

Published based on [How to Wash Your Dog](#)

# How to Wash Your Dog

Even if you've got the **most easy-care dog in the world**, she'll still need some attention to be paid to her appearance every once in a while – so it's worth spending a bit of time learning the **best techniques for easy, stress-free grooming**.

## WHY SHOULD I BOTHER GROOMING MY DOG?

Not so long ago, the average American's **approach to canine grooming** was somewhat cavalier. Dogs were seen as something that lived in the yard (usually in a dusty, hard-floored kennel), ate whatever was put in their bowls, and existed as a sometime-playmate for the household's children.

Today, we tend to **care for our dogs a lot more**, and view them more as members of the household than the Thing in the Yard.

Ever since this rise in the estimation of our beloved pooches became widespread, **grooming has been increasingly recognized as an important facet of your dog's regular health-care**. It ensures that any skin-care problems are minimized (because grooming distributes the natural skin-oils evenly throughout the coat), and assists you in monitoring your dog's overall condition – if you **groom on a regular basis**, you can't help but **notice the presence of any unusual lumps or bumps**.

This **preventative action has saved many a canine life**. Our dogs can't tell us where it hurts, but taking just a little bit of time every so often to check them over ourselves can save a lot of grief in the long run.

The trick is getting your dog to tolerate (and even enjoy!) the process ...

## THE FIRST STEP IN THE GROOMING PROCESS



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Something that many **owners lack experience in is how to wash their dogs**. **Dry-grooming** (brushing and 'buffing' the coat) seems to present little problem for most people; the rot tends to set in when water is introduced to the mix.

Most **dogs have a strong dislike of being bathed**, and in many cases will become utterly [panic-stricken](#) when the tub comes out.

This article is going to **deal with the basics of how to wash your dog** in a way that'll keep both of you relaxed and happy.

## PREPARING YOUR DOG FOR GROOMING

First of all, the absolute most important thing you can do is to **accustom your dog to the grooming process**. Now, starting this in puppyhood is the ideal way to handle the situation, but of course not all of us have this luxury; if you've got an adult dog, you'll probably need to move a little slower, but you should still start getting her used to being touched and handled all over as soon as you can.

As your **puppy or dog gets used to the sensation of being rubbed and handled**, she'll slowly come to enjoy it. Dogs are social creatures by instinct, and **physical affection and contact is a big part of their lives** – it shouldn't take long before she begins to trust you, and allows herself to get some pleasure out of your touch.

All you have to do is start rubbing her slowly all over. Fondle her ears, touch her cheeks and neck, rub her back and belly, pick up her paws and – if she'll let you – give each one a gentle squeeze (**treating and praising her whenever she lets you do this, since paw touching is generally a pretty big deal for most dogs**). If she has a tail, rub it between your fingers; get her to roll over on her back so you can rub and stroke her belly and hocks.

This might not seem like such a big deal, but it's actually a **really important part of the grooming process**: the more your dog enjoys it, the less stressful the whole event will be for both of you, and so the more often you're likely to groom her – which increases the health benefits for her.

## HOW TO WASH YOUR DOG

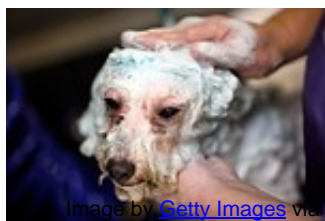


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**Bathing always comes before dry-grooming**, since it makes brushing and trimming a lot easier as well as a lot more effective (there's not much point in brushing a tangled, dirty coat!)

**You will need some basic tools**: a tub, a non-slip mat, a plastic jug, some warm water, a small sponge, and some canine shampoo (**not human shampoo: the pH is all wrong for dogs, and will give her dry and flaky skin.**)

**Stand her in the tub**, on the non-slip mat. If she's a large or unruly dog, you may want to wash her outside to minimize mess – either that, or you can restrain her by tying one end of a light nylon leash to her collar, and the other end to the faucet.

**Pour jugs of warm water all over her until she's good and wet.** This breaks down the grease in her fur, and ensures a thorough shampooing.

**Mix a little shampoo with another jug of warm water, and rub it thoroughly into your dog's fur.** Start off with her back and rub it into a good lather (but don't be too harsh!)

**Now you can move on to her head and face.** Be very careful here – dogs' eyes are sensitive too, and if you get any water in her ears, she'll probably get an ear infection. (You can plug her ears with a small twist of cotton wool to help stop this from happening, if you like.)

**Remember to clean under her tail before you wash her off** – dip the sponge into the shampoo mixture to do this properly.

**Now it's time to rinse**: using the jug and some clean, warm, shampoo-free water, carefully tip it all over her and use your fingers to help disperse the lather from her coat. **Rinse her off thoroughly at least twice**, since any residue that remains will irritate her skin.



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**Now you'll need to dry her off:** if she's got short fur, you can use a towel (an old one will do just fine, although big dogs generally need two); for dogs with longer fur, give her a gentle toweling-off first, and then use a hair dryer to get rid of the last dampness. Be certain that it's set on low heat, and hold it far away from your dog's fur to prevent burning either the skin or the fur.

## KEEP YOURSELF CALM

Remember that most dogs have an inherent dislike of being bathed, which can cause [anxiety](#) and even outright panic.

Your dog takes a lot of her emotional cues from you, so make sure you act like a good role model for the occasion. **Reassure your dog frequently, keeping your voice well-modulated, low, and even; keep your movements slow and deliberate;** praise her lavishly for good behavior, and give her a couple of treats throughout the process to make it more enjoyable for her.

The more she enjoys the process, the easier it'll be for you!

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Grooming your dog is just one tiny aspect of maintaining overall health and happiness.** For a complete, encyclopedic survival guide to all aspects of dog health, from preventative care to choosing a vet to doggie First Aid (even the canine Heimlich maneuver!), you should take a look at **The Ultimate Guide to Dog Health**.

A survival guide for knowledgeable, effective, and life-saving dog care, this manual keeps your dog's health and wellbeing firmly within your control – which is exactly where you want it to be.

To be the best and most responsible owner you can be, take a look at The Ultimate Guide to Dog Health.

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