

Written By Alli Wittbold

SPONSERED BY: **MONSTER**  **DOG
TOYS**

COMPLETE FIELD GUIDE

For

LARGE DOG OWNERS

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Large Breed Adult Dog
Care: Grooming and
First Aid



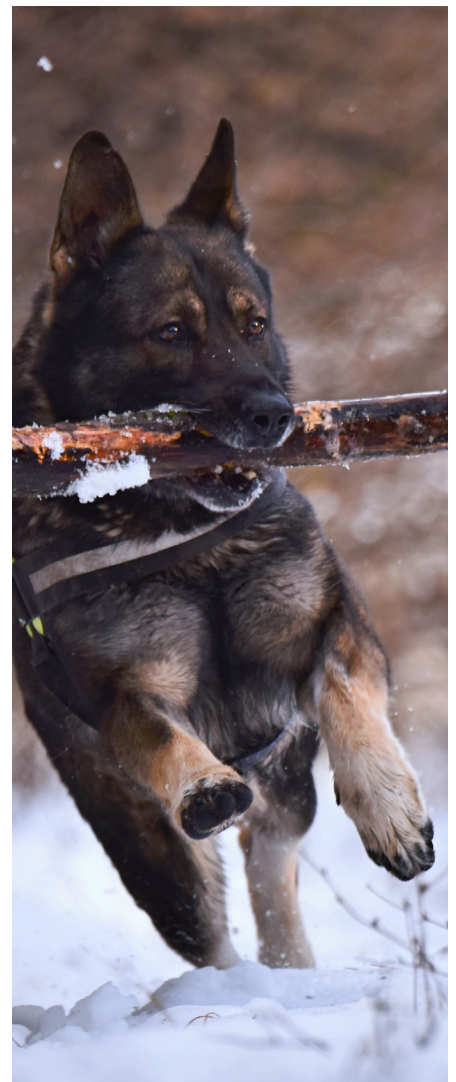
Meeting Your Dog's Needs
for Exercise and Play

29

05

Feeding Your Large
Breed Dog

19



51



Addressing
Common
Behavior Issues

40



Basic Training

35





INTRODUCTION:

How to use this guide

If you're reading this, then I already know that you are the proud owner of a large breed dog. Whether you've recently adopted your first adult dog, or you're a seasoned dog owner, there's something in this book for you. Large dogs quickly become a part of the family and make the most loyal and loving companions. We all want our dogs to live long and healthy lives. We want dogs that listen and behave well whether we're at home or out in public. We want to know what to do when our dogs face acute injuries or fall ill. We want to nip behavior problems in the bud with quick and simple approaches. ***We want to do best by our canine companions!***

It is in those wants that this field guide was born. Within these pages, you'll find a wealth of information related to caring for your large dog, presented in an easy to digest and actionable format. It's meant to serve as a quick reference on a number of topics, problems, and scenarios you may face in your days as a large breed dog owner. The information and advice throughout the book is bulleted and bolded wherever possible to help you quickly locate the info you need and put it into practice immediately. You'll also find a handy list of "field notes" at the beginning of each section to preview what will be covered.

In this book you will find information on grooming, first aid, nutrition, exercise and mental stimulation, training basics, addressing behavior issues, travel tips and more. To get the most out of the field guide, I recommend giving it a complete read through from the start--you might be surprised at just how much you'll find and learn! Then, keep it handy, and when certain situations or scenarios arise, reference certain sections as needed. Additionally, I recommend thoroughly researching your own dog's breed or mix of breeds to augment the information found in this book. Understanding things like the breed's typical personality traits, health risks, exercise needs, coat type, etc. will help in the application of some of the advice and material in this guide.

With the help of this field guide, you'll know you have a handy reference for everything your dog might throw your way. From choosing the right food to what to do if your dog is choking, tips for bath time, and dealing with separation anxiety, we've thought of it all. When you brought your dog home, you made a commitment to them, together we can make sure you're doing it with confidence.

SECTION

01

Large Breed Adult Dog Care: Grooming and First Aid



Having a dog in your life means endless joy and unconditional love. As you know, they are part of the family and so much of your daily routine includes or is impacted by them. In addition to the obvious, like food, water and daily walks, you will need to care for your dog in other ways. In this section, we're going to go over the basics of dog care. You'll find information on grooming, nail trimming, dental hygiene and first aid for a variety of common ailments.

While I hope you only ever need to reference this section because your dog's shedding is out of control, I think the

quick guide to common dog first aid will come in handy too. Many times, in emergency, or semi-emergency situations, you want to act quickly to keep things under control. This guide will help you do just that!

A sudden outbreak of hives, large sores on the body, or a choking dog can cause scary moments of panic. Being able to act quickly can make all the difference. Of course, veterinary care is important, but my hope is that this section will help you avoid unnecessary vet trips for scenarios that you can treat yourself, like hot spots or minor wounds.

FIELD NOTES:

- Coat and brush types
- Guide to nail trimming
- Dog CPR and Heimlich
- Bathing tips
- Dental Hygiene
- First Aid for common ailments



Grooming

Depending upon your dog's breed or background, grooming might take up a few hours of your week or only one to two hours of your month. For dogs with more extensive grooming needs, you might opt for regular professional grooming, but all dogs can be groomed—or at least up kept—at home. To properly care for your dog's coat and fur, you'll want to distinguish their coat type. From there, you can select the proper tools for the job and understand what a regular grooming plan should look like to keep shedding and matted fur under control.

Beyond their coat, we're going to take a look at bathing your dog. I don't think any dog owner loves giving their dog a bath. It sure is easier to hand over the sixty odd dollars and have someone else take care of it (no, just me?) but the expense can add up quickly. Bathing your dog at

home saves money and is something you may have to do from time to time. You know, like when your dog rolls in a pile of some wild animal's poop, or just *had* to dive into that smelly swamp.

Lastly, we'll do a quick guide to nail care and trimming. If you're like me, you cut a little too far down your dog's nail, saw blood, and were scarred for life. Kidding...kind of. But seriously. All the blood you see from over trimming your dog's nail is enough to send anybody running. The thing is, it's actually not too complicated if you know the tricks for how to do it right.

BRUSHING, SHEDDING, AND TRIMMING

Coat Types

Figuring out what type of coat your dog has will help you select the right tools and grooming approach. In some cases, your dog might fall into two categories (like a long haired, double coat). Here are some of the most common types:

- **Short or smooth coat:** This type of coat has short hairs that lay very close to the body, like a Dalmatian or Boxer. Healthy short coats are usually very shiny and smooth to the touch. Short, smooth coated dogs are low-maintenance but are often associated with significant daily shedding
- **Medium and long coat:** These coat types involve fur that is hanging off the body. This fur might be smooth and straight, like that of a Golden Retriever or Afghan Hound, but when combined with a double coat, may kind of puff out, like that of a Collie
- **Curly coat:** Curly coated dogs cover a spectrum of coats from ringlets to pronounced waves or crimps. Curls can vary in length, and owners of dogs with curly coats often opt for regular trips to the groomer for trims. Usually, curly coated dogs are pretty obvious to spot, think Poodles, Airedale Terriers and Portuguese Water Dogs. Another thing to note, curly coats are often hair-based vs. fur-based, and may be hypoallergenic
- **Wire coat:** This coat type is also texture-based. Wire coats have a rough feel, and often the fur stands out, away from the body. Wire coated dogs may appear to have moustaches and beards on their face. This type of coat can be tight and short against the body, or long--sometimes 2-4 inches in length. Popular wire coated dogs are German Wirehaired Pointers and Irish Wolfhounds. This type of coat requires a technique called hand stripping in order to maintain its unique texture
- **Double coat:** Double coats are often found on large breed dogs. This type of coat serves to keep dogs warm and insulated, repel water and dirt, and may even help them keep cool in warmer weather. Many types of cold weather working breeds have double coats such as Labradors, Newfoundlands, German Shepherds and Siberian Huskies

Shedding and Brush types

Caring for your dog's coat will vary depending on the type of coat and type of shedder you have. Let's take a look at the most common shedding situations to see what you're dealing with, and then select the right brush for the job. There's no way around it, brushing is the single best way to keep shedding at bay. No matter what type of coat your dog has, most experts recommend brushing your dog 1-3 times per week.

By brushing more regularly, the brushing sessions don't need to be long and drawn out. But I get it, brushing your dog is a task that often falls by the wayside until the shedding is out of control. Marathon brushing sessions once per month may be more of the norm. If you can try to set aside brushing time once every 7-10 days you WILL see an improvement in the amount of hair around the house and the health of your dog's coat.

What type of shedding best describes your dog?

- **Daily shedders:** These dogs shed year round, every day. If you have a daily shedder, you probably get dog hair on you every time they lean against you, have to vacuum daily to keep dog hair under control, and need to brush very regularly to combat all the hair. Labs, Dalmatians and Great Danes are all notorious daily shedders
- **Seasonal shedders:** Seasonal shedders usually have two distinct shedding seasons: fall and spring. The shedding is intense for 2-4 week intervals where they blow their coats. Fur often comes out in clumps. Daily or every other day brushing during these shedding periods can help shorten the duration and keep your dog's coat and skin more comfortable and healthy
- **Combination shedders:** Combination shedders are exactly what it sounds like: they shed a lot of hair daily AND blow their coats twice a year. German Shepherds are often lovingly referred to as German "Shedders" because they shed daily and seasonally

WHICH BRUSH IS RIGHT FOR YOUR DOG?



BRUSH TYPE	DESCRIPTION	WHO IT'S FOR	BREED EXAMPLES
Bristle Brush	Soft bristles arranged tightly on a flat surface	Almost exclusively for short coated dogs	Greyhounds, Boxers, Dalmatians
Slicker Brush	Short wires arranged tightly on a flat surface	Good for dogs with medium or long coats, will manage the top or outer coat only	Golden Retrievers, Afghan Hounds
Rake Brush	Round metal pins available in various depths to suit for your dog's coat length. Goes deep to pull dead fur from the undercoat	Used on dogs with a double coat, especially good for thick or matted undercoats	Siberian Huskies, Chow Chows, German Shepherds
Stripping Comb or Knife	These have a small, metal blade-like comb	Used for wire coated dogs to manage their undercoat and thin the coat to prevent matting. <i>Most often used by professionals only</i>	Wirehaired Pointers, Irish Wolfhounds
Pin Brush	Wire bristles that have rounded plastic or rubber tips that are on a flat surface. Usually less tightly packed than a slicker brush	This is a super versatile brush that works for long or medium, silky coats and curly coats. Can be used in combination with a rake brush to get the outer layer on a double-coated dog	Golden Retriever, St. Bernard, Bernese Mountain Dogs, Poodles
Furminator De-shedder	This is a name brand de-shedding brush that is a tight, metal, tooth-like comb	Excellent for all coat types during intense shedding periods and seasonal shedding. Especially good for double-coated dogs	Labradors, German Shepherds, Siberian Huskies

Other tips for keeping shedding at bay

- Regular brushing is the best line of defense
- Your vacuum is a great shedding tool, use it after brushing to get the remaining loose hairs
- Dog brush vacuum attachments make indoor brushing less of a mess
- A healthier coat may reduce shedding. Improve your dog's overall coat health with proper nutrition and adding healthy fats to the diet (more on this in Section 2)

When shedding might be something more serious

A sudden change in your dog's shedding or an uptick in the amount of hair they're losing can sometimes indicate a more serious problem. Here are some red flags to look out for and bring up to your vet:

- A sudden increase in shedding
- Severe itching
- Hair loss along the tips of the ears and/or on the snout
- Redness and visible skin irritation
- Hot spots/open sores
- Constant licking or biting at their skin
- Suddenly duller or drier looking coat
- Bald spots or thinning hair

BATHING

Bathing your dog is important for their overall hygiene and health. It's also a chance for you to get a closer look at their skin or address underlying conditions such as allergies or fleas. How often you bathe your dog will depend on a number of factors including their coat type, activity level, and unique sensitivities.

The biggest thing to be aware of is that over bathing your dog can actually result in more skin issues like dandruff which leads to itching and secondary infections. Too much bathing strips the natural oils from your dog's skin.

Guidelines for how often to bathe your dog

- For most dogs, and as a general rule of thumb, you can bathe your dog as often as once a month
- For dogs with oily coats, vets often recommend more frequent bathing, up to once per week

- For dogs with short coats, less bathing is preferred, aim for once every 3-4 months
- For dogs with water resistant coats like Labradors and Newfoundlands, bathe once every 3-4 months to avoid stripping the natural oils in their coats
- For dogs with very thick double coats, like Malamutes and Huskies, fewer baths are also ideal. Instead, opt for regular brushing to keep them clean

The exceptions to these guidelines are (of course!) when your dog gets especially dirty, muddy, or rolls in some other undesirable substance.

Tips for bathing your dog

- Whenever possible, give your dog a really thorough brushing before their bath. This makes it easier to get them nice and clean and rinse well when you're done
- Make sure to rinse out all of the shampoo, if left on the skin it can irritate your dog and cause dryness
- Always use a shampoo made for dogs. These are soap-free and are formulated for their skin. Human skin has a lower pH than dogs, which makes our shampoos too acidic and highly irritating on their skin
- Oatmeal based dog shampoos are great for dogs with sensitive skin
- Expert groomers recommend starting from the paws and working your way up the body when lathering your dog
- For at-home baths with your large breed dog, a detachable shower head or tub nozzle will make your life so much easier
- If it's warm outside and when your dog is especially dirty it's okay to use the garden hose, but try not to make that your main way of bathing your dog. Most really don't like freezing cold water and getting sprayed
- Luke warm water is the best temperature for bathing your dog
- If possible, enlist the help of someone else and keep your dog on a leash during the bathing process
- Gather lots of towels before you start, getting your dog as dry as possible after the bath is best for their skin and will prevent hot spots and ear infections from developing on damp skin
- Give lots of treats and praise after the bath and keep it as positive as possible



🐾 NAIL CARE

Keeping your dog's nails short and tidy is an important task because overgrown or very long nails can actually cause your dog quite a bit of pain and discomfort. This is because your dog's nail has a "living" center called the quick. The quick supplies blood to the nail and is full of nerve endings. When you keep your dog's nails short, the quick is kept in check, so to speak. As your dog's nails become long the quick will grow with them. Then, as your dog's nails become so long that they hit the ground when they stand or walk, the quick feels the pressure from the ground and causes pain. According to the AKC, long nails can cause your dog to spread out their paws or alter their gait to avoid this sensation. This can lead to reduced traction, deformed feet and even injuries.

The good news is that dogs that regularly run, walk and play on varied surfaces often don't need their nails trimmed at all! All of that movement on altered terrain naturally wears down their nails and keeps them in check. Walking on sidewalks and pavement is actually great for this. Interestingly, when we moved to a more remote, wooded property and stopped walking our dogs on the street, we suddenly had to clip our dogs' nails more often because they weren't getting worn down as well.

You may also notice that only certain nails on your dog's paw need to be trimmed. Anatomically, some nails may not drag on the ground. This can be especially true if your dog has an intact dew claw. A dew claw is a single claw that's higher up the leg. It doesn't come in contact with the ground, and is at risk for getting snagged on things while your dog is running and playing.

How to tell your dog's nails need to be clipped?

- You hear them click, click, click when they walk on hard surfaces, such as hardwood floors, tile or sidewalk
- You can see their claws sticking out over their pad
- You can see their claws touching the ground when standing

Tips for trimming your dog's nails

- Most important, you don't want to lodge off too much of the nail because you risk cutting into the quick
- When you cut into the quick of your dog's nail, there is profuse bleeding and pain for your dog. Often it shocks them and causes a big reaction
- If you do accidentally cut into the quick, apply pressure to the nail for at least two minutes or until the bleeding stops. You can put the nail into flour or a bar of mild soap to help plug the opening and protect the quick
- Keep the nail clean while the quick heals. Most experts recommend keeping them off that paw for rest of the day, and avoiding walking in areas with loose dirt, sand and rocks until the nail fully heals, which can take up to two weeks
- If you are new to nail trimming, consider taking your dog to the vet or a groomer and asking if you can watch the process. Alternatively, an experienced dog owner can teach you
- Leading up to the day you plan to trim, handle your dog's paws and toes regularly. Get them used to the sensation of having their feet touched to desensitize the experience. This even works with older, adult dogs
- I recommend using a sharp, scissor-style clipper with a safety stop to prevent cutting too far down the nail. Many groomers prefer grinding the nail which works well, but takes more time
- Hold your dog's paw firmly and cut at a 45-degree angle
- Usually, you will be able to see a visible notch in your dog's nail. This notch is where the quick begins. This notch is a great visual cue of where it's safe to cut to
- If your dog's nails are excessively long, cut a small amount off every few days. This allows the blood supply in the quick to recede after each trimming, allowing you to get the nails shorter without cutting into the quick
- After trimming, you can smooth out the cut with an emery board or nail grinder if desired
- Give your dog lots of praise and special treats throughout the process and when you are finished

DENTAL HYGIENE

Dental hygiene is an important part of caring for your adult dog. Lack of tooth and gum care can lead to mouth pain, tooth decay and loss, and painful gum disease. What's more, significant oral health problems for your dog are costly to treat effectively! Regular maintenance is the best line of defense, and luckily isn't too involved if you're on top of it.

As for professional dental cleanings? Most dogs need a professional dental cleaning once per year, but breeds that are more prone to dental issues may need cleanings two to three times per year.

Signs of healthy gums

- Healthy dog gums should appear light pink, like the color of a shrimp
- When you apply pressure with your finger, they should turn briefly white and then regain their light-pink color in 1-2 seconds
- There should be no visible swelling or redness at the base of the teeth
- There should be no bleeding of the gums

How to keep your dog's teeth clean

- Brush their teeth regularly: Brushing your dog's teeth as often as possible is the best way to keep their teeth healthy. You'll want to invest in a toothbrush and toothpaste specially designed for dogs
- Give them natural rubber dog toys: Chewing is how your dog naturally fights plaque and keeps their teeth clean. It's especially effective at cleaning the back molars, which can be the most difficult to get when brushing.
- Give your dog dental treats: These treats are specially designed to clean your dog's teeth and freshen their breath with natural ingredients. You can find them in all different sizes and shapes to appeal to your dog
- Dog tooth wipes: These are another way to clean your dog's teeth. Simply wipe away plaque and build-up by rubbing them on your dog's teeth. Many owners find this method easier than brushing

Tips for brushing your dog's teeth at home

- Leading up to a full on brushing, start handling your dog's mouth regularly to make them more comfortable with the process
- In the beginning, you may only get to brush the front teeth—that's okay!
- I like to use a finger-tip tooth brush for better control
- Use a small amount of toothpaste and work in a circular motion. Focus on cleaning around the gum line
- Focusing on the outside of each tooth and gums is okay, this is where periodontal disease most often occurs in dogs

- Brush your dog's teeth 2-3 times a month for best results
- If you are having an especially difficult time, begin by "brushing" their teeth with peanut butter or yogurt to make it a more positive experience
- As you work your way up to full teeth brushing, be sure to give lots of praise and treats at the end of the experience
- Once this becomes habit, brushing your dog's teeth will become easy and routine

Signs your dog needs a professional cleaning

- Bleeding at the gums
- Bad breath
- Visible plaque and build-up on the teeth
- Sudden destructive chewing in older dogs
- Signs of tooth pain
- Lack of interest in hard food

