



Association of Pet Boarding and Grooming (Qld) Inc

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Grooming Your Dog

Grooming is an extremely important, yet much misunderstood art/science. Your professional groomer would like you to understand more about this service which can improve your dog's health, appearance and social acceptability. 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, clipping nails, plucking hair from ears and parasite control (many groomers feel that teeth cleaning is best left to veterinarians). 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.

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.

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 he 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 you pet, and expensive for you. Regular brushing, on the other hand, improves skin tone and circulation, and makes his coat healthier and more attractive. Longhaired dogs should be brushed out properly at least once a week.

Which kind of brush should I use?

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

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

It's possible that his 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 vet if necessary.

My dog scratches all the time, but I can't find any fleas on him. 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, or the wrong type of shampoo. Discuss this problem with your groomer.

Why do my dog's nails get so long?

Because he isn't on hard surfaces often enough to keep them worn down. You should have them checked at least once a month. Walking on concrete 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 behaviour with groomers, especially when they sense the firm yet gentle touch which 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 tranquiliser prior to grooming. This protects the pet from injuring himself and enables the groomer to complete the grooming quickly. Many times a dog which reacts badly to grooming at first will learn to accept and appreciate the process as he becomes more at ease with the groomer, and as he realises how much better he feels after grooming. Younger animals (puppies) learn to accept grooming faster, and enjoy it more, than a pet that is not groomed until of adult age or that is groomed infrequently.

I have my dog clipped every six months, but he doesn't look as good as my neighbour's dog. Is that my groomer's fault?

Your neighbour probably has a regular six to eight week appointment with the groomer, and keeps her 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 de-matting and trying to salvage a neglected coat.

Should I bath my dog before taking him to the groomer?

One of the worst problems that confront groomers is that of working on a dog which has been bathed without being brushed out completely. The result of such a practise is a coat which 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 a dog be before he has his first grooming appointment?

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

Remember that your professional groomer is especially 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 kennel and/or grooming shop. Many times, your groomer will be able to detect potential health problems, which should be handled by your vet, before you might ordinarily notice them. Problems such as possible ear infections, mites, skin disorders, unusual growth, parasites etc are more easily detected as a result of regular grooming. Your groomer is familiar with the type of grooming which will make your pet look his best and can also provide special baths for fleas and ticks, dry skin problems, and, in co-operation with your vet, medicated baths for special problems. Good health and good looks go hand in hand with good grooming, and nobody likes a dirty dog. The best team for accomplishing this is your vet, your groomer and you.



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