

GROOMING ORDER: → Bathe → Dry → Ears → Eyes → Nails → Teeth → Full body check
Always brush BEFORE bathing. Water tightens mats and makes them nearly impossible to remove.

■ Before You Start

- ☐ Gather all supplies before starting
Brush, comb, shampoo, towels, clippers, ear cleaner, treats
- ☐ Walk or play session before grooming
A tired dog is much easier to groom
- ☐ Set up area — non-slip mat, good lighting
- ☐ Check coat for mats or skin issues
- ☐ Remove mats with detangling spray first
Never bathe a matted coat — water tightens mats
- ☐ Place non-slip mat in tub or shower

■ Brushing & Coat

- ☐ Brush entire coat head to tail in sections
Brush with growth direction, then against to lift undercoat
- ☐ Use slicker brush on topcoat
- ☐ Use undercoat rake for double-coated breeds
Goldens, huskies, labs need this tool
- ☐ Work remaining tangles with metal comb
- ☐ Check armpits, groin, behind ears for mats
- ☐ Brush tail and feathering if applicable
- ☐ Inspect skin for redness or parasites

■ Bath

- ☐ Wet coat with lukewarm water — neck down first
Test on wrist — too hot dries skin
- ☐ Apply dog shampoo — never human shampoo
Human shampoo disrupts dog skin pH
- ☐ Lather from neck to tail into undercoat
- ☐ Wash face last with damp cloth only
Avoid water in ears and eyes
- ☐ Rinse completely — residue causes itching
Rinse until water runs clear — takes longer than expected
- ☐ Apply conditioner for long or dry coats
- ☐ Towel dry — squeeze, don't rub vigorously
Rubbing creates tangles in curly or long coats

■ Drying

- ☐ Blow dry on low/cool while brushing
Never high heat — keep dryer moving at all times
- ☐ Dry ears thoroughly — moisture causes infections
- ☐ Dry paws and between toes completely
- ☐ Brush coat as you dry to prevent tangles

■ Ears

- ☐ Check for odor, redness, or discharge
Healthy = light pink, odor-free, minimal wax
- ☐ Apply ear cleaner to cotton ball — not swabs
Swabs can damage the ear drum
- ☐ Gently wipe visible ear canal and ear flap
- ☐ Trim excess hair around ear opening
- ☐ Check both ears

■ Eyes & Face

- ☐ Wipe discharge from corners — fresh cloth per eye
- ☐ Check for redness or unusual discharge
- ☐ Trim hair around eyes if causing irritation
- ☐ Wipe face folds if applicable (bulldogs, pugs)
Folds trap moisture — dry thoroughly after wiping

■ Final Check

- ☐ Full body check — feel for lumps or sore spots
Grooming sessions catch early health issues
- ☐ Reward with treat, praise, and play — end positive

■ Nails & Paws

- ☐ Check paws — pads, between toes, nail length
- ☐ Trim just below the quick — small amounts
Clicking on floors = too long. Clip small, check often
- ☐ File rough edges with grinder or nail file
- ☐ Trim dewclaws — they don't wear down naturally
Dewclaws curl into skin if neglected
- ☐ Trim hair between paw pads if needed
- ☐ Apply paw balm if pads are dry or cracked

■ Teeth & Mouth

- ☐ Brush teeth with dog-safe toothpaste
Human toothpaste has xylitol — toxic to dogs
- ☐ Check for tartar, red gums, broken teeth
- ☐ Inspect lips and mouth for sores or odor
- ☐ Offer dental chew after brushing as reward

>■ PRO GROOMING TIPS

- Always brush BEFORE bathing — water tightens mats and makes them nearly impossible to remove.
- Exercise your dog before grooming — a calm, tired dog makes every step easier.
- Never use human shampoo — it disrupts your dog's skin pH and causes dryness and irritation.
- For dark nails, clip tiny amounts and look for a dark center dot — that means stop.
- End every session with treats and play — your dog will cooperate better next time.

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