

# Grooming 101

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Whether you have a dog or a cat there are grooming basics that you should consider. These basics include bathing, brushing, trimming nails and cleaning ears. Performing these basic grooming practices will allow your pet to feel better and look better. They will also help keep your house cleaner.



Bathing is a very important part of grooming for both dogs and cats. Bathing will help to remove any dead hair and skin from your pet. Dogs should be bathed at least 4 times a year or as the need arises, (roll in mud or get sprayed by a skunk). Cats should be bathed at least two times per year. Contrary to popular belief cats can actually tolerate being bathed. It is recommended that you go slowly with your cat the first few times they are bathed to let them adjust to the process. Your veterinarian may recommend that you bathe your dog or cat more frequently or with a prescription shampoo if they are having skin problems. To make your pet more comfortable place a non-slip mat or a towel in the bottom of the tub or sink. You should use lukewarm water and use a shampoo that is designed for animals to avoid drying out the skin. It is also very important to ensure that all of the shampoo is rinsed out afterwards. If you have a long haired cat or dog it may be beneficial to use a hair dryer to help your pet dry faster. When using the hair dryer keep the temperature low and go slow to acclimate them to having their hair dried.

Brushing can help remove dead hair from your pet as well as to sooth and calm them. Brushing can be beneficial to both longhaired and shorthaired animals. Determining the type of brush to use depends on the hair coat your animal has. Also keep in mind that if you are using a Furminator® type brush you can over brush your animal and remove healthy hair as well as dead hair. For long haired cats and dogs daily brushing may be necessary to help prevent mats from forming.



If your pet has mats work slowly at the mat and do not pull or cut it out with a scissors; you may accidentally cut your pets skin which can result in a trip to the vets office to suture up the wound. If your pet is severely matted your only option may be to have the animal shaved down by a groomer.



Many owners are able to clip their pets nails. Nails grow at varying speeds so it is hard to say how often your pets' nails will need to be trimmed. Another determining factor for dogs is what kind of surfaces they are walking on. Dogs that walk on concrete sidewalks tend to not need their nails trimmed as often



because the rough surface of the sidewalk will keep them shorter. Cats that routinely use a scratching post may not need their nails trimmed as often. The most important thing to remember when trimming your pets nails is recognizing the blood and nerve supply within the nail. This is called the quick and you do not want to cut into that because it is going to be painful and bleed a lot. If your pet has white nails it is very easy to see the quick. However it is hard to visualize the quick in animals with black nails. The easiest way to ensure that you do not get too close to the quick is to clip a little bit of the nail at a time. If you accidentally do cut the quick of the nail corn starch or flour will help stop the bleeding. Another option for trimming nails is to use a dremel. This grinds the nails down like when we use an emory board on our nails. As with using a regular nail trimmer you want to stop before the quick. The Dremel method is typically only used in dogs.

When cleaning your pets ears using a less is more approach is the best. It is recommended that you only wipe the outer ear with a wet cotton ball to remove debris. If your dog or cat seems to have an excessive amount of debris and you are wiping their ears out frequently they should be seen by a doctor. DO NOT use cotton swabs to clean your pets ears. When you use cotton swabs it is very likely that you will end up pushing debris further down into the ear rather than removing it.



If your pet seems to be fighting you while grooming them it may be necessary and in the best interest of your pet to have them groomed by a professional groomer. You do not want to overly stress your pet and sometimes being groomed by someone else in a place other than their own home makes it easier for them.

For more information contact Cedar Grove Veterinary Services at (920) 668-6212 or [info@cgvet.com](mailto:info@cgvet.com).