

4. BASIC DOG GROOMING

OVERVIEW

In this module, we will cover the following topics:

- Breed types and recognition
- Combing & Brushing
- Coloring
- Grooming Old Dogs
- Grooming Sick Dogs
- Dealing with Matted Hair
- De-shedding
- Shaving Down a Dog
- Short Coated Breeds
- Mixed Breeds
- Making Bows

INTRODUCTION

Dog grooming actually can be considered a science and an art. Because dogs come in all shapes and sizes, they need different types of grooming. Your job is to know what type of dog you have and how to properly groom it. That's the science. The art is knowing your dog's owner, your customer. Be sure to find out what they are expecting, what will be best for the dog and deliver a product they like and you can be proud of.

On the attached breed chart, note that some popular dogs, such as the Labrador Retriever, have short hair and don't require much aside from a good brushing and a bath now and then.

The many dogs with long hair keep dog groomers in business. Dogs such as the Maltese and Standard Poodle get regular trips to the "beauty shop"

to keep them looking clean and pretty. Owners of these types of dogs know that grooming is part of their monthly budget.

In this module, we'll be discussing basic dog grooming from combing and brushing to dealing with matted hair and more.

BREED TYPES AND RECOGNITION

The primary way breeds are typed is through standards put in place by the KC (Kennel Club of Great Britain) and the AKC (American Kennel Club). These types are the categories in which dogs compete in the major dog shows.

- Herding dogs.
 - These smart dogs act from their owner's commands and use their own judgment at times. Examples include the English Sheepdog, Border Collie and Welsh Corgi.
- Hound dogs
 - Bred for their hunting skills, most hounds are great pets. Examples include the Beagle, Basset Hound and the Dachshund.
- Non-sporting dogs
 - Breeds that don't quite fit other categories are here and sometimes called "Companion Dogs." Examples include the Bichon Frise, Dalmatian, Chow Chow and Lhasa Apso.
- Sporting dogs
 - These are the popular retrievers, pointers, setters and spaniels. Examples include the Labrador and Golden Retrievers, Cocker Spaniel and Irish Setter.
- Terriers
 - These dogs were bred to find and dig up the underground dens and burrows of vermin and rodents. Examples include the Airedale Terrier, Miniature Schnauzer, West Highland Terrier and Scottish Terrier.
- Toy dogs
 - These are the cutie-pie lapdogs – small, cuddly with no real purpose other than to provide companionship. Examples include Maltese, Papillon, Pomeranian and Chihuahua.
- Working dogs
 - Every type of guard and rescue dog is part of this group and mostly they are large, dominant dogs. Examples include the

Great Dane, Doberman Pinscher, Saint Bernard and Siberian Husky.

- Mixed breeds
 - Also called hybrid dogs, these are our friendly mutts that we rescued from the alley or pound. These are sometimes healthier and live longer than pure breeds and make intelligent, loving pets.

The attached Breed Chart gives you photos and information about the major breeds in each group.

EXERCISE 4.1

Of the dog types listed above, which categories do you think require the most regular grooming schedules? Why?

BREED GROOMING STANDARDS

The Breed Standard set by the KC and AKC is the approved record of each particular breed of pedigreed dog and used as the judging standard at major dog shows. The breed standards include: general appearance, size, proportion, head, ears, eyes, coat, clip, color and gait.

Show dogs must be groomed according to KC or AKC standards to exhibit the dog as attractively as possible. The breed's genetics are the most important basis for the appearance of the dog's coat, so show grooming is done primarily to accent the positives and downplay the negatives.

Non-show dog grooming may follow some of the same guidelines, but is up to the owner.

EXERCISE 4.2

What is the primary difference between grooming a show dog versus a non-show dog?

COMBING AND BRUSHING

Obviously, the longer your dog's hair, the more combing and brushing is required and this can be essential in reducing tangles and mats. This also keeps the dog's coat in prime condition by helping to distribute the natural skin oils.

Tools you use for good combing and brushing include a steel comb and/or a pin brush, and for mats, a de-matting comb, slicker or rake.

Here are some handy tips:

- Choose your brush or comb based on the breed's hair length. A curved wire slicker or pin brush for long haired breeds (such as Lhasa Apsos), a regular wire slicker on medium or short coats with dense undercoat (German Shepherds), and a mitt or rubbery curry for smooth-coated breeds (Labrador Retrievers).
- Comb in the direction of hair growth, with small sections combed at a time. You may discover mats that require special treatment (see more information under "Dealing with Matted Hair).
- Allow plenty of time if you have a long-haired dog. Combing and brushing a Sheepdog, for instance, can be very time intensive.
- Hold the dog's skin close to the area being brushed to support the skin and avoid hurting the dog through extensive pulling. Using the brush too aggressively may cause "brush burn" that requires a vet visit. Always brush gently on the tender areas of the tummy and legs.

- Long-haired breeds, such as the Bichon Frise, Maltese and Cocker Spaniel, require a combination of combing and brushing. Mats are common and, if not attended to, the coat may require “stripping” (pulling out or cutting off excess hair).
- To fluff up your dog’s coat, use the pin brush against the direction of hair growth.

COLORING

Have you ever seen a green poodle? Likely, there are hundreds of them around St. Patrick’s Day. Although coloring your dog’s hair is a definite “no no” for show dogs, and many pet groups frown on it, many dog owners seem to think their dogs need to “dress up” to celebrate holidays.

Fun coloring can be done several ways. The primary objective is to not permanently dye a dog’s coat or let the color get to the skin. Kool-Aid, food coloring, beet juice, chalks, fruit gelatin and spray on kid’s hair dye have been used with some success. These are usually applied with a small brush or sponge. Even these temporary dyes may linger for a while.

Rather than coloring dogs’ coats, many dog groomers use color enhancement shampoos to make a dog’s coat brighter. These especially apply to white, black and brown dogs to enliven their coats’ natural shine.

EXERCISE 4.3

Give some examples of breeds that require a lot of regular combing and brushing.

GROOMING OLD DOGS

As dogs grow older, their skin and coat change. The skin's pliability and natural oils decrease and infections are more likely. They may not be as cooperative during grooming because it's harder for them to stand for long periods for a bath or cut. They must be supported at all times.

It is still very important keep an older dog groomed even if it takes some patience. Bathing and brushing is usually fairly easy for older dogs to handle and will help keep mats from forming in their hair. It is recommended that older dogs need a shorter coat to reduce the need to groom.

With an older dog the main thing to remember is to *take extra care* during grooming. Give them a break during the grooming session if necessary and be as patient as possible.

GROOMING SICK DOGS

As with older dogs, sick dogs need extra care when you are grooming. Many times, by regular grooming, you will see possible health problems early, such as a brownish discharge from their ears, a sign of an ear infection. Or you may notice the dog has bad breath, which could mean periodontal disease; or watery eyes, which may be a sign of allergies; or you could see ticks or lice in the dog's hair or on the skin.

In fact, sometimes the groomer will see symptoms before the owner is aware of the problem, so be sure you tell the owner about any indicators of health problems.

If you have a sick dog to groom, make sure you know about any health problems that may affect the process. Just as with older dogs, grooming sessions with sick dogs will probably be abbreviated to ease any added stress.

DEALING WITH MATTED HAIR

Dogs with long or thick hair (the ones you see most at professional grooming establishments) are subject to matted hair, especially if they are not groomed regularly. Thick matting can be very painful and uncomfortable.

able for an animal, especially when those mats are located behind the ear, flank or rear end areas of the pet.

Although it is possible to deal with this at home, for bad mats, a professional groomer will have the better tools, materials and expertise.

Various ways to deal with mats include:

- **Splitting:** This involves cutting the matted area into smaller bits, which makes it easier on the dog because you are working on a small area at a time, and makes it easier on you in successfully untangling the mat.
- **Pre-Cutting:** A rough pre-cut with scissors may make mat removal easier. Always use extra care when using scissors on a dog.
- **Picking Out:** Rather than pulling with a comb or brush through a matted area, pick out some of the hair with your comb to loosen it.
- **Combing Out:** Once you have finished the pre-cut and pick-out, use a coarse comb on the coat. Be sure you hold the hair away from the skin to decrease any distress for the dog.
- **Detangling:** Detangling shampoos or conditioners are used by many groomers, who apply it and then tease the mat apart. Although many recommend de-mating a dog before bathing, some groomers do it in the tub with shampoo/conditioner. Blowing out the hair with a “blasting dryer” after using a detangler can also help you loosen and eliminate mats.
- **Stripping:** This can be done by hand, pulling out excess hair or with a stripping knife, which is helpful in releasing tangles by working on the hair above the mat.

EXERCISE 4.4

Should non-professionals try to eliminate their dog's mats? Why or why not?

DE-SHEDDING

Shedding is a natural part of a dog's life, just as molting is for birds. Regularly brushing and grooming your dog helps get rid of excess hair and cuts down on excess hair on the furniture.

It's a common misconception that dogs only shed in the summer to get rid of their winter coats. However, because many dogs are kept inside or seldom go out in the cold or warm weather, shedding can go on throughout the year.

The amount of shedding depends on the breed -- and the amount of hair, of course. Many of the terriers, poodles and schnauzer breeds are low-shedding dogs. On the other hand, thick-haired dogs, such as the Husky, Akita, German Shepherd and Chow-Chow, who have double coats, may "blow" their coats twice a year, creating a lot of hair that will literally cover the house unless they are regularly brushed a great deal.

Most groomers offer "de-shedding" treatments that includes bathing and blowing out the dog's hair and then using tools such as a shed blade to get rid of a great deal of the excess hair. As with any tool, shed blades must be used properly and it is important keep a light touch rather than pressing too hard down, which could hurt the dog.

A new patent-pending treatment is now available, called the FURminator, a special blade, which with two treatments is said to reduce shedding

from 60-80% over four to six weeks. Many groomers have started using this new treatment as a way to attract business from owners of heavily shedding dogs.

If your dog has an abnormal amount of shedding, it could be caused by stress or health problems such as ringworm, skin infections, mange or cancer. If you see bald spots on a dog or think a dog is shedding abnormally, recommend to the owner that they take the dog to the vet.

SHAVING DOWN A DOG

One of the more controversial topics in grooming is whether dogs should be shaved. With some of the heavy, double-coated dogs, it would seem logical to shave them at the beginning of summer so they can stay cooler. However, these breeds have a double coat for a reason. In the winter it keeps them warm, in the summer it keeps them from overheating and sunburn.

Some groomers believe a short cut is a better solution or keeping the dog's undercoat well brushed or raked to eliminate excess hair. Some vets and groomers recommend just shaving a dog's belly so they can find a cool place to lie down. Some groomers will "strip" a dog to eliminate excess undercoat. Some terriers and schnauzers with wire coats require stripping on a fairly regular basis.

Horror stories are told of dogs being shaved and not growing their hair back properly, having a patched appearance or getting skin infections.

If you still want to shave your dog, here are some tips:

- Be sure you have high-quality, sharp grooming tools.
- Shave the hind quarters first with a sharp blade.
- Use a longer blade for the body hair and pull the skin toward you as you shave.

EXERCISE 4.5

Provide the pros and cons of shaving heavily haired dogs.

SHORT COATED BREEDS

If you have a dog with a short coat, such as a Bulldog, Pug or Boston Terrier, grooming becomes much easier – more of a “wash and wear” exercise. But even these short coats need some attention.

A good brush and comb are the best grooming tools for a short-haired dog. In addition, special mitts are available that you can wear on your hands to smooth away excess hair and give your dog a good massage as well.

For grooming short coats, try these tips:

- Use a pin brush or slicker brush to brush, starting from the hind legs and moving to the front legs.
- Use your fingers to loosen any tangles.
- Be extra gentle brushing the sensitive underside of your dog.
- Use a comb rather than brush on the dog’s face, ears, chin and muzzle, checking especially for fleas or ticks.
- Brush your dog’s hair backward against the growth and then brush it back to help stimulate the natural oils in the coat.

MIXED BREEDS

Just because your dog isn't a pure-bred doesn't mean it doesn't require good grooming. The challenge is deciding which "look" is best. While pure-bred dogs usually have one or more recommended cuts, for obvious reasons, there isn't a typical mixed breed cut.

Many people trim their mixed breeds to match the dominant breed. So, if the dog is a mix between a German Shepherd and Standard Poodle, but looks much more like a shepherd, groom it as a shepherd. In some cases, your dog may have a coat like a shepherd in some areas (dense under-coat) and a poodle (curly and thick) in others! So, it's time to use your creativity to make him or her uniquely special.

You should also consider your dog's lifestyle. If it's outdoors a lot or likes to swim, a shorter coat requiring less maintenance might be preferred.

Of course, since you have a mixed breed, which you may have adopted or rescued, you aren't necessarily looking for the best-dressed dog on the block. So, the look is really up to you. Just remember, grooming helps the overall health of your dog, so don't neglect it.

EXERCISE 4.6

What are the types of tools used for combing and brushing short-coated dogs?

MAKING BOWS

When you're finished with grooming, if you want to get a "oh, how cute!" comment, use a bow. Sometimes male dogs prefer a more "manly" bandana.

The size of the bow depends on the size of the dog. Obviously, a Standard Poodle and a Toy Poodle would not get the same size bow. Your bow shouldn't overwhelm your dog, but add a touch of class.

Some dogs might have a small bow for each ear. Others may have one on the tail and the head. Small, long-haired dogs, such as the Lhasa Apso or Maltese, usually have a top knot on their heads with a bow or barrette decoration.

Bows are made with any ribbon you buy with your other sewing supplies at a craft or fabric store, usually at a width of one and one-half inches or less. In addition, many pet stores and animal websites offer pre-made bows, which may look more professional than your home-made bows.

Bows and bandanas are another way to get creative with colors and add-ons, such as beads, sequins or glitter. A glittery Kelly green bow-tie would give your dog real elegance on St. Patrick's Day!

Use the many online and print references to get some great ideas, but definitely use your creativity to match the dog's personality.

EXERCISE 4.7

In general, which dog type (see "Breed Types and Recognition") is the best candidate for a decorative bow or bandana? Provide some examples of how to use bows.

REMINDER

Have you completed the following exercises?

- Exercise 4.1
- Exercise 4.2
- Exercise 4.3
- Exercise 4.4
- Exercise 4.5
- Exercise 4.6
- Exercise 4.7

Tick each box when you have completed the exercises. Then you can move on to the assignment that follows.

SUMMARY

1. You know the breed types and can start learning to recognize them
2. You have a breed chart to help you identify various breeds.
3. You know about the AKC and KC breed and grooming standards.
4. You know ways to brush and comb your dog.
5. You know about coloring and color enhancement for your dog's hair.
6. You know tips on how to deal with old and sick dogs.
7. You know tips on ways to deal with matted hair.
8. You know about dog shedding and how to contain it better.
9. You know the controversy about shaving a dog.
10. You know about the simple grooming requirements for short-coated and mixed breeds.
11. You know why decorative bows are used to enhance the grooming.

TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Case Study:

In June, Mary comes in with a beautiful red Chow-Chow. She says she would like the dog shaved for the summer because the dog seems so hot, plus he sheds a lot and has a tendency to get bad mats in his coat. What should you tell Mary before you begin any grooming?

When you have completed this assignment, send it to your tutor for marking. If you email your assignment, make sure you include your name and assignment number at the top of your work.

If you send the assignment by post, attach the cover sheet, which is on the following page.

ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET

Please put your name and the date in the arrowed boxes. Then staple the sheet to your assignment, and send it to your tutor.

Your tutor will keep the lower section of this form, returning the top portion to you.

Course	Diploma in Dog Grooming
Module number	4. Basic Dog Grooming
Name	→
Student number	→
Date sent to tutor	→
Date received by tutor	
Date returned by tutor	
Mark	

Comments:



To be retained by tutor

Course	Diploma in Dog Grooming
Module number	4. Basic Dog Grooming
Name	→
Student number	→
Date sent to tutor	→
Date received by tutor	
Date returned by tutor	
Mark	

EXERCISE ANSWERS

EXERCISE 4.1

Of the dog types listed above, which categories do you think require the most regular grooming schedules? Why?

Dogs in the Companion/Non-Sporting and Toy groups seem to have some of the longest hair, and therefore, need regular grooming schedules.

EXERCISE 4.2

What is the primary difference between grooming a show dog versus a non-show dog?

AKC dog shows require strict adherence to the standard look and cut of dogs in each breed. Non-show dogs can have more variety in their looks.

EXERCISE 4.3

Give some examples of breeds that require a lot of regular combing and brushing.

Some examples are the Collie, English Sheepdog, Shih Tzu, Pomeranian, Yorkshire Terrier, Samoyed, Pekingese, Newfoundland, Maltese and Lhasa Apso.

EXERCISE 4.4

Should non-professionals try to eliminate their dog's mats? Why or why not?

Mats can be very hard to remove and unpractised attempts may hurt the dog. If the dog has many tight mats, it is advisable to go to a professional dog groomer.

EXERCISE 4.5

Provide the pros and cons of shaving heavily-coated dogs.

The pros of would include less grooming required, less shedding and mats, and fleas and ticks are easier to check.

Cons include you are eliminating the dog's natural way of staying warm in the winter and cool in the summer. By shaving the coat, your dog doesn't have protection from sunburn. Sometimes after shaving, the hair will not grow back properly and will look patchy.

EXERCISE 4.6

What are the types of tools used for combing and brushing short-coated dogs?

Tools include pin brush, slicker brush, good comb and special mitts.

EXERCISE 4.7

In general, which dog type (see "Breed Types and Recognition") is the best candidate for a decorative bow? Provide some examples of how to use bows.

The smaller dogs in the Toy group are probably the best candidates, but any small companion dog can wear them. There are many types of bows that can be placed by the dog's ears, front, tail or topknot.

TUTOR'S NOTES

Points to look for in the case study:

- Chow Chows have thick double coats and usually shouldn't be shaved – how do you explain this to the owner? What recommendation should you make (possibly a short cut rather than a shave)?
- Explain how to deal with matted hair and shedding (perhaps recommend a de-shedding treatment).
- May also explain the complete grooming process from bathing to de-matting, de-shedding and trimming.