

10 Tips for Brushing Your Dog's Coat

Tips for grooming your dog.

Try these 10 tips to get the most from brushing and combing:

1. Match the brush to your dog's coat type. Use a curved wire slicker or pin brush for long-haired breeds (such as Lhasa Apsos and Old English Sheepdogs), a regular wire slicker on medium or short coats with dense undercoat (Terriers, German Shepherd Dogs and American Eskimos), and a mitt or rubbery curry with smooth-coated breeds (Labrador Retrievers and Basset Hounds).
2. Spray on coat conditioner such as mink oil or other product before brushing to help loosen knots and tangles in long coats.
3. Brush and comb your dog before bathing. Tangles become tighter and more difficult to remove when wet.
4. Brush systematically. Professional groomers often begin with the dog's hindquarters and leave the head and ears for last. The theory: If a dog can't see what's happening, he will be less likely to object. Develop a brushing pattern, and use it every time. You won't lose your place or miss a spot, and your dog will learn what to expect.
5. Brush the entire coat down to the skin but do not brush the skin. Scraping the brush against your dog's skin can cause "brush burn" — irritated, red skin that can require veterinary attention. Brush gently on tender areas, such as the tummy and inside the legs.
6. Concentrate on one section and one layer of the coat at a time. Part the coat by pushing it back with one hand and brushing the hair down a little at a time with the other. Use quick, deep strokes.
7. Take your time. Brushing out a coat, especially on heavy-coated breeds such as the Cocker Spaniel, can be hard work and time-consuming.
8. Comb after brushing to remove remaining tangles and knots.
9. Clip badly matted short coats and let them grow out. Spare your dog the pain and irritation of hours of detangling.
10. Praise and reward your dog. After all, this is a team effort!