

Grooming

Grooming is an extremely important, but much-misunderstood art and science. Your PCSA professional groomer would like you to understand more about this service that can improve your dog's health, appearance and social acceptance. The following questions are the most frequently asked, and the answers should help clarify some of the more common misconceptions about grooming.

Why should I have my dog groomed?

Most pet owners confuse "grooming" with "clipping." Clipping (which is commonly done to poodles, spaniels, terriers, as well as to mixed breed dogs), is only one procedure in the grooming process. Grooming also includes combing and brushing, cutting nails, plucking hair from ears, and parasite control. (Many groomers feel that teeth cleanings are best left to veterinarians, and in some states, groomers are not permitted to clean pets' teeth). Although the most obvious result of these procedures is an improved appearance, the major benefits to your pet are increased comfort and social acceptability, and perhaps even improved health.

Do all dogs need grooming?

All dogs need an occasional bath, but it is more important to keep your dog combed and brushed, especially if your dog has long hair. Matted hair can easily cause skin problems and unnecessary discomfort for your pet. If neglected for too long, it might eventually necessitate a lengthy grooming session, which could be uncomfortable for your pet and expensive for you. Regular brushing, on the other hand, improves your dog's skin tone and circulation, and makes the coat healthier and more attractive.

My dog has a very strong odor. Bathing doesn't seem to help. Why?

It's possible that your dog's teeth, ears, or anal sacs are responsible for the problem. Your groomer will be able to help you to determine the nature of the problem and refer you to your veterinarian, if necessary.

What are anal glands?

They are small sacs located on either side of the rectum. They sometimes need to be expressed or emptied. Some groomers accomplish this as a part of the grooming service. If this is the cause of your dog's odor problem, bathing alone will not solve it. Your groomer will be happy to explain this procedure in more detail.

My dog doesn't smell bad, but I bathe him once a week. Is that enough?

More than enough, because over bathing will dry out the pets' skin. Most dogs do not need to be bathed more than once a month. Some do not need to be bathed more than once every six months, unless they get extremely dirty. However, longhaired dogs should be brushed out properly at least once a week, in lieu of a bath.

What kind of brush should I use?

That depends on the type of coat. Please ask your groomer about the equipment that is correct for your pet.

My dog scratches all the time, but I can't find any fleas on her. What's the problem?

Scratching is often caused by dry skin and not fleas. This could be the result of excessive bathing, dry climate, nutritional deficiency, allergies, or the wrong type of shampoo. Discuss this problem with your groomer or veterinarian.

Why do my dog's nails get so long?

Because your dog doesn't walk on hard surfaces often enough to keep them worn down. You should have them checked at least once a month. Walking on pavement will help wear them down naturally.

My dog doesn't behave when I try to brush him. How do you get him to stand still?

Most dogs tend to be on their best behavior with groomers, especially when they sense the firm yet gentle touch that marks the experienced professional. It is rare for a groomer to encounter a dog with a drastic temperament problem. In these infrequent cases, the groomer might ask the owner to have his or her veterinarian administer a mild tranquilizer prior to grooming. This protects the pet from injuring himself and enables the groomer to complete the grooming quickly.

Many times, a dog that reacts badly to grooming at first will learn to accept and appreciate the process as the dog becomes more at ease with the groomer, and realizes how much better it feels after grooming. Younger animals learn to accept grooming faster and enjoy it more than a pet that is not groomed until an adult age or groomed infrequently.

I have my dog clipped every six months, but she doesn't look as pretty as my neighbor's dog. Is that my groomer's fault?

Your neighbor probably has regular six- to eight-week appointments with the groomer, and keeps the dog well brushed between appointments. This kind of regular attention enables the groomer to devote more time and effort to beautifying the dog, rather than to de-matting and trying to salvage a neglected coat.

Should I bathe my dog before taking him to my groomer?

One of the worst problems that confront groomers is to work on a dog that has been bathed without being brushed out completely. The result of such a practice is a coat that is so firmly matted that clipping is sometimes the only solution. Ask your groomer if bathing at home prior to grooming is recommended, and always brush your dog properly before bathing.

How old should my dog be before she has her first grooming appointment?

Even though a three-month-old puppy is not usually in need of grooming, you should take your pet to your groomer to get him or her used to full grooming gradually. In this way, your pet will learn to accept grooming as a happy experience to enjoy.

Should my cat be groomed?

Longhaired cats need combing occasionally to prevent matted fur. Many cats also need bathing at times, if they are not capable of achieving the neatness that is usually attributed to cats. Check to see if your groomer provides this service for cats.

Remember that professional PCSA groomers are specially qualified to advise you about the type of grooming and grooming equipment that is best for your pet. They can advise you of techniques for

grooming your dog at home, and can provide the finest service available at their pet care facility. Many times, your groomer will be able to detect potential health problems, which should be handled by your veterinarian, before you might ordinarily notice them. Problems such as possible ear infections or mites, skin disorders, unusual growths, and parasites, are more easily detected as a result of regular grooming. Your groomer is familiar with the type of grooming that will make your pet look his or her best and can also provide special baths for fleas and ticks, dry skin problems, and, in cooperation with your veterinarian, medicated baths for special problems. Good health and good looks go hand in hand with good grooming. The best team for accomplishing this is your veterinarian, your PCSA professional, and you.