

Grooming Tips

Regular grooming sessions are beneficial because they help you and your puppy bond, and they help keep her body in healthy condition. Grooming also helps your puppy become familiar with his body, so that you can notice changes that may require veterinary attention.

- While you and your puppy are learning about grooming you will need a positive attitude, lots of patience, and, in the beginning, lots of treats.
- Always start slowly. Get your puppy used to more extensive grooming gradually. Keep the training sessions short and fun.

Bathing

- **How often?** Unless your puppy is dirty or smelly, a bath every two months is plenty. Bathing more often can dry out or irritate your puppy's skin.
- **How to get started?** Use a gentle dog shampoo – human shampoo is too harsh for a dog's skin and coat. Put a bath mat in the tub, and start with “fake baths” where you get your puppy used to the empty tub first, and then to the sound of running water and a bit of splashing, while eating yummy treats. Work your way up to real baths where you lather up the coat, and then rinse thoroughly. Avoid getting shampoo or water in the eyes, mouth or inside the ears. Make sure to rinse thoroughly to get the shampoo out. **Reward you puppy through every step.**

Brushing

Regular brushing is good for all coats. It removes loose fur, distributes skin oils, removes dead skin cells, and helps prevent matting.

- **How often?** All dogs should be brushed at least once a week. Long coated dogs may need daily brushing. You might also need to brush your dog to remove burs, or to help shed a seasonal coat.
- **How to get started?** There are many types of brushes and combs available. Your breeder, groomer, or veterinarian will be able to advise you on what you need according to the kind of care your dog's coat requires. Many puppies will try to chew on the brush, or they will object to being brushed, in the beginning. Let your puppy see and smell the brush then brush a few short strokes and **reward him with treats and praise.** In the beginning keep your sessions short – gradually increase their length as your puppy gets used to being brushed. Some puppies will need to keep busy with a stuffed food toy during the first few brushings, to prevent them from trying to chew on the brush!

Ears

Keeping the inside of your dog's ears clean helps prevent uncomfortable waxy buildup, and ear infections.

- **How often?** Clean your puppy's ears once a week, and at the end each day that your dog swims.
- **How to get started?** Soak a piece of gauze, tissue or cotton ball with ear cleaning solution. Gently wipe the inside surface of the ear – going only as far down the ear canal as your can easily reach. Do not use water because it leaves the ear moist, which can lead to ear infections. Ear cleaning solution not only cleans the ear well, but also leaves the ear dry. If you ever notice an unusual smell or a discharge, seek veterinary attention.

Nails

Dog nails grow in a downward curve. If they overgrow and start touching the ground when the dog walks, they can become sore and even damaged. Regular nail clipping prevents this from happening.

- **How often?** Most dogs will need a nail trim every two weeks. If you can hear your dog's nails click as he walks on a hard surface then his nails are too long.
- **How to get started?** There are many styles of nail clippers for pets. Any style is fine as long as: you are comfortable handling them; you can see exactly where the blade is cutting; and the clippers are sharp. Keep a jar of styptic powder handy to stop the bleeding in case you accidentally clip the vein. You can also use a Dremel tool or a Pedi Paws tool to grind/file the nails instead of clipping.
- **Where to clip?** If your puppy has white nails, you can see the pink vein through the nail. Clip off the tip of the nail, which is usually hook-shaped, at least a few millimeters past the vein. Squeezing the clippers gently before actually clipping is a good way to check that you are not on the vein – pressing over the vein will hurt and your puppy will squeal. If your puppy has black nails, you will need to clip off the nail a little bit at a time, looking at the nail tip after each clip. When you start seeing a pale oval in the tip, it means you are near the vein and should stop clipping.

Remember to start slowly. In the beginning, let your puppy sniff the clippers and get used to you holding the paw, extending the digits, and to tapping the clippers against the nails – all well before you actually start clipping! Get your puppy confident with treats for paw holding and toe fiddling. Start actual nail clipping by clipping just a nail or two a day, keeping the sessions short, and rewarding your puppy with lots of treats and praise. The same slow methodical steps apply to the Dremel tool and the Pedi Paws tools.

Teeth

Dogs suffer from dental disease just like we do. Tartar is unhealthy, and brushing is the best way to prevent it.

How often? Brush your dog's teeth once a day.

How to get started? Dip your finger in some salt water and rub your puppy's gums. This is most easily done if you hold the puppy on your lap, facing sideways, with his body against your abdomen. If his right side is against you, use your right hand to put a finger into his mouth along his left gums. Rub up and down where his gums meet his teeth. Do the same with your left hand for the right side of his mouth. Once he is used to this do

the same with a finger toothbrush, and then eventually work your way to using a real toothbrush and doggy toothpaste. Do not brush while he is teething, because his mouth will be sensitive during that time. Puppy teeth do not need brushing, because they will fall out before any tartar can build up, but puppy hood is the time to get him used to brushing so that you can take good care of his permanent teeth.

Note: These recommendations are guidelines only, and are intended for healthy puppies without medical conditions. They are not meant to replace the advice of a veterinarian.