



GROOMING

The purpose of this lecture is to explain the importance of grooming and to provide basic information about grooming your Pilot Dog. This lesson will explain:

- The importance of grooming
- Basic information about your dog's coat
- Grooming tools
- How to brush your dog
- Other types of grooming

The Importance of Daily Grooming

There are many reasons why grooming your Pilot Dog daily is important:

- It keeps your dog looking good.
- It detangles fur.
- It keeps your dog clean.
- It ensures that your dog will continue to be welcome in public places.
- It reduces shedding.
- It stimulates the dog's oil glands and helps to properly moisturize the dog's coat by keeping naturally-produced skin oils distributed evenly; this will help make the dog itch less, and it reduces odor.
- It allows you to become familiar with the feeling of your dog's body and makes it easy for you to quickly detect bumps, scabs, or other changes in your dog's skin that might require medical attention.
- It serves as a bonding experience for you and your dog. The majority of dogs love being groomed, and it should be a peaceful and calming experience for both of you.

Basic Information About Your Dog's Coat

Most Pilot Dog breeds have what is called a double coat.

- The undercoat is short, soft, and lies next to the skin. Its function is to insulate the dog from heat, cold, and dampness; it generally sheds twice a year, in the spring and fall.
- The outer coat is coarser with longer hairs; its function is to keep dirt and dampness from reaching the inner coat. This is what we feel when we pet the dog. This coat sheds a little all year round.

Grooming Tools

For daily grooming you will receive a fine-tooth comb and a bristle brush, or a slicker brush if you are receiving a poodle.

For weekly grooming you will receive ear flush, cotton balls, and a chamois cloth.

How to Brush Your Dog: Daily and Weekly Grooming Sessions

Daily Grooming Session

- Choose a place for grooming that is easy to clean.
- New, young dogs often get excited during grooming and think it is play time, so it may be easiest for you to put your dog on tiedown while grooming for the first few days.
- Excitability can also be minimized by grooming at a time when the dog is calm, such as after a work session or during the evening when the dog is "winding down" for the night.
- Initial grooming sessions should be very short - approximately 5 minutes. You can lengthen them as the dog's comfort level improves.

Brushing poodles

The slicker brush has short wire teeth which are bent back towards the handle. It is designed to penetrate the outer coat and remove dead hair from the inner coat. The slicker brush also has a large plastic button on the back of it. Pressing down on this button will release the hair that has been collected in the slicker brush. This brush can cause skin irritation or discomfort in some dogs with very thin coats, so when you first

use it, you should apply only very light pressure until you become familiar with your dog's comfort level.

1. When brushing your dog, you always want to brush in the direction the hair is growing. Dogs' hair generally grows from front to back (on the back) and from top to bottom (on the neck, chest, and legs).
2. Brush the dog's neck first, starting immediately behind the ears and moving the brush down towards the dog's back, then continue on to the dog's back.
3. Brush from the base of the neck back towards the tail.
 4. Be careful when brushing the tail. Many dogs are sensitive about having their tails handled and may not be comfortable with it until your bond with the dog has progressed a little more.

Brushing all other breeds

1. Start with finger combing. Run the pads of your fingertips through the dog's coat, against the grain of the fur. You are going to do this all over the dog's body. This loosens up dead skin, fur, and dirt. While you are backcombing you are also checking for sores, hot spots, mats, bumps, and fleas.
2. Next, take the fine-tooth comb and comb the dog from neck to rump, going with the grain of fur. Avoid the dog's face and tail. This removes dead skin, fur, and dirt as well as detangles fur.
3. Lastly, you will take the bristle brush and brush the dog from neck to rump, going with the grain of the fur.
 - a. Be careful with the tail; sandwich the tail between your hand and the brush and go along both sides, with the grain of the fur.
 - b. There are some areas that you should not attempt to brush at all, and these include the face, ears, and paws. These areas can be wiped with the chamois cloth or just lightly touched with your hands to make sure they are clean.

Weekly Grooming

Besides the dog's coat, there are some other body parts that you should pay attention to. Once a week you are going to start with a daily groom and then finish with a weekly groom. The weekly groom consists of:

1. Checking the dog's eyes - many dogs have small, dry crusts in the corners of their eyes, much like people do when they wake up in the morning. These are not generally cause for concern unless they are accompanied by excessive tearing or are thick and goeey. They can be removed by wiping gently with a warm washcloth or the chamois provided in class, always in the direction away from the dog's eyes.
2. Checking and cleaning the ears - Pilot Dogs recommends cleaning the dog's ears once a week. Before you clean, it is a good idea to lift your dog's ear flaps and sniff the ears. If you smell a bad odor, the ear is hot to the touch, or the dog shows discomfort when you touch his ears, he may have an ear infection and need to see the vet.
3. Checking the nails - most working dogs wear down their nails from contact with the ground, but some do not. If you hear your dog's nails clicking on tile or pavement when he walks, he will need to have his nails trimmed. Dogs also have an extra nail called the dew claw, which is higher up on the dog's leg and will always need to be trimmed. Trimming a dog's nails is difficult for many people. Most people are more comfortable getting the dog's nails trimmed during their routine vet visits. Most grooming salons will also trim a dog's nails for a low price.

Many people ask how often they should bathe their dog. Generally, a well-groomed dog does not need a bath. Bathing can cause dry skin and itching. If you do choose to bathe your dog, make sure to use a shampoo specially made for dogs, and use an oatmeal-based shampoo. Use warm water, and rinse very thoroughly; if soap remains in the coat, it can cause irritation, scratching, and hair loss. Remember, a well-groomed dog will look good and feel good and will be a source of pride for you.

Special Considerations When Grooming a Standard Poodle

- Poodles should be groomed (get their coats trimmed) every 4 to 8 weeks depending upon desired length.
- Generally, the cost of a grooming cut can be between \$100 to \$180 depending upon cut length and style of cut.
- The length of time is usually between 1 to 1-1/2 hours to groom. Kennel cut (one length) style may take longer.
- You should brush your poodle with a slicker/demating brush 2 to 3 times weekly.
- It is suggested that you bathe your poodle every 3 to 4 weeks. Blow dry and brush at the same time to prevent tangles and mats.
 - Additionally, during a bath it is suggested to pluck the hair from the ear canal. This should be done frequently to alleviate overgrowth.
- Pilot Dogs offers graduates within a 50-mile radius the opportunity to have your dogs groomed every 8 weeks by our groomer.
 - You are required to provide transportation to and from Pilot Dogs.
 - Advance notice is required.
 - There is no cost for the service.