

# CLEAN DOG, HAPPY DOG!



Our dogs – loyal, affectionate, and intelligent. Owning a dog can be a great privilege, rewarding owners with companionship and even health benefits. Our four-legged friends depend completely on us to take care of their every need. In addition to routine visits to his veterinarian, your dog should be regularly groomed. Grooming is not only done to improve the appearance of our dogs, but is essential to their comfort, good health, and keeps our dogs feeling great. Many times a professional dog groomer may be the first to detect any signs of health problems and can notify you if veterinary attention is needed. Between grooming appointments, there are many things that you can do at home that will be beneficial to your beloved pet.

## **The brush hour.** Brush and comb.

Comb and brush. The importance of brushing cannot be stressed enough. This is especially true if you have a long-haired dog, such as a maltese, shih-tzu, or schnauzer. Pomeranians, shelties, etc. have an undercoat that needs to be thinned out to relieve shedding and avoid matting. Brushing a long-haired dog should always be done before the bath to remove any tangles and mats. If you are bathing a dog that is tangled, the knots only worsen and become tighter on the skin once wet. A good slicker brush and metal dog comb is recommended. Proper brushing requires reaching all the way to the dog's skin. Gently work out any knots first with your brush, finishing with the comb. Frequent brushing can avoid those tedious and costly shave-downs that your groomer will recommend once matters get out of hand. Try to make brushing a bonding and rewarding time together. Follow up with treats and lots of praise!



**Look into my eyes.** Many toy breeds have over-active tear ducts that will leave stains and a build-up of eye 'boogies'. Keep the corners of the eyes clean using a tissue or baby wipe. If eye 'boogies' are left unattended they will harden and can eventually leave a thick crust in the corners of the eyes and down the sides of the nose. Moisture builds up and can result in a bacterial or yeast infection of the eye. A foul odor around the eyes could be a sign of an infection. Unfortunately, many times when your groomer is able to remove the 'boogie'

build-up there is irritation and sometimes even a sore left in this area, which can be easily avoided by frequent at-home cleaning.

**Lend me your ears.** Each time you bathe your dog, you can finish the deed with a good ear cleaning. Dogs that have heavy ears are very prone to ear infections, as well as breeds that have hair growth inside the ear canal. Your groomer will remove the hair from the ear when necessary. Use a veterinarian recommended ear cleaner and cotton balls to clean the inside of the ear and just slightly down the ear canal. Extremely dirty ears may need to be flushed and massaged to loosen up any dirt and wax build-up. If you noticed swelling, redness, or a foul odor coming from the ears, they may be infected. Also, if your dog is scratching his ears or shaking his head often, he could be trying to tell you his ears need some TLC.



back to every other week or use a soapless or oatmeal shampoo. It is not necessary to work up a sudsy lather when bathing, just make sure you are reaching the skin. A good massage is always appreciated. Finally, rinse well. Residual shampoo can leave your dog's skin itchy. Avoid getting the water in the inside of the ear flaps.

Remember, excess moisture leads to ear infections. There is an endless variety of shampoos available. If you notice any severe flaking, inflammation, oiliness, or a foul skin odor, your veterinarian may recommend a medicated shampoo.

Caring for your dog is well worth the time and if done properly your pal will be grateful for the extra attention. May God bless you and your pets!

by Crystal Boullion, Owner, Salon De Chien

**Those nagging nails.** Long nails can be bothersome and uncomfortable for your dog. They can make it difficult to walk and even get snagged on blankets and clothing. Neglected nails can even curl and grow into the paw pads, causing extreme pain and sometimes infection. Should you attempt to clip your dog's nails at home remember that there is a vein (the quick) that grows inside the nail, so use caution to avoid cutting them too short, Black nails are especially tricky. If you clip a nail too short and do not have any "quick stop" you can always use cornstarch to stop the bleeding. You may opt to just file the nails, which can be done with a Dremel®.

**Rub-a-dub doggie.** It is perfectly safe to bathe your dog once a week if you choose to do so. However, if you find weekly bathing is drying out his skin, you may want to cut



*God blessed them and told them, "Multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. Be masters over the fish and birds and all the animals." Genesis 1:28 NLT*