damage if you do attempt it.

In order to remove those hairs that are within your reach, you should have tweezers or a hemostat to hand. Both can effectively do the job because you need a good grip on the individual hairs in order to pluck them out. This does not hurt your dog but instead tickles a little, providing that you pull them out the right way of course.

All you have to do is put a little medicated powder into the ear and allow it to sit for a moment because it will make the hairs easier to pluck out. From there, get a good grip on the individual hair with the tweezers and pull it out via the same direction it is growing. If you try to pull it out any other way then it may hurt your dog and this will
do nothing to encourage him or her to let you clean the ears again! Repeat as often as necessary to remove all of the hairs that are bothering the ear.

However, what about hairs outside of the ear that are tickling the ear flap or muffling the hearing? Well, you can easily take care of that with a good pair of scissors and a metal comb. You should cut the hair that is covering the ear hole to ensure that nothing blocks, muffles or irritates your dog’s ears and hearing. It should be trimmed in a semi-circle that curves away from the ear canal so as to leave the opening unblocked. When you cut this hair, it is worth putting a piece of cardboard over the ear opening to prevent hairs falling into the ear canal as you cut them off. Any hair that is left in the area or does fall down the ear canal can cause issues and infections so if you do not safeguard against it then you may well find yourself with ear drops to administer!

**ADMINISTERING EAR DROPS**

Administering ear drops is something that should only ever occur if you have a prescription after visiting a vet with your dog. You should never use ear drops that have not been prescribed as they can do more harm than good. In fact, it is recommended that no other water and cleaning solutions make it into the ears at all. You should never syringe your dog’s ears at all but it is OK to put the ear drops in yourself providing that you follow the instructions given.

Ear drops are prescribed for infections and to correct issues that may have long term problems attached to them. As such, you will more than likely to be asked to apply
them two to three times a day for a very specific period of time. All you have to do is make sure that they are given.

Administering ear drops is easy. You literally apply the given dose to your dog’s ear. You literally have to squirt the drop down the ear and into the ear canal. When you are sure that it has gone down the ear then massage the base of the ear to ensure that it is evenly spread throughout the area. That will enable it to get better that little bit quicker.

Always reward your dog after you have been dealing with his or her ears. No dog likes to have their ears messed with so be sure to reward good behavior and this encourages further cooperation in the future.
Every person is fully aware how irritating it can be to get grit in the eyes or, even worse, a hair. It can be a nightmare to try and remove the hair without causing some sort of damage to the eye because of how delicate the area it is and how easy it is to cause bigger problems. Well, it could be worse. Just imagine how irritating it must be to have hair all around your eyes and in them all the time! Well, this is just the problem that many dogs face on a daily basis but one that they do not have to if their owners take the time to look after their eyes and groom the area around them on a regular basis.

First of all, it is important to note that the eyes should be tended to on a daily basis and not as and when you groom your dog’s coat. This is because the eyes are particularly sensitive and easily damaged. Cleansing the eyes daily can help to keep infections at bay and can also help to maintain clarity of sight. Think about your own eyes. You wash the area around the eyes daily and this helps to keep them fresh and infection free. Imagine if you did not wash the area around your eyes how quickly you would experience the itching and pain of infections. The same applies for your dog.

It only takes five minutes to care for the eyes once a day so you can do it when you are fussing your dog. The methods are incredibly basic and very easy even for people that have no experience of the grooming process. Of course, there are some other things you can do to keep your dog’s eyes clean that are more difficult but there is absolutely no excuse for not performing the fundamentals of eye care.

Everything you need to know about dog eye care during grooming is outlined below.
**WHY EMPLOY EYE CARE**

Eye care in dogs is incredibly important because of the main reason outlined in the introduction above – it can help to preserve your dog’s eyesight and can also help to prevent infections a little further down the line. However, that is literally just the start of the explanation as to why we employ eye care as an integral part of the grooming regime. There are other reasons as well that prove absolutely vital.

Not only can the eyes be a haven for everyday bacteria but they can actually cause that haven to become more desirable through no fault of their own. Certain breed, like Poodles, spaniels and terriers cannot drain the tear ducts naturally as larger dogs can. This is a genetic trait and cannot be altered or changed. As such, the excess tears actually spill over and down the lower eyelid. This can cause a stain to build up on the area below the eye and can also cause a build up of mucus in the corner of the eye. Both encourage bacteria to build up because the bacteria will actively feed on the mucus and then move into the eye.

There are some ailments that you should also use your eye care routine to look out for. Conjunctivitis is the most common eye infection in dogs and is very similar in them as it is when we get it. You should look out for redness around the eye in addition to a yellow or green tinted discharge. Both are indicative of conjunctivitis and are relatively common as well. If you suspect that your dog has conjunctivitis then you should take him or her immediately to a vet to get antibiotics to help clear the infection up in no time at all.

The better your eye care routine and the more often you carry it out, the better it will be for your dog because the early signs of eye infection are not easy to spot if you do not pay particular attention. Similarly, the earlier you spot eye problems the quicker the treatment arrives and the quicker it is to sort out the problem with the minimum of fuss and pain for your dog. This is why learning the basics of eye care, as outlined below, is incredibly important.
THE BASICS OF EYE CARE

The basics of dog eye care are not that difficult to learn and the hardest part is simply remembering to do it every single day. As such, this element of grooming is something that all owners should do themselves at a set time of the day so as to remember.

The first element of the basics of dog eye care is actually simply wiping any mucus away from the eye with a damp cloth. The cloth should be soft and should not have any harsh chemicals on it at all. It is not necessary to use specific eye washes for dogs because literally all you have to do is dampen the cloth with water. Water is sufficient because it will attract the mucus and leave the eye area cleansed. Eye washes do exactly the same job but are more expensive.

The second element of basic dog eye care is simply checking the eyes for any changes. It may be that you notice a little redness around the eyes or a little extra mucus from time to time and this can be indicative of an infection but neither sign is necessarily anything that you would notice if you were not looking closely. As such, you have to keep a regular check on the eyes just in case and go to see your vet if you do notice any differences and believe that they should be checked and treated.
Both elements of basic dog eye care can be done on a daily basis quickly and easily. Neither of these elements take more than a minute to perform so there really is no excuse for not doing so. However, this especially applies to owners of breeds that have flat faces, short noses and protruding eyes. Breeds like pugs, for example. These dogs require regular eye care as a necessity rather than an optional extra because they are prone to eye problems and do not have the protection that deeper set eyes can afford them. In fact, with flat faces and no nose to offer a little shelter, the eyes of these breeds have no protection at all unless you offer some via grooming practices. They are easily damaged, dry out quickly and are prone to infections so basic care is an absolute must.

Similarly, the breeds that have flat faces and protruding eyes also have other issues that few owners know about in terms of eye care. They often suffer from dry eyes because the eyelids stretch over the eyes and do not leave enough room for the drainage system to work correctly. This causes the overspill of tears, which can also attract bacteria that will ultimately move into the eye. However, before we discuss how to deal with those tears and the stains they leave, it is necessary to discuss the dangers of hair first.
YOUR DOG’S EYES AND THE DANGERS OF HAIR

Hair may not be viewed as dangerous to dog owners but it can be if it is allowed to grow too long around the eyes. Not only does it cause clumsiness and irritability if your dog cannot see properly but it will also attract dirt and bacteria, trapping both around the eye area and thus causing the potential for infection to grow. Hair can rub against the eye, and indeed for quite a long period of time. The bacteria and dirt will then move from the hair into the eye and cause anything from a mild but painful infection to sight threatening ailments.

There is also another risk of allowing your dog’s hair to get in his or her eyes and that is that it may actually scratch the cornea, which is irreparable. This is the clear membrane that is on the surface of the eye. It cannot recover and allows bacteria to move through into the lower levels of the eye. In turn, the bacteria can then ultimately get into the blood stream.

So what can you do to prevent your dog’s hair harming his or her eyes? Well, the first thing you can do is ensure that the hair around them remains as closely cropped as possible. That can actually be a dangerous part of the grooming process because you essentially have to use scissors to cut the hair around the eyes in order to keep it short. Needless to say that most dogs do not like objects being moved that close to the eye because it alarms them when they cannot focus properly. Do not be surprised if you meet with a hostile, panicked or rather violent reaction. In fact, you should be prepared for that. There are some tips outlined below that can help you though:

• First of all, never use scissors with a pointed nose. Instead, use the rounded nose scissors because they are of course blunt and will not do as much harm if your dog does move suddenly for whatever reason. The scissor blades should be sharp so that one quick snip will do the job nicely.

• You should always cut parallel to the edge of the eyelid. This actively offers the eyes a degree of protection and will also ensure that fewer mistakes are made in relation to the length.
• Use a fine tooth comb to gather the hair together and add a little moisture to the hair to ensure that it is quite clear how much you need to cut off first time. You should spend no more than a couple of moments tying to cut the hair around your dog’s eyes because any longer can upset him or her so it is essential to be as quick but as accurate as you can.

• Get your dog used to the scissors. Let him or her sniff around them for a while and use them elsewhere on the body before putting them directly in front of your dog’s nose. If they appear familiar then the likelihood is that the reaction will be minimized.

• If your dog is particularly laid back and used to grooming then it may be easier and safer to use an electric razor to trim the hair around the eyes. An electric razor will do the job quicker, keep the hair under control and get closer to the head so as to remove all excess hair. However, few dogs will allow you to do this so do not be surprised if you have to go back to the scissors.

• Make sure that all hair cuttings are moved directly away from the eyes immediately after the hair has been cut because any leftover pieces, no matter how big or small, will actively irritate the eyes and can take dirt into them. As such, you may want to use a fine tooth comb as well to brush the area afterwards and remove any little bits left.

**Eye Care Tips**

In addition to all of the above information that will empower you to look after your dog’s eyes a little better, there are various other hints and tips that you may want to take full advantage of in order to better protect your dog from difficulties that may well cause problems with sight. These tips are not necessarily to do with infection control but more about proper eye care.

Many dog owners are aware of common sense measures to protect their dogs’ sight but others are not so it is important to stress these measures. For example, whenever you are applying shampoo or flea prevention substances to the head and neck area, you should always ensure that it is kept away from the eyes completely.
even a hint of shampoo or insecticide gets into your dog’s eyes then it can cause a lot of pain and irritation. Some owners advocate avoiding shampooing the head completely so as not to risk getting the substance in areas that will drive your dog mad. Others use protective eye ointment prior to applying the shampoo or insecticide. You have to decide what is best for you.

Shampoo is not the only irritant that you need to watch out for in your dog. Some dogs suffer with seasonal allergies to pollen and other substances that can really make their lives miserable for a little while. If this applies to your dog then make sure that you can protect the eyes as far as possible by avoiding the source of the allergy. If it is a pollen allergy then avoid high grasses and open field areas. Instead, look to take your dog around the block without encountering any open areas to minimize exposure.

Similarly, you also need to keep your dog away from any situations in which he or she may receive eye trauma because once the damage is done it cannot be corrected. Eye trauma can occur as a direct result of any fights that your dog may get into of course, and that includes aggressive but fun play fighting if you have two dogs that enjoy a little rough and tumble. However, exposure to irritants and chemicals can also cause eye trauma. More importantly, allowing your dog to hang his or her head out of the window also causes eye trauma. Many owners love to see their dogs having fun with their heads out of the window but flying objects can cause serious damage and even the wind can seriously harm the eye’s ability to protect itself by producing moisture to wash away bacteria and other foreign bodies. The risk is not worth it so do not let your dogs do it.
General eye care should not incorporate any form of eye drops unless they are purposely prescribed for you by a veterinarian either because using medication that is not necessary, or even drops for cosmetic purposes, can actually be really detrimental to your dog’s optical health. Sustained use of any form of eye drops can have huge side effects, most notably by preventing your dog’s eyes from creating their own moisture. In turn, this will cause dry eyes. Of course, then you have another issue because you may have to use drops then to moisten the eyes. If they do not work then you will have issues and it is a vicious circle. The moral of the story is to never add anything to your dog’s grooming routine in relation to eye care unless directed to do so by your vet.

**Removing Tear Stains Around The Eye**

As previously stated, tears will often roll down the cheeks of smaller breeds of dog because those dogs cannot drain their own tears naturally via the nose, which is how we do it when the tear ducts are full. The liquid is automatically drained into the nose for transportation away from the eyes to prevent infection but if this fails to happen then the tears have nowhere to go but out of the eyes and down the cheeks. This can cause the build up of a dark stain right under the eye. This should be removed no matter what color your dog is but is especially visible on lighter colored dogs.
There are also other reasons why tears may drain down the outside of your dog’s nose via the corner of the eye rather than the inside. For example, hair may draw out tears if it is sticking in the eye a little. This is of course a natural reaction because the eye automatically tries to flush out foreign objects. Alternatively, it may also be a particle of dirt, dust or something else that draws out the tears and causes overflow. Allergies have a similar effect and so do abnormal eyelids. Some dogs are born with eyelids that are slightly turned inwards. This of course irritates the eye and causes the same reaction. If you are not sure what causes the tear overspill in your dog then seek advice from your vet.

The tear stains may leave brown, yellow or pink stains on the fur of lighter colored dogs and can be an annoying cosmetic problem for owners that take pride in the grooming of their dogs. You cannot stop the overspill of tears because it is an entirely natural process so there is absolutely no way to prevent it happening at all. As such, you have to deal with it afterwards instead.

It may come as a little bit of a surprise to find out that tears cause a stain on certain breeds’ face because tears are clear. However, it does happen because bacteria interact with the tears when they move into the hair or onto the skin and this causes the change in color. It is almost like a chemical reaction but unfortunately that very reaction that shows up the tears so you can wipe them off is also the reaction that causes the tears to bind to the hair. In turn, this causes a major problem because the stain sets into the hair and can cause discoloration if left for too long. As such, you should clean it off as soon as possible after it occurs.

There are two ways to remove these tear stains. The first is by using a tear stain remover and the second by employing a fine toothed comb. If the stain has not yet set then it is possible to comb the area just below the eye with a small fine tooth comb in order to prevent the tears from setting into the hair itself and thus will help to prevent future stains and break the slight existing one up. When you have combed the area thoroughly then just wipe the area with a damp cloth to remove the remnants. However, this may not be enough if the stain has set.
If the tear stain has set then there is only one way to get rid of it – using stain remover. There are numerous tear stain removers available on the market today. Show Eyes Solution is perhaps the one that springs to mind immediately as a result of its fantastic effect. It draws the stain right off and is not harmful to your dog’s eyes in any way, which also helps to put your mind at rest. Simply dab a little onto a cloth and use it to gently wipe away the stain. There are specific instructions on the back of the stain remover container though so be sure to follow them.

There are also natural stain removers that can be used in the place of the tear stain removers that you can buy. These are obviously better for your dog given the proximity to the eyes and how sensitive they are. Natural substances are better equipped to work in harmony with their bodies. Herbs like Eyebright, Dandelion and Chamomile are effective and efficient natural eye cleansers and so can effectively be dabbed on the stain and cleanse the eyes at the same time.

Whether you are using a natural stain remover or one of those that you can purchase, you should follow the instructions on the packaging to the letter. Apply just a spot to a piece of cotton or gauze and slowly dab it directly onto the stain. Leave it to set for a couple of seconds before using the gauze or cotton to wipe away the stain. You must wipe away from the eye in the direction that the hair is growing to wipe the stain out of the fur. If the stain is particularly stubborn then try again after 24 hours but avoid rubbing too hard or putting too much pressure on the area because it will hurt your dog. You can also try to prevent tear stains in the first place as well by keeping the fur trimmed using blunt nosed scissors. The less hair there is, the less likely the tear stains are to form.

Now you know exactly how to look after your dog’s eyes on a daily basis. The eyes are very sensitive, just like ours, so it is worth taking the time to get your dog used to the process. It is essential for their health. As such, it is essential for your peace of mind.
CHAPTER FOURTEEN: ANAL GLANDS

Your dog’s anal glands represent one area of the body that you may not associate with grooming. Relatively few owners actually do when compared with bathing, brushing or clipping, even though it is an area that should be openly discussed.

Anal glands are in place because they are effectively how dogs recognize each other and why they sniff every new dog they meet at the back end rather than the front. Oily secretions build up in the anal glands and this is a completely natural process. In the case of some dogs, it will never cause a problem because the glands express themselves when they have a bowel movement. However, in some cases it is necessary for you to manually express your dog’s anal glands instead.

Expressing and cleaning the anal glands of your dog has to be the most unpleasant and unusual task that you have to do during the grooming process and there is much debate about whether or not it should be done. Some owners suggest that it actually harms the dog and reduces bowel activity. However, this is not true. Bowel activity is largely regulated by diet so you do not have to worry about harming your dog. Veterinarians would not recommend it otherwise.

It does not hurt your dog in any way at all. This should be highlighted now because it is easy to make this an excuse not to do it. It may be a little strange for your dog the first time so you will have to slowly get him or her used to it. However, it does not cause pain unless the anal glands are already infected. If this is the case and the fluid expressed actually contains blood, pus or is thick then you should seek veterinary advice right away.

Although it may not be harmful, expressing the anal glands may make you heave and it may make you feel a little ill if you have a weak stomach. However, it will help to ward off certain health problems further down the road and can help your dog to avoid veterinary bills at a later date.
It is advisable that you go to a veterinarian or a professional dog groomer the first time that your dog is to have his or her anal glands expressed because both will be experienced and know exactly how to do it. This ensures that your dog is not only completely clean and perfectly comfortable with the procedure but also that you can physically see exactly what to do. A dog groomer or a vet will be happy to give you a real time demonstration to ensure that you can do the job properly. However, be warned that the first time that you perform this element of grooming, it will not be pretty and may well be messy. However, with a little perseverance and practice, you will soon find that you are able to do it quickly and with the minimum of mess and fuss.

So how do you express your dog’s anal glands? Well, the step by step instructions are outlined below for you to follow:

1. Proceed as if you were giving your dog a bath and ensure that the area around the bath is covered in towels. When you are expressing the anal glands, the contents may squirt out unexpectedly so it is better to prepare well and avoid any excess mess.

2. When you get your dog in the tub, you need to first find the glands, but this can be a difficult task because they are often impossible to see. They can be found to either side of the anus, specifically at 5 o’clock and 7 o’clock on your dog’s backside.

3. You should gently rub the area of skin under which the glands are present to get an idea of their size and shape. They are effectively the size and shape of a kidney bean, maybe a little larger if they are full or infected. Place your thumb and forefinger beneath the skin under the actual openings.

4. Gently but firmly use your grip to squeeze in an upward motion, pressing in a little at the same time. You have to make sure that you get the gland below your fingertips in order to move the contents, forcing it all to the surface so it can move out of the opening. Using a grip that has just the right amount of pressure will help you to achieve this without causing any discomfort or distress to your dog at all. Never stand directly behind your dog when doing
this or else you will be in the line of fire. You may actually want to place a damp cloth over the anus to prevent spray completely.

5. The greenish brown fluid should take a few squeezes to express in full. You should repeat step 4 over and over until no more fluid is emerging at all.

6. When all fluid has been removed, wash your dog’s anal area thoroughly with warm water and dog shampoo to ensure that all remaining fluids have been removed and the area is once again completely hygienic. Leaving the oily fluids in the area can attract bacteria and cause an infection. Similarly, the secretions also tend to get everywhere including furniture, bedding and clothing so make sure that every single trace of it is removed.

Following the steps above is easy enough but you may be a little reluctant to perform it on your dog. This is understandable because most owners are reluctant the first time. However, here is a little tip for you to get you started. It is easier to express the anal glands when your dog is relaxed or at least expecting some form of grooming if that is not possible. As such, the bath is not only the perfect place to do it as a result of the mess but also as a result of the expectation of grooming.

When you have expressed the anal glands a few times, your dog will not only expect it but will also see it as a routine part of the bath, thus making it easier for you!
Everyone loves puppies. Puppies are cute and wriggly and lovable. However, of all three of those qualities that everyone adores, only one will make you complain when you are starting the grooming process! That’s right – wriggly! This quality is definitely not conducive to a harmonious introduction to grooming and is one reason why many owners put off grooming their dogs for the first few months of their lives. Unfortunately, that is a big mistake.

No matter how much your puppy wriggles, it is essential to introduce the grooming process as early as you can because it can save you a lot of hassle in the long term. Puppies are far more open to new situations and experiences than wary, stuck in their ways older dogs are. As such, if you want to make your life easier then it is worth ignoring the myths.

“What myths?” you may ask. Well, there really is only one major myth – that you should not groom puppies until they are more than six months old. It is rumored that the puppy will catch a cold or get hurt because the brushing will be too rough. This is not true in any way. Puppies are more resilient than many people may think. If they
come from a breeder then the likelihood is that they have been roughhoused by their siblings and their mother. They will also be dirty and yet they will have survived.

Furthermore, your puppy will be dirty when he or she comes to you so it is essential to bathe him or her and brush any remaining dirt out of the fur in addition to dead skin cells and shed hairs. Grooming a puppy is actually essential for those reasons and the fact that it can actually improve the health of the coat. It stimulates the sebaceous glands, which of course produce the oil that conditions a dog’s coat.

In truth, as soon as the puppy is ready to come away from the mother, he or she is ready to be groomed and this especially applies to medium and long coated dogs because they actively need to be conditioned ready for grooming on a regular basis in the coming years. Puppyhood is a perfect time to introduce grooming, teach your puppy and form habits. As such, you should schedule regular grooming sessions from week one. However, these regular sessions should be supplemented if your puppy gets wet. The coat may get tangled and matted as it dries and this can cause problems when it comes to grooming during the next session. As fast as your puppy can learn that grooming is fun, he or she can also learn that it hurts and decide to make it as difficult for you as possible next time around.

Although there are no special ages in terms of when a puppy can be bathed or brushed, there is an accepted age at which a puppy can get his or her hair clipped for the very first time. The accepted age is 16 to 18 weeks old. This is the age given by many professional dog groomers but in fact it really all depends on whether or not your puppy has had his or her rabies and DHPP shots. As soon as those shots have been administered, your dog can have a haircut if he or she needs it.

Now that the general advice including the whys and wherefores are out of the way, some specific details of how to groom your puppy are outlined below for you so that you know exactly where to start.
BATHING YOUR PUPPY

In recent years, a lot of research has been done on the skin of puppies to determine what is best for them when it comes to having a bath as a part of a grooming routine. After all, the more we understand about it the better we can cater for their little bodies. A lot of information has been released and now it is possible to give a definitive answer as to how you can bath a puppy.

Believe it or not, a puppy’s skin is much like ours and so can withstand the application of shampoos with little difficulty at all providing that the shampoo used is puppy shampoo. There are plenty of specially formulated puppy shampoos available today that have been designed to cater for puppy fur and skin. You should always use one of these because anything else may well be too harsh. If you believe that your puppy’s skin is sensitive then use one of the many hypoallergenic varieties available instead of a generic puppy shampoo.

You should bath your puppy once a week to begin with to ensure that dirt is removed and there is no potential for any form of skin infection or bacteria build up that can prevent his or her natural development.

When you do give your puppy a bath, start by brushing the coat thoroughly but gently to ensure that tangles, matting, burrs, debris and excess hairs are all
removed. This will make the bathing process much easier and more enjoyable for your puppy. When that is done, you should either use puppy eye ointment to provide a film that can protect the eyes from shampoo or be very careful not to get shampoo near the head. The former is perhaps the best option knowing how mischievous puppies can be!

Finally, you are ready to get the bath underway. Wet the coat thoroughly with lukewarm water, making sure that the skin is just as wet as the coat. When it is, apply as much shampoo as is directed by the bottle. Lather the shampoo up and make sure that your puppy is covered in it, massaging it in as you go and making the bath more about petting than cleaning. It should be left on for a few minutes before you wash it off. Take the time then you rinse it all away, making sure that all vestiges of the shampoo are removed so as not to dry out the hair. If you like, you could then allow your dog to play in the water for a little while so that it is enjoyable before taking him or her out for drying.

**Drying Your Puppy**

When you have given your puppy a bath then you need to make sure that he or she is completely and utterly dry before allowing him or her to roam around the house or the yard. This is the only areas of grooming that it is likely that your puppy could become ill, but the same applies to any adult dog that is not completely dry as well.

The best way to dry a puppy is with a towel. Briskly rub your puppy until the coat is mostly dry. If you have been rubbing for a while then you may want to let the coat dry at room temperature if it is still damp. Make sure that the room is warm and that there are no draughts at all before doing this. It may not be a good idea to use a hairdryer to begin with because it would provide grooming overload. However, introduce it after the first couple of sessions so it quickly becomes an accepted part of grooming. However, always have it on a cool setting when using your dryer on a puppy.
Brushing your puppy is one element of grooming a puppy during which you can relax because both of you will enjoy it a lot. You will find it funny and your puppy will find it highly pleasurable. Just as older dogs enjoy a good brush, tangles aside of course, your puppy will too. Aside from this obvious enjoyment, there are also a number of reasons as to why brushing your puppy is good for him or her that go above and beyond establishing acceptance of the whole grooming process.

Brushing your puppy stimulates the production of oil, which is vital for achieving a healthy coat and can help to get any remaining dirt and loose hair off the fur quickly and easily. However, your puppy will not care about these benefits, only the fact that it is attention and close contact with you as well as a brush that feels nice!

Use a soft bristle brush to begin with when brushing a puppy as it will be able to slide through tangles quickly and easily and will also be able to ensure that the pleasurable feeling remains with your puppy until the next time. Soon enough your puppy will get excited about the brush every single time you get it out.
TRIMMING A PUPPY’S NAILS

Nail trimming for a puppy is something that many owners ask about because it is never quite made clear when you should begin to trim the claws of your beautiful puppy. For some reason, some owners have the misguided notion that it hurts the puppy. It does not. It may feel strange to them but it does not hurt them unless you cut the quick. Instead, it is actually much easier to cut their soft if sharp nails than it is to cut an older dog’s claws.

If your puppy has yet to have a nail trim then do so today because it is essential to remove the points from those sharp little needles before you, other people and even the furniture suffers as a result. All you literally need to do is use a pair of scissor nail clippers to take the very tips of the nails off, avoiding the quick as outlined in Chapter Ten. This will be enough to take the edge off them and introduce your dog to clippers for future reference.

As soon as you have taken the tips off the nails then your puppy will be good to go for at least a month before requiring another trim. When the month is up then just check them again and cut as and when necessary. When you settle into a grooming routine then you will be able to assess how long is needed between trims but it is important to get that first one out of the way.

It should also be noted that your puppy’s ears and eyes also need to be checked and cleaned on a regular basis but both processes are literally the same as they are for adult dogs. You cannot take a chance with a puppy’s eyes and ears any more than you can take a chance with your older dog’s sight and hearing. As such, simply incorporate these elements into your grooming and petting routine.
CHAPTER SIXTEEN: DIET

You are reading a guide to grooming your dog so this is probably the last chapter that you expected to see here. However, your dog’s diet plays a major role in grooming your dog because a well balanced diet will actively help the grooming process.

For example, have you heard all of the dog food adverts that mention the shiny coats, bright eyes, good health and all of the other elements of your dog’s appearance that would otherwise be associated with grooming? If you have then you may not be surprised to find out that the nutrients that well balanced diets can provide complement the grooming process quite well.

We all know that we need to eat in order to survive and the same applies for dogs. They need food to boost their energy levels, their immune systems and to help boost their mental as well as physical health. However, food is also necessary for them to look good because the quality of the diet is reflected on the outside as well as on the inside.

Taking all of the above into account, you may be able to understand that there are certain nutrients that should be contained within your dog’s diet and it is down to you to make sure that your dog has them in the correct amounts. Any slight imbalance in the diet will be reflected in a duller coat, duller eyes, lethargy or an irregular bowel movement. Other changes may also cause certain illnesses and ailments, such as a skin reaction to an allergy. As such, you have to make sure that you give your dog exactly what he or she needs.

Your dog should have a balanced diet that contains:

- Fat
- Carbohydrates
- Protein
- Fiber
- Vitamins And Minerals
Of course, there is no set level of each of these for dogs because every dog is different. The more active your dog is the more energy he or she will need. Similarly, a Great Dane obviously needs more food and nutrients than a Jack Russell. As such, the proportions and balance of the diet depends largely on breed and guidelines for all breeds can be found online.

Whether you make the food that your dog eats at home or you buy it in bulk from a local pet supermarket, you should ensure that your dog is fed a balanced diet at regular intervals or times because any differentiation to the diet could actually upset your dog just as much as stopping feeding your dog altogether. Dogs are creatures of habit and it is in their best interests to remain that way.

Going back to the relationship between diet and grooming, it is important to feed your dog the right diet in order to achieve a healthy and glossy coat. There are actually plenty of tips and tidbits of information that can help you to get that diet right to ensure that it aids grooming as far as possible. Regardless of age, breed, color and coat type, nutrition is of the paramount importance so you have to get it right.

Some of the information and tips are outlined below for you:

- Choosing the cheapest dog food is not always the best so it is important to focus on nutrition rather than cost. So many economical, store and generic brands of dog food are not balanced correctly. They contain too much water and not enough of the other nutrients that your dog needs to remain healthy. As such, they are actually a waste of money. There are plenty of quality brands that are properly balanced and thus can help your dog feel and look healthy inside and out.

- A homemade dog food diet is often the best way to ensure that your dog has all of the nutrients that he or she needs for a glossy coat and healthy body. However, before you take to making dog food yourself, check out exactly what your dog needs on a daily basis. From there, make large batches of dog food and freeze it so it is available for your dog on a daily basis so as not to upset his or her system.
• Use supplements to ensure that your dog has all of the vitamins and minerals he or she needs if necessary. After all, skin and fur is there to keep bacteria, viruses and the cold at bay, whilst retaining heat and water. However, before adding supplements to your dog’s diet, always check with your vet to make sure that it is viable to add supplements to the diet and in what quantities.

• A dog’s coat is fascinating because it is almost wholly composed of protein. As such, it needs a good intake of protein in order to keep it in the best of health. If your dog does not have as much protein as he or she should then the fur may begin to fall out, become weak and dry and ultimately look ragged. The protein must be of a high quality in order to maintain coat health. This is why dogs should not be kept on vegetarian diets because the protein often does not reach the recommended levels. Meat is essential because that is essentially what their natural diet is.

• Dog foods that contain fillers and are grain based are absolutely no good for the health of your dog. All of these substances are very hard, if not impossible, to digest. As such, they are of no nutritional value at all and should be avoided wherever possible.

• It is unlikely that your dog will need supplements if you are feeding him or her on the highest quality premium food available. However, if you are worried about nutrition then consult a vet because any issue may not be a result of a dietary issue if you believe that you are fulfilling your dog’s requirements.

• There are three ways in which you can enhance your dog’s nutrition in order to achieve a lovely glossy coat. Adding a raw egg to your dog’s food once a day can add protein to your diet. Adding supplements of Omega 6 and Omega 3 fatty acids as well also helps the coat because these essential fatty acids go a long way to helping achieve a shine that is otherwise impossible to achieve.

A good diet is a great place to start when you are beginning the grooming process. You can introduce a good diet immediately whereas it can take some time to even introduce the brush to your dog without him or her having a go at it! If you get the grooming diet in place to start with then the rest will ultimately fit into place as and when your grooming regime can commence.
It is worth remembering though that if you need any advice at all about nutrition then never be afraid to ask your vet. He or she will definitely be able to help you and will, more often than not, be prepared to offer all the advice and recommendations you need.
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: OVERCOMING RESISTANCE

All of the previous chapters in this book have addressed the fundamentals of grooming your dog. You should now know how to groom your dog, why you should groom your dog and the tools that you will need to use to make your dog look healthy. However, there is one major issue that still has to be addressed – how to groom your dog if he or she fights you!

Meeting resistance when you try to groom your dog is not out of the ordinary. In fact, it should be expected the first time you try to groom your dog. This is largely because you are approaching them with a foreign object that rips their fur out… or at least it feels that way to them. Dogs always rebel against unfamiliar circumstances as a result of the whole fight or flight reaction.

Depending on their characters, most dogs will either fight against grooming or run away. A few dogs may acquiesce to grooming right from the start, but those dogs are usually unbelievably easy going. The majority will have some sort of reaction so you have to be prepared for all eventualities and introduce the idea of grooming slowly. The younger the dog, the better it will be for your long term chances of grooming your dog in a harmonious way but regardless of how old your dog is you should start to introduce grooming right away.

There are numerous hints and tips that can help you to overcome resistance or even prevent it in the first place. Some of the best are outlined below for reference purposes:

- Start Grooming Your Dog As Soon As Possible – The younger your dog is when grooming begins the better because younger dogs are more open to new experiences and adventures. It is also easier to make grooming more fun for younger dogs. As such, this increases the chances of acceptance, especially given the fact that it can be made to seem like another way of giving him or her attention. This applies up to the age of about 2 years or so, although this largely depends on the nature of the dog.
• Be Sure To Touch The Paws And Ears – There are certain areas that every dog objects to being touched in. For the most part, this is the nose, paws and ears because they are the most sensitive. However, this may be different for your dog if you have adopted his or her as a rescued or abused animal. Wherever the no go zones are, you need to find out what they are and touch them as often as possible when petting. This encourages your dog to get used to being touched in those areas and will make them more available when it comes to grooming.

• Use Positive Reinforcement – Positive reinforcement is a major factor in all forms of dog training at the moment and with good reason as it actually achieves great results. Dogs are food driven and so will react positively to certain incentives and positive reinforcement supports that. You essentially reward good behavior and ignore bad behavior. As such, you tell your dog what is right and what is wrong, which will make the grooming process easier.

• Reward Good Behavior With Treats – The golden rule of training your dog and ensuring good behavior is rewarding it as and when it happens. This is especially true in grooming. If you reward your dog for behaving well during grooming then he or she will be eager to repeat the good behavior in order to get more treats. However, if you fail to reward good behavior then there is no incentive to behave.

• Groom Regularly Even If Your Dog Is Clean – Do you get in the shower only when you start to smell? Do you wait until your skin is caked in dirt to have a bath? The answer to both questions should be no and the same applies to your dog. He or she should be groomed no matter what state the fur is in. However, when you are starting to groom your dog there is a very real reason for this – your dog is more likely to accept grooming and associate it with a pleasant experience when he or she is not hurt by the process. If the fur is matted and it really hurts them to have it brushed then of course they are going to rebel in the future. Make it positive before circumstances make it negative. That association can be a powerful thing so do not let it be.
• Focus On Pleasant Areas – A dog is much like a human in that he or she will have a weak spot. Some people like having their hair stroked or their back rubbed and dogs are very similar. They also have particularly pleasant spots that they will love to have rubbed. The tummy is often particularly popular! As such, you should use this to your advantage and pay particular attention to this area during grooming. You will find that it is indeed much easier to get your dog to comply if you use this particular tip.

• Start Of Short And Build Up – Never start grooming your dog with an hour long session that touches every single square inch of his or her body. This is a sure fire way to put your dog off grooming for life. Not only will it scare your dog to death but it will also make your life much harder in the coming years. Instead, you should start off grooming for five minutes and work your way up to as long as your dog feels comfortable with. If you introduce your dog properly to grooming then you may never have issues with grooming again but if you dive head first in then you will absolutely face difficulty next time.

• Choose A Good Time And A Relaxing Place – Grooming your dog first thing in the morning before you take the kids to school is a recipe for disaster. However, if you put a little thought into the when and where then you will find grooming a much more successful experience than you would if no thought was put into it at all. Grooming after a long walk or meal is often much better because your dog would be more content. Similarly, choosing a relaxing place like a quiet living room is also a good idea.

• Avoid Distractions – Dogs are renowned for their short attention spans. Any distraction can cause problems when it comes to getting a little focus. As such, you have to make sure that there are no distractions around during grooming because they will make the experience a lot more unpleasant than it actually needs to be. Ensure that your dog’s full focus is on you and you will find that it is much better for both of you.

• Introduce The Tools Before The Process – Grooming tools can look like artifacts from a torture chamber to us so imagine how they look to your dog! Grooming instruments are foreign objects that do not look at all inviting so the
likelihood of them being accepted from the very first time that your dog lays eyes on them is slim to none. It is essential that you introduce them slowly and before you actually use them to brush your dog. Try putting your brush on the floor and getting your dog to investigate it before providing a treat. Repeat this process over and over. You will find that your dog soon comes to associate the brush with positive treats. This serves to work really well in getting your dog to allow his or her fur to be brushed, especially when the treats continue. Do this with all tools you will use on your dog and you will find that grooming becomes much easier very quickly.

All of the above tips will help to turn a one on one war into a happy bonding activity. Grooming does not have to be a stand off or an all out battle so you absolutely have to take action to ensure that it is a better situation for your dog so as not to make it more distressing than it should be.

Ultimately, you have to use the tips above to your own advantage. It is all about what works best for you and your dog. However, you should bear in mind that every dog is an individual and so completely different to others. As such, if you have groomed a dog previously then your new dog may not have the same reaction. Always be prepared for every circumstance until your dog gets used to grooming because you never know what may happen in the meantime.
Grooming your dog sounds easy in theory, even when you have read all of the previous chapters concerning exactly what you should consider and how you should go about different tasks. However, putting it into practice is a different story because breed also plays a part in the correct methods of grooming your dog.

Breed affects the way in which you groom your dog purely and simply because certain characteristics are specific to breed and these characteristics actually help to determine how to deal with canine coats in particular. Certain coats should be dealt with in very specific ways in order to maintain their health and hygiene as far as possible. For example, long haired dogs have to be groomed differently to shorter haired dogs because the composition of the coats is completely different.

Every breed of dog has one of the types of coat that are outlined in Chapter Six but there are special considerations that should be made for individual breeds based on the above types of coat and indeed other factors. Eighteen individual breeds and their grooming requirements are given below to help you to groom your dog properly in the future.

**POODLE**

The Poodle is a non-shedding breed with a wavy coat.

The Poodle is where it all began. The first dog breed to be publically groomed according to history, the French founded grooming parlors as a direct result of their popularity with the royal family but grooming has progressed since and now there are distinct ideas about how Poodles should be groomed.
First and foremost, it is important to note that Poodles do not shed their fur at all. In fact, Poodles cannot shed their fur naturally so we have to do it for them. The best way to think of a Poodle coat is by associating it with human hair – it is necessary to cut it in order to control it and this is why grooming Poodles is incredibly important.

There are various types of Poodle haircut around because of the different show standards and designs available. However, these are indeed show cuts and not those expected of an everyday Poodle. It takes a lot of practice to groom Poodles on account of the way the hair is and the techniques involved with the design. However, you might want to simply try clipping your Poodle all over with a #10 or #7 blade for starters to give an all over uniform clip and ensure that you get the right feel for the clipper itself. You can experiment later.

Getting rid of matting is important because Poodles do have a tendency to mat. As such, you should use a clicker brush followed by a metal comb to make sure the fur is tangle free. This should be done at least once every few days with bathing essential every month at the very least. The Poodle needs a full grooming routine on a regular basis so ensure that he or she gets it!

You will need a slicker brush, a metal comb, tweezers, ear powder, nail clippers and electric clippers with #15, #10 and #7 blades. The step by step method is as follows:
• Clean the ears and apply medicated ear powder so that any dead and excess hairs can be removed easily with tweezers. Move onto the nails, clipping the very ends off and avoiding the quick.

• Begin with the feet and clip them with a #15 blade, making sure that the pads are clear and the edges of the fur are neat. Move onto the face with the same blade. Move with the growth of hair from the ear down to the mouth before moving onto the muzzle and then to the tail.

• Change the blade to a #10. Clip the stomach first before moving onto the rest of the body. The clipper should be used from the front to the back in the same direction as growth.

• Use the slicker brush to brush the coat thoroughly, thus removing any loose hairs that may be lingering before using scissors to trim any loose ends or scruffy areas. When this is done, use a metal comb to ensure that there are no tangles in the fur and that all areas are even.

For more information, a comprehensive guide is “Poodle Clipping and Grooming: The International Reference” by Shirlee Kalstone. In addition, a series of videos can be found here: http://www.ehow.com/videos-on_1326_poodle-dog-grooming.html.

**Bichon Frise**

The Bichon Frise is a non-shedding breed with a wavy coat.

The Bichon Frise is a unique little dog that appears fluffier than anything else. Distinctly Poodle-like in appearance, it is essential that you brush the little one at least once every couple of days with a slicker brush and metal comb. It is essential to bath the Bichon Frise at least once a month because, like the Poodle, the breed is non-shedding and so will keep growing hair until you do something about it!
This breed does not mat as much as may be expected but your dog will require a lot of grooming to ensure that he or she remains white and stain free. Again, regular clipping is advised for practical purposes as well as show purposes.

You will need a slicker brush, a metal comb, tweezers, ear powder, nail clippers and electric clippers with the #15 and #10 blades. The step by step method is as follows:

• Clean the ears and apply medicated ear powder so that any dead and excess hairs can be removed easily with tweezers. Move onto the nails, clipping the very ends off and avoiding the quick.

• After cleaning the ears, lay the ear flat against your hand and use the #15 blade to clip the hair on the outside of the ear. You should clip it in the same direction as growth. Also use the same blade to clip the top of the head to the eye line.

• Switch the clipper blade to a #10 and clip the muzzle. Clip down the neckline to the chest before moving to the legs. When you have clipped the leg, carefully clip around the feet and remove any excess hair with scissors if necessary.

• Use the same blade to clip the body of your dog, moving from the front of the body to the back in the same direction as growth. Use scissors to trim the hair around the anal region.
• When clipping is done, use the slicker brush to remove any remaining hairs before using scissors to tidy up any scruffy areas. Finally, use the comb to finish the job by smoothing the coat out.

For more information, go to http://www.bichonfrise.me.uk/grooming.html. Alternatively, you can take a look at the video on exactly how to groom the Bichon Frise in real time at http://www.ehow.com/video_4755656_groom-bichon-frise.html.

**Basset Hound**

The Basset Hound is a smooth coated breed.

The Basset Hound is a notorious shedder that needs a lot of attention in the grooming department, but not for the same reasons as the previous two dogs! It is essential to brush him or her at least once a week to ensure that any stray hairs are removed and oils are redistributed evenly. Always use a bristle brush to give a more natural look. As a smooth-haired dog, it is not necessary to clip him or her and so a monthly bath is more than acceptable. However, the nature of the ears makes cleaning them especially important for this breed.
Similarly, the Basset Hound tends to have rolls of skin on the neck and legs so make sure that you fully clean these areas and avoid issues when it comes to bacteria and mold gathering in the lovely environment that they offer.

You will need a bristle brush, a shedding blade, a metal comb, tweezers, ear powder, nail clippers and a chamois cloth. The step by step method is as follows:

- Clean the ears and apply medicated ear powder so that any dead and excess hairs can be removed easily with tweezers. Move onto the nails, clipping the very ends off and avoiding the quick.

- Use the bristle brush to brush your dog from head to toe, thus removing any hairs that may be loose. If your dog is shedding then use the shedding blade to remove the hairs in one go.

- When you have used the brush and blade to remove excess hair, use the comb to even out the coat and remove any lingering mats or tangles.

- When you have removed all excess hairs, mats and tangles then use the chamois cloth to even out the coat and really make it shine.

Although most Basset Hounds do not require bathing often, it may be worth using clean cotton to wipe in the folds in your dog’s skin to ensure that no dirt is building up every time you groom your dog. This can help to keep infection and irritation at bay. Dry cotton is fine but if you use damp cotton then make sure that you dry the folds well too.

If you want more information about this low maintenance breed then try http://www.just-basset-hounds.com/basset-hound-grooming.html. This site deals with all aspects of the Basset Hound as well as grooming from an owner and expert in the field.

**BORDER COLLIE**

The Border Collie is a medium coated breed.
The Border Collie grows hair to around 3 inches in length and this makes it prone to matting and tangling. As such, bathing once a month and brushing every day is an absolute must. You may also benefit from using a conditioner on the Collie hair to prevent major tangles and thus pain for your dog.

Daily brushing should be performed with an undercoat rake as well as a wire brush because these tools will ensure that there are no tangles anywhere in the coat. A trim once in a while is a good idea but the breed relies on its coat for its function as a sheepdog in some parts of the world and it should retain that.

You will need a slicker brush, a metal comb, a de-matting comb, tweezers, ear powder, nail clippers and scissors. The step by step method is as follows:

• Clean the ears and apply medicated ear powder so that any dead and excess hairs can be removed easily with tweezers. Move onto the nails, clipping the very ends off and avoiding the quick.

• Use a slicker brush to thoroughly brush the coat, using the method outlined in Chapter Seven. Be sure to remove tangles and identify any matting in the coat. Split the coat into sections and brush it inch by inch, being especially careful not to create more mats.

• Use the de-matting comb to work through the matting, being careful not to nick the skin underneath the coat. Work through the matting carefully but if you cannot remove them with the comb then be sure to cut them out with the scissors gently, removing as little fur as possible. If your dog is shedding, you may also want to use a shedding blade at this point.
• Use the scissors to trim the feathering at the back of the legs, keeping the edges neat and tidy. Tidy up any fur around areas that have had to be cut to remove matting as well.

• When all of the above steps have been completed, use the metal comb to rake through the hair, removing any tangles that linger and smoothing it out. Comb the coat through twice to ensure that it is perfectly smooth before leaving it for a few days and then starting the whole process again.

A comprehensive article about grooming a Border Collie can be found at http://www.helium.com/items/1126722-grooming-the-hyperactive-border-collie. The information there is slightly more in depth.

**BOSTON TERRIER**

The Boston Terrier is a smooth coated dog.

Boston Terriers are incredibly easy to groom because they are smooth coated dogs that barely shed. As such, they are ideal for families that do not have much time for grooming. A brush once a week with a natural bristles brush and a bath once every 6 weeks to 2 months if perfectly adequate. You may have to look after the eyes well as Boston Terriers often face the overspill of tears as a result of their own tight eyelids cutting off their drainage system. As such, you have to take care of it yourself.

You will need a natural bristle brush, a metal comb, cotton, a smoothing glove or chamois cloth, tweezers, ear powder and nail clippers. The step by step method is as follows:

• Clean the ears and apply medicated ear powder so that any dead and excess hairs can be removed easily with tweezers. Move onto the nails, clipping the very ends off and avoiding the quick.
• Take a piece of dry cotton and slowly but gently wipe the folds in the dog’s skin. As they are on the face, they pick up dirt easily so be sure to clean any dirt out of them before taking care of the coat.

• Use the natural bristle brush to brush your dog from head to toe, thus removing any stray hairs that may be on the coat. When you have finished, use the comb to smooth over the coat.

• Use the chamois cloth or smoothing glove to enhance the health of your dog’s coat and really make it shine.

Further information on grooming your Boston Terrier can be found online, with a free grooming eBook being available from the following address:

http://www.officialbostonterrierguide.com/Boston_Terrier_Care/Boston_Terrier_Grooming.php

CAIRN TERRIER

The Cairn Terrier is a non-shedding breed with a wire coat.

The Cairn Terrier is not a difficult dog to look after providing that you do not follow the show patterns but instead go for basic grooming patterns. A terrier like this should only have a bath about 4 to 6 times a year and the coat needs to be stripped in order to keep it completely healthy.
Brushing is required regularly to remove any hair that is loose too. However, it is the thick hair around the eyes that needs to be maintained more than any other feature because it provides a haven for bacteria, being a window to the eyes. As such, eye care is vital.

You will need a slicker brush, a metal comb, scissors, a de-matting comb, tweezers, ear powder, nail clippers and electric clippers with the #10 blade. The step by step method is as follows:

• Clean the ears and apply medicated ear powder so that any dead and excess hairs can be removed easily with tweezers. Move onto the nails, clipping the very ends off and avoiding the quick.

• After cleaning the ears, use the scissors to trim the thick hair around the eyes and ears until it appears as in the picture above. Also use the scissors to trim the muzzle because they are more effective than clippers in the case of this breed.

• Use the slicker brush to remove tangles and the de-matting brush to remove any mats that may be present. If you cannot remove the mats with a comb then carefully cut them out.
• Use a #10 blade and clip the dog from the neckline to the chest before moving to the legs. When you have clipped the legs, carefully clip around the feet and remove any excess hair with scissors if necessary.

• Use the same blade to clip the body of your dog, moving from the front of the body to the back in the same direction as growth. It should be the same length all over so use the scissors to tidy up any areas that need it.

• When clipping is done, use the slicker brush to remove any remaining hairs. Finally, use the comb to finish the job by smoothing the coat out.

You can find more information out about the Cairn Terrier grooming process at http://www.cairnrescue.com/general/groom.htm. The resources there are incredibly comprehensive and will tell you everything you need to know.

**Cavalier King Charles**

The Cavalier King Charles is a medium coated breed.

Looking after a Cavalier King Charles is relatively easy because the breed is average in terms of shedding and does not require excess bathing or brushing, with the former being required once a month or so and the latter just once a week. The coat should be stripped around the feet and legs to ensure that it remains hygienic and it is recommended that a shampoo high in protein be used to enhance the coat.
However, special attention needs to be paid to the ears. That is where mats and tangles occur and also where the breed is prone to infection.

You will need a slicker brush, a metal comb, a de-matting comb, tweezers, ear powder, nail clippers and scissors. The step by step method is as follows:

• Clean the ears and apply medicated ear powder so that any dead and excess hairs can be removed easily with tweezers. Move onto the nails, clipping the very ends off and avoiding the quick.

• Use your hands to locate any mats and tangles in the fur. Never use a brush to do so because of the delicate nature of the coat. When you have located each mat, use a de-matting comb to remove them but always avoid cutting the fur at any cost.

• Brush your dog with a slicker brush, taking care to remove all further tangles in the coat. When you have removed any stray hairs with the brush, use the metal comb to smooth out the coat and ensure that no tangles remain in place.

• Finally, use the scissors to trim the hair that can be found underneath the paws. The hair on top of the feet should not be trimmed but that found between the pads should. In fact, that’s the only hair that should ever be trimmed because the scissors should not be used anywhere else and clippers are absolutely forbidden by the breed standard.

If you would like a little more information about the King Charles Cavalier and how to groom him then take a look at [http://www.ehow.com/how_5308977_bathe-cavalier-king-charles-spaniel.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_5308977_bathe-cavalier-king-charles-spaniel.html) because it has a little more information there.

**COCKER SPANIEL**

The Cocker Spaniel is a long coated large dog.

The Cocker Spaniel is a relatively easy dog to groom, requiring a bath once a month and brushing twice a week. However, the breed is prone to matting and so will need
prolonged attention after a bath. It is recommended that the breed be clipped to minimize the occurrence of matting and a #10 blade is perfect for the job.

You will need a slicker brush, a metal comb, tweezers, ear powder, nail clippers and electric clippers with #10 and #9 blades. The step by step method is as follows:

- Clean the ears and apply medicated ear powder so that any dead and excess hairs can be removed easily with tweezers. Move onto the nails, clipping the very ends off and avoiding the quick.

- Bearing in mind that you should have brushed your dog first, begin clipping your Spaniel at the ears. Clip using a #9 attachment, starting with the ears. Lay the ears flat on your hand and be very gentle so as to avoid nicks. When the ears are done, use the blade all over the face and back of the head, going with the direction of growth.

- Change to a #10 blade and move from the neck down to the chest, keeping the clipper steady. Move with the direction of growth to prevent any tangles.

- Change back to the #9 blade and clip the back and sides, moving again with growth. Finish with the stomach to the navel, ensuring that all areas are clipped including awkward areas like the groin.

- When you have finished clipping your dog, use scissors to trim the feet and also to even out any areas that are a little untidy. However, before doing the
latter you should use a slicker brush to remove any lingering hairs that have been clipped off and to untangle the coat.

- Finally, use a metal comb to remove any lingering tangles and neaten up the longer fur in the chest area.

An in depth guide to grooming a Cocker Spaniel can be found at http://www.ehow.com/how_2312209_give-cocker-spaniel-summer-puppy.html.

LABRADOR

The Labrador is considered to be a smooth coated dog, although the coat is of a medium length.

The Labrador has a medium coat in terms of the length but one that sheds all year round. Incredibly oily, it does not need to be bathed on a regular basis with once a quarter being fine. However, it should be brushed at least once a week in order to maintain its health, boost the blood circulation and enhance the appearance. Be sure to use a conditioner on the coat to ensure that all natural oils are restored straight afterwards.

You will need a bristle brush, a metal comb, a shedding blade, tweezers, ear powder, nail clippers and coat conditioner. The step by step method is as follows:
• Clean the ears and apply medicated ear powder so that any dead and excess hairs can be removed easily with tweezers. Move onto the nails, clipping the very ends off and avoiding the quick.

• Use the bristle brush to briskly brush the coat, thus ensuring there are no tangles. You should then use the comb to remove any loose hairs remaining. However, if your Labrador is shedding then the shedding blade is more appropriate for removing excess hair.

• If your dog is shedding then you should then bathe and dry your dog, either with a cage dryer or a towel.

• After bathing, apply the coat conditioner with your hands. Ensure that it is well rubbed in so that the complete coat is conditioned. Smooth the hair again with the bristle brush and use scissors if necessary to even out any rough or untidy areas.

The Labrador is prone to ear infections though and so must have the ears checked at least once a week to ensure that there is no excess wax or hair in the ear canal.

If you want to find out more about how to groom your Labrador then go to http://www.woodhavenlabs.com/grooming.html.

LHASA APSO

The Lhasa Apso is a dog that is characterized by its long parted coat.
The Lhasa Apso is one of the most difficult breeds of dog to groom at the moment. Perfectly clipped show dogs look beautiful but the breed can just as easily look scraggily and dirty. The breed should be bathed once a month and brushed at least once a week. However, the coat grows slowly and so it is easy to maintain a clip for around 3 months.

The Lhasa Apso is very prone to matting and takes a lot of grooming so it is wise to dedicate a day a month to the complete grooming package. Be sure to do the ears at least once a week though because this breed is very prone to ear canal problems as a result of the ears.

You will need a slicker brush, a metal comb, a de-matting comb, tweezers, ear powder, nail clippers and scissors. The step by step method is as follows:

- Clean the ears and apply medicated ear powder so that any dead and excess hairs can be removed easily with tweezers. Move onto the nails, clipping the very ends off and avoiding the quick.

- Use the slicker brush to remove any tangles from the coat of your Lhasa Apso. The tangles should be easy to remove but avoid matted areas, leaving them until a little later.

- When you have identified all matted areas, take a de-matting comb to them and remove the matting gently. Ensure that the entire mat is combed out, taking care not to nick the skin. Use the slicker brush again to remove any stray hairs layer by layer. Brush carefully and ensure that all sections are silky before using a metal comb to smooth it down.

- Use the scissors to cut the hair on the feet between the pads but only use them on the fur if you have to remove a particularly stubborn mat. Aside from that, scissors should never be used on the coat.

If you would like more information on how to groom the Lhasa Apso or how to clip the coat rather than leaving it in the show style as outlined above, go to the information at [http://www.lhasadogs.com/grooming.htm](http://www.lhasadogs.com/grooming.htm) for reference.
MINIATURE SCHNAUZER

The Miniature Schnauzer is a non-shedding wire coated dog.

The Miniature Schnauzer is a wonderful little dog but has a coat that is prone to matting and thus needs a lot of attention. With the recommendation being to brush your dog 3 times a week and bathed once a month, the double coated breed must be brushed with a wire brush and you may want to consider clipping him as well. Finally, trimming the beard is an absolute must because it is prone to food stains and tends to grow out incredibly quickly.

You will need a slicker brush, a metal comb, tweezers, ear powder, nail clippers, scissors and electric clippers with a #10 blade. The step by step method is as follows:

• Clean the ears and apply medicated ear powder so that any dead and excess hairs can be removed easily with tweezers. Move onto the nails, clipping the very ends off and avoiding the quick.
• Brush your dog with the slicker brush, removing any dead hairs from the fur. When all matting and tangles have been removed, use a #10 blade to clip your dog from the base of the skull right through to the tail. All the fur should be one length and you should clip with the direction of growth. You should also use it on the top of the head but not the muzzle.
Use scissors to trim the muzzle so that it appears as in the picture above. The moustache is the feature of the Miniature Schnauzer so ensure that it is neat. However, avoid clipping the whiskers as far as possible.

Use the slicker brush again to ensure that any and all hairs are removed before running the metal comb through the coat. The scissors should be used to trim any areas that look particularly untidy or scruffy, in addition to being used for the fur around the anal region.

For further information on grooming the Miniature Schnauzer and a full description of the tools and methods used, you can visit the American Miniature Schnauzer club at: http://amsc.us/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid=33.

PAPILLON

The Papillon is a long coated small dog.

The Papillon is a lovely dog that requires a lot of grooming as a result of the sheer amount of fur it has and the nature of it. Weekly grooming is a must, and that includes bathing and brushing. The breed does shed and so it is worth taking the time to brush more during the high shedding seasons.

The Papillon is a very high maintenance dog and needs particular attention to the eyes and ears because they tend to have issues with both. Staining on the muzzle is common thanks to tears so be sure to wash the face when bathing the dog.

You will need a slicker brush, a metal comb, tweezers, ear powder, nail clippers and scissors. The step by step method is as follows:
• Clean the ears and apply medicated ear powder so that any dead and excess hairs can be removed easily with tweezers. Move onto the nails, clipping the very ends off and avoiding the quick.

• Brush the coat out using a slicker brush in order to remove any shed or dead hairs. You should be firm with this part given the fact that the breed does not suffer with matting or tangles at all.

• Take the time to trim any stray hairs after you have brushed the coat out. The fur should be even and the colors should be well defined so trim any areas that encroach on other colored areas.

• Finally, run the metal comb through your dog's fur and ensure that it is shiny, even and free of any stray hairs.

Although this is the basic grooming procedure, if you do wish to show our Papillon then you should take a look at http://www.showpaps.com/grooming.htm for the full information that you should use!

**PEKINSESE**

The Pekingese is a long coated small dog.

The Pekingese is another breed that needs a lot of attention as a direct result of the sheer amount of shedding that it does. The undercoat in particular is very prone to shedding for the majority of the year. Using a slicker brush regularly can help to minimize it but bathing on a monthly basis will do this better than any other tactic.

The Pekingese face is particularly squashed and so looking after the eyes and ears is an absolute must as the breed faces issues with both at some stage during their lives. The face also becomes rather stained at times so take good care of this area.

You will need a slicker brush, a metal comb, tweezers, ear powder, nail clippers and electric clippers with #15, #5F and #10 blades. The step by step method is as follows:
• Clean the ears and apply medicated ear powder so that any dead and excess hairs can be removed easily with tweezers. Move onto the nails, clipping the very ends off and avoiding the quick.

• Go over the coat with a slicker brush firmly to ensure that all shed hairs are removed. Pay specific attention to the hind leg area as this is prolific for shedding and will get tangled if you are not careful.

• Use the clippers with the #10 blade, to trim the hair on the stomach. Go with the direction of hair growth to avoid tangles as you go. Change the blade to a #5F and use that to trim the hair on the body, moving from the base of the skull backwards towards the tail.

• Finally, use the #15 blade of the clipper to trim the feet, especially the hair between the pads. When the clippers have been used on the whole body, take the slicker brush and give it a once over before using the metal comb on the body to smooth out the coat and remove any odd tangles that may have occurred.

For full information on how to groom a Pekingese, and indeed information on how to do so without clippers, go to the information that is readily available at the following page: [http://www.windemerepekingese.com/articles/grooming_the_pekingese.htm](http://www.windemerepekingese.com/articles/grooming_the_pekingese.htm).

**Pug**

The Pug is a smooth coated breed.
The Pug needs a lot of grooming but not because of the coat, unlike other breeds. The Pug has a lot of skin folds and a flat face and so needs special attention paying to the eyes and general skin condition. Wiping the skin folds on a regular basis can prevent irritation and it is vital to clean the eyes and the eye area every single day because the tear ducts are naturally blocked. However, with an undercoat and all year round shedding, the Pug may need a lot of brushing as well. Daily sessions come highly recommended.

You will need a natural bristle brush, a metal comb, cotton, a smoothing glove or chamois cloth, tweezers, ear powder and nail clippers. The step by step method is as follows:

- Clean the ears and apply medicated ear powder so that any dead and excess hairs can be removed easily with tweezers. Move onto the nails, clipping the very ends off and avoiding the quick.

- Take a piece of dry cotton and slowly but gently wipe the folds in the dog’s skin. As they are on the face, they pick up dirt easily so be sure to clean any dirt out of them before taking care of the coat.
• Use the natural bristle brush to brush your dog from head to toe, thus removing any stray hairs that may be on the coat. When you have finished, use the comb to smooth over the coat.

• Use the chamois cloth or smoothing glove to enhance the health of your dog’s coat and really make it shine.

The Pug is easy to groom but if you feel that you need more information then try the article at http://www.dog-behavior-training.co.uk/pug_grooming.html. It is comprehensive and full of hints and tips.

**SCOTTISH TERRIER**

The Scottish Terrier is a wire coated dog.

The Scottish Terrier is a unique breed in appearance and in grooming needs because it has to be rolled. In addition to daily brushing and monthly bathing, the Scottish Terrier effectively has to be plucked. You do so with your fingers to remove chunks of hair that are coming out. Using the clippers is actually a must to make this a little bit easier. However, the eyes require special attention because the coat often grows over them and this can lead to serious infections.

You will need a slicker brush, a metal comb, tweezers, ear powder, nail clippers and scissors or thinning shears. The step by step method is as follows:
• Clean the ears and apply medicated ear powder so that any dead and excess hairs can be removed easily with tweezers. Move onto the nails, clipping the very ends off and avoiding the quick.

• Use the slicker brush to rake out the skirt of your Scottish Terrier. A pin brush would work just as well though. Both will remove any tangles and stray hairs. However, when you have finished begin plucking your dog’s coat, The dead fur will come away in clumps so you should continue to do this until the whole boy has been covered.

• Comb through your dog’s fur to even it out after rolling. You will be able to see any gaps in the texture of the coat at this point and then should use the thinning shears to even it out.

• Take the scissors to the muzzle and trim the hair there to keep it neat before brushing your dog from head to toe with the slicker brush again. Finally, use the comb again to ensure that your dog looks the part.

If you want further information about grooming your Scottish Terrier then take a look at the following resource: [http://www.scottishterrierdog.com/coatcare.htm](http://www.scottishterrierdog.com/coatcare.htm). This is particularly useful if you want to find out how to clip your Scottie. It is a complex process so it is not worth risking it unless you know how to do so.

WEST HIGHLAND TERRIER
The West Highland Terrier is a non-shedding wire coated dog.

West Highland Terriers, or Westies as they are commonly known, have double coats and shed a lot so it is important to brush them at least once a week. They can be rolled or stripped by hand, clipped or trimmed to the usual style of coat. However, it is best to use a metal brush on them to help with the matting that so often occurs. The outer fur is wiry and the undercoat soft so careful grooming is essential so as not to damage either.

Always use a mild shampoo on a Westie because they are renowned for their dry skin and thus also for the infections that often arise as a result.

You will need a slicker brush, a metal comb, tweezers, ear powder, nail clippers, thinning shears and blunt nosed scissors. The step by step method is as follows:

• Clean the ears and apply medicated ear powder so that any dead and excess hairs can be removed easily with tweezers. Move onto the nails, clipping the very ends off and avoiding the quick.

• The slicker brush should then be used to brush out the coat, ensuring that the undercoat is tangle free and all mats are removed. If mats are particularly bad then you may want to use a de-matting comb, being careful to avoid nicking the skin.

• When all tangles have been removed, use the thinning shears to remove any stray hairs that may be apparent on the body. You should also use them around the edges of the face so it appears rounded, as in the photo above.

• Do not use the thinning shears on the face itself, but instead use scissors to trim the hair around the eyes and ears, keeping it short to ensure the health of the sensory organs.

• When trimming is complete, use a slicker brush to brush out any stray loose hairs and then go through the coat with a metal comb to smooth it out and ensure that it is completely level before bringing your grooming regime to an end.
If you would like further information on how to groom a Westie then the following page will give you a full and detailed explanation of how to do so: [http://www.dailypuppy.com/articles/how-to-groom-a-west-highland-white-terrier/3d01e59b-928a-376c-574a-cb6546c69fcc](http://www.dailypuppy.com/articles/how-to-groom-a-west-highland-white-terrier/3d01e59b-928a-376c-574a-cb6546c69fcc)

**YORKSHIRE TERRIER**

The Yorkshire Terrier is characterized by its long parted coat.

The Yorkshire Terrier, or Yorkie, is a long coated but single coated dog, which means that there is a lot of maintenance required in the way of regular baths twice a week. Yorkies do not shed and so the cost needs clipping around 3 times a year. However, they need brushing at least twice a week because they are prone to matting.

The Yorkie is also prone to issues at the rear end as feces often become matted in the hair. As such, it is essential that the area is trimmed and kept perfectly clean so as to prevent serious illness and disease.

You will need a pin brush, a bristle brush, a metal comb, tweezers, ear powder, nail clippers and scissors. The step by step method is as follows:
• Clean the ears and apply medicated ear powder so that any dead and excess hairs can be removed easily with tweezers. Move onto the nails, clipping the very ends off and avoiding the quick.

• Take the pin brush to completely brush out the coat. This includes all areas of the body, including under the stomach, groins and so on. This will brush out any tangles that are in place at the moment and ensure that the coat is in good health.

• Use a metal comb to check the coat in full after using the pin brush to ensure that it is prepared for the bristle brush, which will of course help to boost circulation under the skin as well as smoothing the coat ready for trimming.

• Take the scissors you have and trim any ends of the coat that are longer than the others. Remove any scruffy ends and thin out the coat as and when necessary. The feathering should always be at an equal length so it is essential to trim it regularly. You should always trim the hair on the feet as well, particularly between the pads.

• Finally, brush through with the pin brush, metal comb and then bristle brush again to ensure that it is smooth, even and beautiful!

If you need a little extra help then a good video for illustrative purposes can be found at http://www.ehow.com/video_4755669_groom-yorkshire-terrier.html. An in depth article is also available at http://www.wikihow.com/Groom-a-Yorkshire-Terrier.
CHAPTER NINETEEN:

INTERESTING GROOMING FACTS AND TIPS

This comprehensive guide has now covered all of the basics that are associated with dog grooming, from brushing to bathing and beyond! However, there are some elements of grooming that do not really fit in anywhere. These are small areas of grooming in most cases but actively play a huge role in the health of your dog. As such, they should not be overlooked and, for a want of somewhere else to put them, you can find them all within this chapter.

**Tip One: Cleaning Your Dog’s Face**

Believe it or not, most owners forget to groom one vital area of their dog’s body during the grooming process. Ears check, eyes check, teeth check… but what about the face? Just because you clean all of the sensory organs around the facial area it does not mean that you should not clean the face as well. In fact, it is essential that you do clean and groom your dog’s face because a failure to do so would render the rest of your facial area routine useless.

It is the facial hair that must be clean in order to prevent the transfer of dirt into the eyes. As such, it is a vital area of infection control. Similarly, grooming the face can be a very personal and enjoyable form of petting as well and thus it can enhance the bond between you and your dog. So how can you clean your dog’s face? Well, the three points outlined below will help you:

1. Firstly, use a little gauze or cotton to wipe the skin around the eyes. The gauze or cotton should be moistened with a little water and you should work your way away from the eyes, using gentle strokes and ensuring that you cover every single hair around the eye area. Keep an eye out for any discharge or changes in the area and go to a vet if there are any.
2. Move to the ear area and do the same, holding the ear out of the way and using gentle strokes to rub away from the ear. When you have finished moving around the ear area, use another piece of fresh cotton or gauze to gently rub inside the ear flap and the hair directly around the opening of the ear. Always use a fresh piece of cotton for each ear.

3. Use a mild dog shampoo to gently wash the muzzle and hair from the jowls downwards. Only use just enough to lather up a little and rinse off easily with a wet cloth rather than a direct showerhead. If there is any loose skin around the muzzle or elsewhere on the face then be sure to wipe it with a little damp cotton instead of using shampoo. Do this at least once a week to prevent any build up of dead skin cells, bacteria and dirt. This can lead to infection.

Your dog’s face really is that easy to clean. It only takes a few moments out of your grooming regime so be sure to take the time to do it.

**TIP TWO: ALWAYS HAVE A FIRST AID KIT TO HAND**

This is one element of grooming that most people do not even consider because they wrongly take it as a given that nobody will get hurt during the process. After all, grooming is harmless, right? Wrong. Anything can happen at any given time and when you think about it, you will be using scissors and other sharp objects when grooming your dog. Unfortunately, that can lead to an awful lot of injuries to you or your dog and that is obviously not a good thing!

You have to be prepared for all eventualities when grooming your dog because not all events are avoidable. If you have a dog and human first aid kit to hand then you can soon have any injury patched up and good to go again!

So what do you need in a first aid kit for grooming purposes? Well, the following should always be easily available and to hand:

- A muzzle
- Aspirin
- Large and small non-stick bandages along with bandage scissors and tape
• Sterile gauze wrappings
• Pressure bandages
• Betadine antiseptic solution
• Tweezers
• Blood-clotting gel or styptic powder
• Hydrogen peroxide
• Triple antibiotic ointment, which should not contain benzocaine or lidocaine
• Electronic ear thermometer for dogs
• Vaseline
• Cortisone cream
• Disposable latex gloves
• Isopropyl alcohol
• Syrup of ipecac
• Kaolin product for dogs
• Mineral oil
• Unflavored pediatric electrolyte (Pedalyte)

All of the above are readily available at drugstores up and down the country and most are inexpensive so this will not cost you a fortune. However, it is definitely better to be safe than sorry so make sure that everything is easily accessible just in case.

There are many reasons as to why you may need a first aid kit to hand and the following are just a few of the illnesses, ailments and issues that may well arise during the grooming process at one stage or another. As such, you should be on the lookout for all of them:

**Cuts** – Cuts come in two main types. The first is the scratch variety, which can be treated with antiseptic solution and a little gauze until the bleeding stops. However, if it is a deeper cut then you will have to take your dog to the vet’s office immediately. The vet will either stitch or staple the wound in addition to cleaning it up effectively. If there are any hairs remaining in the wound after the vet has done then use the tweezers to remove them carefully and ensure that it is completely clean. If bleeding begins again when you do this then use the styptic powder to stop it and treat it
again with antiseptic just to be on the safe side. You should change the dressings regularly until the stitches are ready to be removed.

**Skin Irritation Or Rashes** – Skin irritation is quite common in grooming situations and can occur for a number of reasons. For example, it may be because the clippers burn your dog or it may be a result of a product you use, such as shampoo. Either way, it must be treated to prevent it getting worse. Clipper burn can be treated using Aloe Vera or even a clipper coolant. However, if you make sure that the irritation is treated immediately and it then gets worse, you will have to take your dog to the vet for a prescribed solution to the issue.

**Hypothermia** – Hypothermia is effectively a problem when your dog’s body temperature drops below the average. It occurs far more often in winter than it does in summer and can occur during grooming if you groom your dog outside or in a cold house. It is relatively easy to spot because your dog will shiver and appear listless. If the illness progresses too far then your dog will fall into a coma so make sure that you move him or her immediately to a warm room, use a blanket to warm him or her up and slowly bring the temperature back up to normal. If you fail to do so then you need to call a vet immediately to remedy the condition or else your dog will die.

**Allergic Reactions To Products** – Allergic reactions to all sorts of elements of grooming is not uncommon and, to be honest, you may face it in the early stages of grooming because of the various new products that you would be using on your dog. However, there are all sorts of different allergic reactions to watch out for. For example, the reaction may be as mild as a rash but as severe as diarrhea and vomiting. How it appears determines how exactly you should treat it. For example, you should treat any minor allergic reaction as you would skin irritation and ensure that you remove the product that caused the issue from your regime. If it is a more severe reaction then you should call the vet for advice. It may be that you need to administer medication, in which case you will need to consult a vet first.

**Dehydration** – Dehydration is not uncommon during the first few stages of grooming. Your dog may not drink enough water on account of nerves or getting too excited. You can check to see whether your dog is dehydrated via the gums. If they are dry or sticky then dehydration is present. Try to get your dog to drink a little or, if
he or she refuses, then you should most definitely visit the vet for a quick solution. If your dog does not begin to drink again soon then he or she could die so it is definitely essential to take your dog for treatment immediately.

**TIP THREE: GETTING CONTROL OVER FLEAS, TICKS AND LICE**

Pests have been mentioned in previous chapters but not in great detail. Many owners do not consider fleas, ticks and mice to be part of the grooming process but as something else entirely, which is why you may be surprised to see a section on them in here at all. However, grooming is the best possible time to help prevent against them as well as looking out for them in the first place. Looking out for parasites should undoubtedly be a part of the routine so it is important to slot it into it as soon as you can.

Ticks, fleas and lice are more common in dogs than you may think, and far from being irritating but harmless as we seem to think of them so often. In fact, all external parasites can be incredibly harmful. They can make your dog itch, break out in a rash and ultimately make him or her depressed and irritable. On the other hand, fleas can soon start bouncing around your home and this makes it very difficult to get rid of them.

Getting rid of parasites like fleas, ticks and lice if you catch them early enough is actually really easy. Grooming can help you to catch them within a week or so of getting them providing that your routine is regular and up to scratch. This is a big help in the ongoing war that dog owners have with them. You will also need techniques to help you get rid of them as well, and some of those you can use are outlined below:

**Ticks** – Ticks are awful little creatures that suck the blood of your dog and have a nasty habit of transmitting diseases. As such, they have to be dealt with immediately when you find them because the longer they remain on your dog the worse his or health will be. Goodness knows what your dog may end up with. Removing them is not as difficult as you may think. You will need clean tweezers, flea powder that kills ticks as well and a jar with rubbing alcohol in it.
All you have to do is apply the tick powder directly to the tick. Follow the directions on the bottle as to how long you should leave it on there for because this varies from solution to solution, depending on its strength. It should be left for some time before you attempt to remove the tick with the tweezers because the grip on your dog needs to be loosened. It is a bonus for you if the tick is killed outright. Either way, you have to make sure that you get it all out because anything left over can still transmit disease. Use the tweezers, get a good grip on the tick and pull it straight out. Put it in the jar of alcohol to ensure that it is dead and scrub the tweezers with a little rubbing alcohol to ensure that they are clean.

When you are finished with one tick you should slowly and methodically go over your dog’s body inch by inch to see if there are any more of the critters on your dog. Treat them in the same way if there are. When you have removed all ticks, thoroughly wash the areas that were affected on your dog to ensure that they are clean. However, if you noticed any rashes or areas of irritation on your dog when looking for ticks then take him or her to the vet just to be on the safe side.

**Lice** – Lice are often mistaken for fleas by novice owners but they are actually really light colored insects that cannot fly. They are very rare in dogs these days. They used to occur quite a lot but the majority of the problem has been eradicated these days. However, dogs from poor backgrounds may have lice and face a huge range of health problems if they do. If your dog does have lice then the problem does become more apparent on a much larger scale because of the steps you have to take to get rid of them are effectively concerning your entire home.

Lice dips and baths are very effective in removing all lice and eggs from your dog, thus ensuring that he or she is free and clear right away. However, this does not mean all of the lice are gone. You have to clean, wash and disinfect your house from top to bottom. Every scrap of bedding that your dog has lain on has to be thrown away or, even better, burned. You should also disinfect any baskets or crates that he or she may have been in. Finally, make sure that your home is clear before you allow your dog to settle anywhere afterwards just in case.

**Fleas** – Fleas are actually very similar to ticks in a number of ways. Obviously they do not cling to the skin like ticks do but they still bite and suck the blood. Most
Importantly, they also transmit disease because they come into contact with all sorts of ailments, illnesses and diseases before passing them on via the bloodstream. Fleas tend to congregate in warm areas of your dog’s body like the stomach and groin because those areas have the best living and breeding conditions for them.

Fleas can be found on all dogs but leap from dog to dog so they are common in those dogs that are never groomed, dogs that have recently spent time in a kennels and dogs that regularly socialize with a variety of other dogs. Neglected dogs also have a high flea incidence rate. However, even the cleanest dogs can have them from time to time. If you do find fleas then be sure to use one of the flea shampoos or solutions that are available from your veterinarian. If you follow the instructions then you will soon find that they disappear. However, avoid insecticides if you can help it because they may be harmful for your dog. There are other products out there but you will have to ask about them.

When you have eliminated the fleas from your dog then always vacuum your house from top to bottom, including mattresses and sofas. Use one of the flea sprays available on any dog bedding that you cannot wash and on any fabric surface that your dog has been on. You should, though, wash anything that it is possible to wash at as high a temperature as possible.

**Mites** – Mites are also a part of this, although not as serious as some of the others if caught early enough. They look like little spiders and are actually the main canine cause of mange. Mange is not a nice ailment to have because it is itchy, causes scabs to arise, encourages hair loss and can irritate your dog to the end of his or her wits. If your dog has mites then you do need to seek veterinary help because you will need prescribed medication to take care of it. However, in terms of cleaning, you only need to get rid of or disinfect anything that your dog sits or lies on regularly.

Now you know how to take care of parasites. All you have to do is absolutely ensure that they are always taken care of sooner rather than later and you can avoid a lot of hassle on your part and a lot of pain and suffering on the part of your dog.
**Tip Four: Dealing With Aggression And Biting**

Every dog will have a different reaction to grooming, at least the initial attempts at grooming that you make. Your dog may be nervous, jumpy, a little aggressive or as good as gold. However, the odd few dogs will have an extreme reaction that is caused by the fight or flight mechanism that they have to deal with what they perceive to be danger.

It is not uncommon for your dog to believe that grooming poses a danger, especially if he or she is older and has no prior knowledge of grooming. Do not be afraid or startled if your dog does try to bite you, a brush or anything else within close proximity because it is a natural reaction. It does not mean that your dog is dangerous. Puppies may also nip you when grooming them for the first time but this is more easily ironed out than in an older dog.

So what should you do if your dog bites you or even tries to bite you during the grooming process? Well, the first thing to do is to take a step back and calm your dog down. Do not reward him or her by giving fusses but do put the tools that you are using down and stand in the room without fear. Only in very rare cases will you ever have to restrain your dog but if you can help it do not leave the room. If you do and fail to go back to grooming then your dog will automatically assume that the bas behavior is a surefire way of getting his or her own way and that can be even more dangerous over time.

When your dog has calmed down give him or her a command, such as sit, lie down or roll over. If your dog does not know commands then sit is the easiest one to choose because he or she will soon pick it up. When your command has been obeyed fuss your dog for a few moments. Leave grooming for an hour or so and then go back to it. This time though, start by inspecting your dog to ensure that it was not a reaction to pain. Then, after you have ascertained that it was not, introduce the tools to your dog but do not begin grooming. You just have to take it slow and make sure that you get your dog used to the tools and grooming in general steadily so as not to cause alarm.
You may want to consider muzzling your dog during the next full grooming attempt if he or she is not accepting the tools at all. Muzzling can protect you and your dog and can also give you the opportunity to demonstrate to your dog that it can be pleasurable and does not hurt. This demonstration is the only thing that will work with some dogs but only try muzzling if everything else until that point has failed.

If your dog still continues to display aggressive tendencies or gets worked up then he or she may be doing more harm than good to his or herself. As such, you may want to consult your vet. Not grooming your dog is not an option because it may cause more harm than good but your vet may be able to help with tranquilizers or other medication to calm your dog down. Only ever give medication to your dog when it has been prescribed.

Always remember that aggression and biting is normal if a dog is not used to grooming and you rush into it. The bite may well be your fault more than the dog's. After all, would you let someone do something to you that you were not used to and had no prior knowledge of? That is only what your dog is refusing after all. Just take your time. Slow progress is better than no progress at all.
CHAPTER TWENTY: THE JOBS THE PROS SHOULD DO!

So now you have read the entire book and have all the information about grooming that you need to know at your fingertips, but there is one question that you need to ask yourself before you begin to establish a grooming routine – do you feel comfortable and happy with grooming your dog?

The answer to this question should be yes before you even contemplate using any of the hints and tips outlined here. You should be comfortable and relaxed with the process because if you are not then you will lack patience and that is one quality that you have to have if you are to groom your dog effectively and make it a pleasant experience for both of you. If you do not have the patience or indeed the time to groom your dog properly then you may want to consider employing a professional dog groomer to do the job for you as they will be able to provide the time and patience the grooming process requires. Not every owner is suited to home grooming as a result of numerous factors, specifically the busy lifestyles we lead and lack of general routines and that is why specialist grooms are always an option.

However, there are certain circumstances under which you may want to hire a professional dog groomer, even if you feel comfortable doing it yourself. For example, if you do have a specific breed that needs a lot of grooming to look just right, such as a Poodle for example, then you may prefer to hire a professional to do it because getting it right yourself is difficult until you have experience under your belt. Alternatively, it may be that your dog is severely matted or has come into contact with harmful substances or bad odors. These are all situations for which you need a professional dog groomer. You should never attempt to solve any of these three problems yourself because you may end up doing far more harm than good.

Finally, if you have a very nervous, aggressive or temperamental dog then you are best off employing a professional dog groomer because he or she will know exactly how to handle these types of dogs. With extensive experience in the field, they have
experience of a number of psychological issues and can deal with them accordingly whereas you may not be able to.

Although professional dog groomers do have vital experience that you may want to take advantage of, they cannot perform miracles or exceed expectations that are already too high. As such, you need to be realistic in relation to what you expect the groomer you choose to do and also take responsibility for your own pet's needs whether you can perform the grooming or not.

So how do you choose a professional dog groomer?

Well, there are a number of elements that you need to consider when finding the best possible dog groomer for you and your dog, the most important of which are outlined below:

- Recommendations – Always seek recommendations when you look for a professional dog groomer because you have feedback in advance that will put your mind at rest and this will help the trust process. Similarly, you will know exactly what to expect. You can ask any number of people who to go to but veterinarians, boarding kennels, dog trainers, animal shelters and friends give the best recommendations. If this does not offer much then you could always try the local phone book or search the Internet. However, be sure to Google your potential groomer to find out what feedback is out there about them.

- Qualifications- All good professional dog groomers will be fully qualified and prepared to show you their certificates and accolades. However, there are no licenses or general bodies that regulate dog groomers at the moment. As such, grooming associations and schools offer the qualifications but always check out online whether those presented to you are legitimate or not. Most groomers out there will offer you a full run down of costs, services and their backgrounds when you call them too so check them out from all angles. Furthermore, ask to speak to current clients to complete your initial evaluation.

- Facility Evaluation – When you have narrowed down your search for a professional dog groomer to one or a handful of grooming services then it is
time to visit them to get a feel for the place and compare. You should check a number of factors that include the level of lighting, cleanliness and size of the facilities. Dog grooming parlors should always be well lit, incredibly clean in look and odor, and have good sized cages to accommodate your dog. The groomer should also monitor the dogs to ensure that no injuries or overheating occurs during drying and be able to answer all your questions knowledgeably. Their manner with the pets should be gentle and caring and they should always keep complete records that include contact numbers, vaccination records, medical history and grooming information.

• Expense – You should also compare the costs of grooming to ensure that it is well within your monthly budget. Your dog will suffer if you keep switching groomers to save money because this is unsettling. However, you should never go for a groomer just because he or she is the cheapest. Work out what you want and then see what you can afford. Bear in mind though that it will cost more to call a groomer out to your home.

• Personal Feelings – You should always have warm feelings towards the professional dog groomer that you choose because you absolutely have to feel completely comfortable with him or her and should trust in the abilities of your chosen groomer as well. This will give you peace of mind and ensure that you are happy, which will also rub off on your dog.

• Initial Meeting – You should arrange a convenient time to take your dog for an initial meeting to ensure that he or she likes the professional dog groomer that you have chosen. After all, your pet will be spending more time with him or her in the future so a hostile reception is not what you want or need. It is much better to know in advance to save time, effort and money. Similarly, you can also see the groomer’s reaction to your dog so that you can evaluate whether they will get on and just how genuine a dog lover the groomer actually is.

When you decide on the professional dog groomer that you want to take your dog to then you should ensure that you tell them everything you require in advance so that the groomer is able to tell you whether your desires are possible or not. In addition,
you should also confirm any illnesses, conditions or other ailments that may affect how your dog can be groomed. For example, a puppy will be different to an elderly dog with arthritis. You should also confirm whether or not your dog has any psychological issues that you are aware of, such as aggression towards strangers, other dogs or grooming tools. Groomers cannot give tranquilizers if they practice ethically so you must seek a prescription in advance if required. Similarly, you should also confirm whether or not you allow your dog to be muzzled in case that is necessary.

Finally, when you leave your dog with a professional groomer then leave quickly so as not to make it any more distressing than necessary for your dog and always leave a contact number that you can be reached on just in case.
You have reached the end of the most comprehensive guide to dog grooming available today. You have just read all the hints and tips, basic information, techniques and methods, and of course how to go about grooming your dog. All that is left to do is start!

It might not seem like it but dog grooming really is that simple. It should be a basic part of your routine today if you want to ensure the health and happiness of your dog. Although it is easy to make excuses and neglect the grooming process, it will not do your dog any good to do so at all. Now you have all the information you need at your fingertips, there is no excuse at all!

Before you go though, there are a few final tips outlined below so you can make the most of grooming and get your dog used to it quickly and easily so it quickly moves from the “chore” category to the “enjoyable experience with man’s best friend” category:

• Have Fun! – The more fun you have when grooming your dog, the more fun he or she will have as well. Dogs always read humans quite accurately and respond to our body language and tone as a result. They will usually mirror your attitude so if you are having fun then they will not only relax into the grooming process but may make it fun for themselves as well!

• Have Patience – Raising your voice, getting frustrated and shouting at your dog during the grooming process is not going to help anything. Not only will they react to grooming in a negative way but will avoid it at all costs in the future because they ill associate your negative behavior and their negative feelings with it as a result. Patience is the key because, like all good things, being able to groom your dog without any fuss will take time. The more patience you have, the quicker that will actually come.

• Have A Break – If you do get frustrated when grooming your dog then take a break for five minutes or cut short the session after you have spent at least five minutes grooming them and go back to it the next day. It is much better to
come back to grooming later than to throw a fit and get angry once. A few moments away from your dog will give you time to calm down and gain a little perspective as well as giving your dog a break from what is effectively grooming training. There is always later to go back to it.

• Have A Routine – If you have a routine then you will not surprise your dog by assaulting him or her with a brush as and when you feel like it. A routine will alert your dog to what is coming so that he or she knows exactly what to expect and when to expect it. As such, it will also ensure his or her comfort because dogs are creatures of habit. They like the familiar and so grooming at a specific time or on a specific day will help them to get use to the experience.

• Have A Little Fuss Time – Always reward your dog for a good grooming session. Fuss and treats are absolute musts if you want to get your dog used to the idea that grooming is a good thing and should be enjoyed. Fussing your dog will reinforce the idea that dog grooming is one big, if slightly wet, fuss session and help to improve the bond between you even further.

• And Relax! – Just relax! If you relax then your dog will relax. Never show relief when the session is over because they will mirror that too. Always groom your dog with a smile on your face and you will be surprised at just how readily it is reciprocated.

These tips will help you to groom your dog and achieve a measure of peace and harmony at the same time!

Thank you for taking the time to read all of the information in this book. Everything you need to know to be able to groom your dog is right here from start to finish so now all you have to do is pencil in a time to be able to start your routine and get your dog looking his or her best quickly and easily.

Happy grooming!
USEFUL READING

**Dog Grooming For Dummies**

[http://www.dummies.com/search.html?query=dog+grooming](http://www.dummies.com/search.html?query=dog+grooming) - The search results on the Dog Grooming For Dummies website, complete with basic information about how you should go about grooming your dog.

**How To Groom A Dog: Video Series**


**ASPCA Grooming FAQ**

[http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/grooming-faq.html](http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/grooming-faq.html) - A quick and concise FAQ to answer all of the most frequently asked questions.

**How To Groom A Dog: Article Series**

[http://www.ehow.com/articles_2061-dog-grooming.html](http://www.ehow.com/articles_2061-dog-grooming.html) - A resource featuring over 1200 articles so you can always find what you are looking for there. All articles are written by experts.

**Breed Dog Grooming Articles**

[http://www.dog-behavior-training.co.uk/dog_grooming.html](http://www.dog-behavior-training.co.uk/dog_grooming.html) - Dog grooming information, featuring a breed by breed menu system for ease of reference.

**The Groomer’s Reference**

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