

The ultimate bathing guide for pet parents



The selection of grooming tools available to you can be overwhelming. We can help: below is some basic grooming advice which will help you do right by your dog.

What you use and how you use it depends entirely on the breed of dog, the type of coat the dog has, and the desired outcome. The professional groomer or dog show handler has a thorough understanding of these variables. We'd suggest working with a respected handler or groomer to learn the best options for your particular dog. Your dog's breeder should also be able to give you guidance. Any reputable breeder who has the best interests of the dog at heart will welcome the opportunity to educate you in proper grooming techniques for your particular pet. There are also a number of excellent books available on the market that explain in detail the different tools and how to use them.

In general, most breeds will need a few basic tools to keep the coat and skin in great shape. Brushes, combs, shedding or stripping tools, de-matting tools and nail trimmers come in various sizes and types and have specific purposes.

Just as Isle of Dogs offers personalized systems for bathing your dog, different coat types will need different styles of tools. Choosing quality grooming tools designed specifically for dogs is very important to the health of the coat and skin, and they are easier to use than adapted 'human' brushes and combs – which can actually be inappropriate for your dog's coat and skin.

Setting Up for Success

Often dreaded as a labor intensive chore which neither the dog nor the owner enjoys, bathing your dog can actually be a positive experience for both. And the end result should be a reward to both as well.

The key to hassle-free bathing is having the proper facilities. The best option is a raised tub with a dog friendly designed water nozzle. If you haven't already discovered one, look for a do-it-yourself dog wash in your area. Besides offering a dog and groomer friendly tub, they often provide access to professional grooming tables and dryers.

If such an option is not available to you, we recommend investing in a hand held shower head with at least a 6 ft. hose. These are easy to attach in any standard tub/shower combo unit.

We also recommend using a rubber mat on the bottom of the tub to help make your dog feel more secure and less likely to slide.

Especially with dogs not familiar to baths, it may be necessary to secure their head in a specially made bath leash. Several different models are available in pet supply catalogs. They can be permanently attached to the wall or secured with a temporary suction cup. (Though try without first: dogs who began life scared of baths often grow to adore their bathing sessions and even look forward to them. Your confident and reassuring manner is key.)

bathing basics

The water temperature should be warm and comfortable to your own skin. Not as hot as you like it, but not cold either.

Wet the coat, starting at the back of the neck and working down the spine toward the tail. Keeping the nozzle close to the skin will allow the water to penetrate the coat, and hopefully keep the water from spraying you. Work the nozzle down one side of the dog including the legs then down the other side until the pet is thoroughly saturated. Heavily coated dogs will take longer to wet and rinse.

Once the body coat is soaked, wet the head taking care to not get the water in the eyes, nose or ears. You may want to place cotton balls in some dog's ears to prevent getting water into the canal.

To ensure distribution of product, first massage the shampoo evenly onto your hands before massaging it into the dog's skin with your fingers. Again starting at the back of the neck in a similar pattern as wetting the dog.

For a particularly dirty dog, more than one shampooing may be needed to get him or her really clean. It is during the second application that we highly recommend letting the product sit on the coat for several minutes. This will allow the active ingredients such as Evening Primrose Oil and Royal Jelly the opportunity to absorb into the hair and skin.

Once the 2-5 minutes are up, be sure to **THOROUGHLY RINSE** all traces of shampoo from the coat. Leaving even small amounts of shampoo in the coat is the number one cause of skin irritation in dogs.

Apply the appropriate conditioner, following the same procedure as for shampooing. Some coat types may do better leaving trace amounts of conditioner in the coat or letting the conditioner sit in the coat a few minutes before rinsing. This will be specific to your dog's individual coat care needs. Conditioners are typically used to protect the hair from damage caused by styling tools and products as well as environmental factors and to help loosen tangles. Many harsh coated breeds still need some type of conditioner applied to beards or leg furnishings.

Squeeze out as much water as possible while the dog is still in the tub. You can then towel dry the coat before carefully removing your pet from the tub. Depending on your breed, you may need to use a specifically designed dryer to help dry the coat completely.

drying basics

There are probably as many different drying techniques as there are breeds of dogs. All based on coat type and condition and what works for you and your dog.

The easiest and most popular is towel drying followed by air drying. Simply use your hands to gently squeeze out as much water as your dog will let you. Once that is done you can blot him gently with a towel.

For most coated dogs it is not recommended to scrub the coat with the towel. This will cause tangles and damage or breakage to the hair itself. If this is all the effort it takes to dry your particular dog it is at this time that we recommend spritzing the coat lightly with an Isle of Dogs Grooming Spray or Conditioning Mist.

For breeds that require a force air dryer or stand dryer you still want to start by using the above methods followed by using the dryer. These types of dryers can frighten some dogs, and we don't recommend using these products without the help of an experienced groomer the first time. For coated breeds the Isle of Dogs No. 62 Evening Primrose Oil or No. 63 Detangle Conditioning Mist should be used when the coat is just damp and brushed in during the final drying stage.

Once your dog is freshly cleaned and dry, he will feel on top of the world. The gentle, natural ingredients in Isle of Dogs products will leave his skin comfortable and his coat in top condition, and most important of all, he will know you love him.