

Grooming: A New Horizon in Health Management of Dogs

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Introduction:

Earlier the veterinary clinics were known to be the place where sick dogs were treated and cured of the diseases. Now an emerging concept of grooming has been added. In a good veterinary clinic, grooming facilities must be available. There is a close relationship between grooming and health management. This article will be helpful in understanding the true meaning of grooming and its importance in health management.

Grooming: Canine grooming refers to the hygienic care and cleaning of a dog, as well as a process by which a dog's physical appearance is enhanced for showing or other types of competition. A dog should be groomed twice daily for 30 minutes before feeding regularly. Regular grooming provides the handler an opportunity to become friendly with his dog and at the same time, to find out any wounds, injuries, external parasites or any skin infections of the dog in his care. Due to the busy schedule of the dog owners, it is not possible for them to groom their dog on regular basis, therefore, the dogs must be groomed under the supervision of a vet at regular intervals. Grooming under the supervision of a vet gives an opportunity to observe any abnormality present on the body of the dog.

Benefits of Dog grooming:

- Hidden wounds are exposed.
- Ticks/fleas can be removed.
- Increases blood circulation.
- Minimizes fatigue.
- Enhances coat quality.
- Loose hairs shed off.

- Dog looks attractive.
- Increases the affection between dog and handler.

Brushing the dogs:

Regular grooming with a brush or comb help keeps the dog's hair in good condition by removing dirt, spreading natural oils throughout the coat, preventing tangles and keeping the skin clean and irritant-free.

The method of brushing and frequency of brushing largely depends on his or her coat type.

Smooth, short coat: If the dog has a smooth, short coat (like that of a Chihuahua, Boxer or Basset Hound), you only need to brush once a week. Use a rubber brush to loosen dead skin and dirt and follow with a bristle brush to remove dead hair.

Short, dense Fur: If the dog has short, dense fur which is prone to matting, like that of a retriever, brushing once a week is fine. Use a slicker brush to remove tangles and catch dead hair with a bristle brush. Don't forget to comb the tail.

Long, Silky Coats: If the dog has a long, luxurious coat, such as that of a Yorkshire terrier, the dogs need daily attention. The owner needs to remove tangles with a slicker brush every day. Brush the coat with a bristle brush. If you have a long-haired dog with a coat like a collie's or an Afghan hound's, follow the steps above, but also be sure to comb through the fur and trim the hair around the feet.

Long hair that is frequently Matted: For long-haired dogs, it is a good idea to set up a daily grooming routine to remove tangles and prevent mats. Gently tease out tangles with a slicker brush, and then brush the dog with a bristle brush. If matting is particularly dense, clipping the hair may be tried, taking care not to come near the skin.

Tips for bathing the dogs:

1. First, give the dog a good brushing to remove all dead hair and mats, and then put him or her in a tub or sink that's been filled with about three to four inches of lukewarm water.
2. Use a spray hose, large plastic pitcher or an unbreakable cup to completely wet the dog.
3. Take care to not spray or pour water directly in his ears, eyes or nose.
4. Gently massage in shampoo, working from head to tail, and rinse and repeat as needed.
5. Dry him or her thoroughly by giving your pet a good rub with a large towel.

**Ear care:**

Dog's regular grooming routine should include regular ear checks. This is especially important for dogs who produce excessive earwax or have a lot of inner-ear hair. Do not clean the dog's ears so frequently or deeply as to cause irritation, and take care to never insert anything into your dog's ear canal, probing inside can cause trauma or infection.

Nail care:

As a thumb rule, a dog's nails should be trimmed when they are just about to touch the ground when he or she walks. If the dog's nails are clicking or getting snagged on the floor, it is time for nail trimming. For leisurely living dogs, this might mean weekly pedicures, while urban dogs who stalk rough city sidewalks can go longer between clippings.

Tips for nails trimming:

1. Begin by spreading each of the dog's feet to inspect for dirt and debris.
2. Take the dog's toe and hold it firmly, but gently. Hold the trimmer and insert a very small length of the nail through the trimmer's opening to cut off the tip of each nail. Don't trim at a blunt angle to maintain the existing curvature of the nail.
3. Cut a little bit of nail with each pass until you can see the beginning of a circle appear on the cut surface. The circle indicates that you are nearing the quick, a vein that runs into the nail, so it's time to stop that nail and move on to the next.
4. If the dog has black nails, however, the quick will not be as easily discernible, so be extra careful. If there is an accidentally cut into the quick, it may bleed, in that case, some styptic powder or corn starch can be applied to stop the bleeding.
5. Once the nails have been cut, make the rough edges smooth using a nail grinder.

Paw care:

The pads on the bottom of the pup's feet provide extra cushioning to help protect bones and joints from shock, provide insulation against extreme weather, aid walking on rough ground and protect tissue deep within the paw. It is important to check your pet's feet regularly to make sure they are free of wounds, infections or foreign objects that can become lodged.

To keep them in tip-top shape, look for foxtails, pebbles, small bits of broken glass and other debris. Remove any splinters or debris gently with tweezers. Then, comb and trim the hair between the toes to be even with the pads to avoid painful matting.

Using Moisturizer:

If the dog's pads have become cracked and dry, consult a veterinarian for a good pad moisturizer and use it as directed. Avoid human hand moisturizers, which can soften the pads and lead to injury. A paw massage will relax your dog and promote better circulation. Start by rubbing between the pads on the bottom of the paw, and then rub between each toe.

